CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

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CEA Council for Estate Agencies
Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme for Key Executive Officers, Practising Directors/Partners and Registered Salespersons

Updated as at 31 March 2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Developments within the real estate agency industry move at such a pace that no professionals should be content to rest on the knowledge and skills gained through their education, training and experience in the past. Estate agents and salespersons must keep their knowledge up to date, be familiar with the relevant guidelines, government policies and procedures and the latest developments taking place in the industry. The public expects no less from the real estate professionals whom they engage to be knowledgeable and to provide timely, accurate, comprehensive and reliable advice. The Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) in regulating the real estate agency industry, shares these expectations.

1.2 One key objective of CEA is to promote higher standards of professionalism, competency and integrity. CEA will achieve this through regulations and enforcement, and collaborative efforts with the industry associations, estate agents and salespersons. The mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) scheme is a major step forward in this regard. This will also bring the real estate agency profession in line with practices in other countries such as Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia.

1.3 In implementing the scheme, CEA takes into account the professional needs and interests of Key Executive Officers (KEOs) and salespersons. In many ways, it formalises what most KEOs and salespersons are already doing. Under the Estate Agents (Estate Agency Work) Regulations 2010, every KEO, practising director/partner and salesperson will be required to undertake a minimum of 6 CPD credit hours in each CPD cycle, of which at least 3 CPD credit hours must be on core subjects. It is also a renewal licensing/registration condition stipulated in the Estate Agents (Licensing and Registration) Regulations 2010. Failure to comply will affect their registration and may lead to removal from the Public Register.

2. Objectives

2.1 To raise the professionalism (professional conduct and ethics) and competency across the real estate agency industry;

2.2 To ensure their professional knowledge is up to date;

2.3 To build a culture of professionalism and encourage adherence to best practices;

2.4 To strengthen public confidence and consumer protection; and

2.5 To assist KEOs, practising directors/partners and salespersons in their quest for continuous learning and career development, and to help fulfil their potential.
3. Introduction of CPD Training Roadmap in October 2013

3.1 To further enhance the CPD scheme, CEA has introduced the CPD Training Roadmap which was developed in consultation with the industry and training providers. It is a comprehensive framework to guide KEOs and salespersons in building their capability and professionalism in a progressive and structured manner. The training roadmap took effect from the 2014 CPD cycle which commenced on 1 October 2013.

3.2 Under the new training framework, core subjects are grouped into three categories based on the key knowledge areas needed by salespersons when conducting estate agency work in property transactions and by KEOs in managing and supervising salespersons under their charge. The three core CPD course categories are:

   C1: Professional Ethics, Estate Agents Act and Regulations
   C2: Laws, Government Policies and Regulations related to estate agency work
   C3: Practice-related knowledge and issues

4. What is the New CPD Requirement effective from 1 October 2013?

4.1 With effect from 1 October 2013, KEOs, practicing directors/ partners and salespersons are required to attend at least one core CPD course from each of the three categories: C1, C2 and C3 over 3 consecutive CPD cycles (i.e. over a 3-year period).

4.2 Each CPD cycle spans one year, from 1 October of the previous year to 30 September of the current year. For example, the 2014 CPD cycle will start from 1 October 2013 and end on 30 September 2014.

4.3 KEOs and salespersons can choose to attend courses from the three categories in any order within the three-year CPD cycle. Failure to comply will affect their licence and registration renewal and may lead to removal from the Public Register.

4.4 Below is an illustration of an approach of achieving the new CPD requirement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPD Cycle</th>
<th>CPD Attendance</th>
<th>CPD Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1st CPD Cycle (1 Oct 2013 – 30 Sep 2014) | 1 core course under C1  
                                          | 1 core course under C3  
                                          | 1 non-core course  | 2 2 2 |
| 2nd CPD Cycle (1 Oct 2014 – 30 Sep 2015) | 1 core course under C1  
                                          | 1 core course under C2  
                                          | 1 non-core course  | 2 2 2 |
| 3rd CPD Cycle (1 Oct 2015 – 30 Sep 2016) | 1 core course under C2  
                                          | 1 core course under C3  
                                          | 1 non-core course  | 2 2 2 |

Did the salesperson meet the new requirement? Yes

4.5 The number of core-subject credit hours requirement could be increased in future.
5. What are the components of the CPD Training Roadmap?

5.1 The CPD Training Roadmap aims to bolster the CPD scheme by defining a clearer direction on core courses that are suitable for KEOs and salespersons of varying years of experience and encouraging them to attend a balanced mix of training courses on different subject matters.

5.2 Courses are categorised according to knowledge areas essential to the conduct of estate agency work and for KEOs and salespersons of different experience levels.

Core Course Categories

5.2.1 Core subjects serve to raise the professional competency and effectiveness of KEOs, practising directors/partners/salespersons. Under the CPD Training Roadmap, the three core course categories are as follows:

- **C1: Professional Ethics, Estate Agents Act and Regulations** focuses on developing and enhancing the professional ethics of KEOs and salespersons and promoting their knowledge of the Estate Agents Act and Regulations.

- **C2: Laws, Government Policies and Regulations related to estate agency work** is designed to keep KEOs and salespersons abreast of the latest laws, government policies and regulations related to estate agency work and property transactions.

- **C3: Practice-related knowledge and issues** is aimed at raising the professional standards of KEOs and salespersons through learning best practices relating to estate agency work and deepening of knowledge of CEA’s practice guidelines.

CPD Course Levels

5.2.2 Salespersons are free to choose the level of courses that is appropriate for them or with guidance from their KEOs.

- **Level 1** courses focus on laying the foundation for essential knowledge and enabling salespersons to develop their competencies as well as good ethics and professionalism. These training courses are targeted at salespersons who are new to the industry or are in their early years of their careers, and need to build their professional knowledge.

- **Level 2** courses enable the salespersons to gain advanced knowledge related to real estate and acquire problem solving and management skills to manage a team effectively. Experienced salespersons who are at the advanced level or functioning as team leaders with supervisory responsibilities will benefit from these courses.

- **Level 3** courses are aimed at KEOs, practising directors/partners and salespersons in senior management positions. These training courses seek to enable them to explore the finer details of real estate disciplines, such as deeper knowledge in professionalism, ethics, law, practice management, governance and complaint management. These courses will also prepare them for their management roles by allowing them to acquire leadership and senior management skills to manage and lead an estate agent.
Recommended and Special Interest Courses

5.2.3 The roadmap also features courses that are recommended for salespersons to attend as well as courses in specialised areas for salespersons who wish to pursue more in-depth learning.

- **Recommended CPD Courses** mainly focus on government regulations relating to property transactions and estate agency work, including latest regulatory changes and updates like CEA’s Practice Guidelines on the Professional Service Manual (PSM).

- **Special Interest CPD Courses** may include selected topics on commercial or industrial property, collective/en bloc sale, dispute resolution, among others.
### Table 1: Example of Level 1 Core CPD Courses

|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| For Salespersons at Initial / Intermediate Level to acquire Professional Knowledge | • Professional Ethics
• Ethical Responsibilities of Salespersons incorporating Code of Ethics & Professional Client Care *(Recommended)*
• Estate Agents Act and Regulations *(Recommended)* | • Rules, Policies and Procedures
- HDB Resale / Subletting Transactions
- Private Residential Property Transactions (Sale & Lease)
- CPF and Taxation Policies *(Recommended)*
• Conveyancing Knowledge for Sale Transactions / Law pertaining to Tenancy *(Recommended)*
• Personal Data Protection Act and its impact on Industry *(Recommended)*
• Rules, Policies & Procedures for Commercial / Industrial / Foreign Property Transactions (Sale & Lease) *(Special Interest)* | • CEA Practice Guidelines such as:
- Professional Service Manual *(Recommended)*
- Prevention of Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism *(Recommended)*
- Ethical Advertising
- Use of Prescribed Estate Agency Agreement Forms
- Options To Purchase (OTPs) and Sale and Purchase Agreements
• Real Estate Seminars / Congress on core subjects |
### Table 2: Example of Level 2 Core CPD Courses

|---------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| For Salespersons at Advanced Level / Team Leaders to acquire in-depth understanding of Professional Knowledge / Problem Solving and Management Skills to Manage a Team | • Professional Ethics  
• Ethical Responsibilities of Salespersons incorporating Code of Ethics & Professional Client Care *(Recommended)*  
• Estate Agents Act and Regulations *(Recommended)*  
• Code of Practice for Estate Agents incorporating proper systems control over supervision of salespersons and ensuring compliance *(Recommended)* | • Rules, Policies and Procedures  
- HDB Resale / Subletting Transactions  
- Private Residential Property Transactions (Sale & Lease) *(Recommended)*  
- CPF and Taxation Policies *(Recommended)*  
• Rules, Policies & Procedures for Commercial / Industrial / Foreign Property Transactions (Sale & Lease) *(Recommended)*  
• Conveyancing Knowledge for Sale Transactions / Law pertaining to Tenancy *(Recommended)*  
• Personal Data Protection Act and its impact on Industry *(Recommended)*  
• Government legislation pertaining to real estate e.g. Housing Developers (Control & Licensing) Act, Land Titles Act, Land Titles (Strata) Act (e.g. on collective / en bloc sale matters) *(Special Interest)* | • CEA Practice Guidelines such as:  
- Professional Service Manual *(Recommended)*  
- Prevention of Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism *(Recommended)*  
- Ethical Advertising  
- Use of Prescribed Estate Agency Agreement Forms  
- OTPs and Sale and Purchase Agreements  
• Complaints Management & Dispute Resolution *(Special Interest)*  
• Real Estate Seminars / Congress on core subjects |
Table 3: Example of Level 3 Core CPD Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th><strong>C1</strong>: Professional Ethics, Estate Agents Act and Regulations</th>
<th><strong>C2</strong>: Laws, Government Policies and Regulations related to Estate Agency Work</th>
<th><strong>C3</strong>: Practice-Related Knowledge and Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| For KEOs and Practising Directors/Partners and Salespersons at Senior Management Level to explore finer details of real estate disciplines, advance professional knowledge and develop Leadership and Key Management Skills | • Professional Ethics  
• Ethical Responsibilities of Salespersons incorporating Code of Ethics & Professional Client Care *(Recommended)*  
• Estate Agents Act and Regulations *(Recommended)*  
• Code of Practice for Estate Agents incorporating proper systems control over business, corporate governance, recruitment, retention, discipline control, management and supervision of salespersons and ensuring compliance *(Recommended)* | • Conveyancing Knowledge for Sale Transactions / Law pertaining to Tenancy *(Recommended)*  
• Personal Data Protection Act and its impact on Industry *(Recommended)*  
• Rules, Policies & Procedures for Commercial / Industrial / Foreign Property Transactions (Sale & Lease) *(Recommended)*  
• Collective / en bloc sale *(Special Interest)*  
• Government legislation pertaining to real estate e.g. Planning Guidelines *(Special Interest)* | • CEA Practice Guidelines such as:  
- Professional Service Manual *(Recommended)*  
- Prevention of Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism *(Recommended)*  
- Ethical Advertising  
- Use of Prescribed Estate Agency Agreement Forms  
• Complaints Management & Dispute Resolution *(Recommended)*  
• KEO Seminars / Real Estate Seminars / Congress on core subjects |

6. **What is the Content of CPD Activity for Non-Core Subjects?**

6.1 Non-core CPD subjects are also part of the CPD Scheme and can be included as 3 out of the mandatory 6-credit hours requirement per CPD cycle. Non-core subjects target at raising the skills and professionalism and are no less important.

6.2 Learning activities such as enhancing marketing techniques, IT, managerial, supervisory and interpersonal skills are considered non-core subjects.
7. **Who will assess non-core CPD activities?**

7.1 KEOs have the responsibility to ensure that their salespersons comply with the regulatory requirements of the CPD scheme. As CEA will not be approving non-core CPD activities, KEOs need to assess the relevance of activities undertaken by their salespersons and make sure that their non-core CPD hours are in line with CEA’s requirements set out in this guideline. Examples of undesirable activities are those which seek to hype up the market and run contrary to or exploit opportunities in government’s policies.

7.2 To assist KEOs in their assessment, further elaboration is provided on the 6 identified non-core CPD topics as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Core CPD topics</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>N1: Marketing skills and techniques</strong></td>
<td>• Sales and Marketing techniques which enable a salesperson to effectively reach out to potential customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible topics include understanding ethical online marketing and consumer research, and property market trends/forecast/analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N2: Business management</strong></td>
<td>• Activities suitable for KEOs and key personnel in improving overall efficiency of company’s organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible topics include work process improvement, HR development and strategic business planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N3: Real estate finance related services</strong></td>
<td>• Finance-related knowledge in managing business operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible topics include effective business cost management, financial analysis for business operations, finance control and audits for business operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Finance-related knowledge to complement on-the-ground estate agency work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible topics include financial loan calculations and understanding investment returns related to real estate such as capital appreciation, rental yields, valuation, fund management and REITs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N4: Information technology (IT)</strong></td>
<td>• IT-related knowledge which facilitates effective estate agent operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Possible topics include networking operations for sales management, development of systems which aid in estate agency work e.g. website designs, learning IT programmes which enhances business operations, such as record keeping of transactions and CPD attendances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Core CPD topics | Guidelines
---|---
**N5: Management and supervisory skills** | • Soft skills which promote effective HR resource management. Suitable for KEOs and senior management.  
• Possible topics include leadership development, resolving conflicts within organisation and understanding teamwork.

**N6: Interpersonal skills** | • Soft skills training activities which raise service delivered by salesperson to enhance customer satisfaction.  
• Possible topics include client relationship management, effective communication, negotiation techniques and complaints handling.

Note: Core subjects serve to raise the professional competency and effectiveness of KEOs, practising directors/partners/salespersons; while non-core subjects target at enhancing their skills. If the coverage of core subjects proposed by activity provider is not substantive to qualify as a core CPD activity, where appropriate, it can be classified as non-core CPD activity. Non-core CPD learning activities are no less important.

8. **What are the Principles and Guidelines for CPD Credit Hours?**

8.1 All CPD activities are assigned CPD credit hours based on the nature and content of each activity and contact hours. Time spent on tea-breaks, ice-breaking, quiz, test, etc cannot be regarded as contact hours.

8.2 We encourage diversified learning. Unless there are significant policy changes during the same CPD cycle, for salespersons who attend core CPD activities under the same topic by the same trainer/provider more than once within the same CPD cycle, their repeated attendance of such core CPD activities would not be counted towards the CPD requirement. Hence, salespersons should take part in at least two different core CPD activities per year to expand on their knowledge, rather than chalking up the CPD hours through the same CPD activity. Based on this principle, the CPD credit hours guidelines are as follow:

8.2.1 Usually, one CPD credit hour will be awarded for each contact hour of formal classroom learning. There is a cap of 2 CPD credit hours for each core activity undertaken, regardless of the number of hours per session.

8.2.2 For a full-day course/seminar/lecture/workshop approved to be recognised as a core activity, CEA will award a maximum of 2 CPD credit hours per day.

8.2.3 For non-core subject CPD courses, activity providers and KEOs can assess and determine the number of CPD credit hours, following the same guidelines as prescribed at 8.2.1 and 8.2.2.
8.2.4 The acceptable learning modes are listed in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Mode</th>
<th>CPD Credit Hours Guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attending seminars/ lectures/ workshops</td>
<td>• As according to guidelines at 8.2.1 and 8.2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending courses leading to a certificate or academic qualification related to real estate industry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending local conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending overseas conferences (conducted by foreign organisations) endorsed by the industry associations, viz. IEA, SAEA, SISV and REDAS (non-core only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching RES / REA courses / CPD activities</td>
<td>• Max. 2 core CPD credit hours per year for RES/REA trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1 CPD credit hour per activity for trainers of CPD activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-based distance learning</td>
<td>• Not accepted due to difficulty in verifying actual participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. What are the Responsibilities of KEOs in complying with CPD Requirement?

9.1 KEOs are required to:

i. Communicate to their salespersons that they need to:

   a. Fulfil at least 6 mandatory CPD credit hours per CPD cycle, of which at least 3 CPD credit hours must be on core subjects and the balance can be on non-core subjects; and
   b. Attend at least one core CPD course under each of three categories over three consecutive CPD cycles.

These are regulatory requirements, failing which their registration renewal will be affected. CPD requirement is enforced on a yearly basis, notwithstanding the licensing/registration period.

ii. Communicate to their salespersons that core subjects are recognised only if prior approval has been given by CEA.
iii. Learning activities of non-core subjects must be in line with CEA’s requirements.

iv. Communicate to their salespersons that they have to maintain their own records of CPD training. From time to time, CEA may do sampling checks and require proof of participation in the form of:

   a. Certificate of Attendance issued by Activity Provider; or
   b. Letter of Confirmation of Attendance given by Activity Provider

These certificates or letters of confirmation should indicate clearly the name of salesperson, CEA registration number, title of learning activity, core course classification, course level and date(s) of attendance.

v. With effect from 16 Sep 2013, industry associations and Approved Course Providers (ACPs) conducting courses that accord salespersons with non-core CPD credit hours shall comply with the new requirement of informing and obtaining CEA’s concurrence if the proposed activity is open to the public and/or the industry and intended to be publicised on mass media channels. Estate agents’ internal/in-house seminars and conventions are excluded as they are not allowed to advertise/conduct non-core CPD courses to salespersons from other estate agents.

vi. Monitor their salespersons’ compliance with CPD requirements and keep track of their CPD attendance hours throughout the year to prevent any bunching effect towards end of each CPD cycle. Should the KEOS suspect any falsification or cheating of CPD records, they should do due diligent checks with the Activity Provider if necessary.

vii. Assess the number of CPD hours for non-core subjects based on CEA’s guidelines, if CPD hours are not determined by Activity Providers.

viii. Key in required information into CEA’s Estate Agent System. KEOS need not retain the individual attendance certificates.

**Important Note**: CEA will conduct random audit checks on estate agents to ensure compliance with CPD Scheme.

### 10. CPD Cycle

10.1 New Salespersons are exempted from CPD requirement for the first CPD cycle but will need to comply with the CPD requirement for the next and subsequent CPD cycles.

10.2 For KEOS, Practising Directors/Partners and Salespersons who leave the industry, he or she will be required to fulfil the following requirement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KEOS, Practising Directors/ Partners and Salespersons Who:</th>
<th>CPD / Exam Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left the industry for up to 2 years</td>
<td>Required to fulfil same number of CPD hours as if the salesperson did not leave the industry, before applying for registration*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEOs, Practising Directors/Partners and Salespersons Who:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPD / Exam Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left the industry for more than 2 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In addition, if a former salesperson applies for registration in the last 3 months of a CPD cycle, he will be required to fulfil the current year’s CPD requirement before submitting the application.

10.3 Below is an illustration of the CPD requirement for a salesperson who left the industry for up to 2 years:

Example: Salesperson left the industry in Sep 2012 without fulfilling the CPD requirements in 2012 and is reapplying for registration in July 2014. He is required to fulfil 16 CPD credit hours, of which at least 8 credit hours must be on core subjects, before applying for registration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPD Cycle</th>
<th>CPD Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Min. core CPD credit hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1Jan 2012 to 31 Dec 2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013*</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 Jan 2013 to 30 Sep 2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1 Oct 2013 to 30 Sep 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CPD credit hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>Min. 8 core CPD credit hours</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salesperson must fulfil before applying for registration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* From year 2013 onwards, each CPD cycle shall end of Sep of each year. Hence, the 2013 CPD cycle will start from 1 Jan – 30 Sep 2013 (9 months) to tie in with the licence registration renewal/continuation in Oct 2013. Subsequent CPD cycles will resume the 12-month period from every 1 Oct of the year to 30 Sep of the following year, e.g. 1 Oct 2013 – 30 Sep 2014.

11. CPD Information

11.1 The CPD Guidelines are posted on the CEA website at www.cea.gov.sg and updated regularly. Activity providers, KEOs and salespersons should refer to them from time to time for the latest updates.

11.2 CEA posts the list of approved core CPD learning activities conducted by the industry associations, government agencies, tertiary institutions, etc. on our website.

11.3 For non-core CPD activities, they can be any of the courses/workshops conducted by the industry associations, academic institutions as well as any publicly available courses as long as they meet the non-core subjects guidelines stipulated. KEOs and salespersons can source for such courses on their own. Estate agencies’ in-house
training can be core CPD activity (with approval needed) or non-core CPD activity (no approval needed but need to adhere to CEA’s guidelines).

Council for Estate Agencies
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