



## **CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CODE AND GUIDELINES**

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## 1. GLOSSARY AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 1.1. This document must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Counsel Association Memorandum of Incorporation and the Corporate Counsel Association Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- 1.2. Unless otherwise stated, or the context indicates to the contrary, terms, words and expressions defined and used under the Corporate Counsel Association MOI and Code and used in this document shall have the same meanings and descriptions when used in this document as have been ascribed to them under the Corporate Counsel Association MOI and the Code.
- 1.3. **Board** – means the Board of directors of the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa NPC.
- 1.4. **Corporate Counsel Association** – means the Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa NPC, a Company which was incorporated on 12 September 2019 as a Non-Profit Company as defined in the Companies Act, 2008 and which represents Corporate Counsel and the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa.
- 1.5. **Certified Corporate Counsel professional** – means a member of the Corporate Counsel Association who has undertaken the Corporate Counsel Association assessment process and has met the Corporate Counsel Association standards and requirements which have been set for the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa and who are permitted to refer to themselves as certified 'Corporate Legal Support Practitioner' or 'Corporate Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate Senior Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate General Counsel', as the case may be, and use the designations: 'Corporate Legal Support Practitioner' or 'Corporate Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate Senior Legal Counsel' or 'Corporate General Counsel', as the case may be.
- 1.6. **Client** – means the person, entity or employee who makes use of the expertise and skill of Corporate Counsel and/or a Corporate Legal Support Practitioner.
- 1.7. **Code** – means the Corporate Counsel Association Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct.
- 1.8. **Corporate Counsel** – means qualified legal practitioners who are employed by a Client or Employer for the purpose of providing that Client or Employer with a dedicated source of Legal Services and Advice in exchange for a salary or remuneration, and phrases and names such as "legal advisor", "general counsel", "in-house counsel" and "legal counsel" attract the same meaning.
- 1.9. **Corporate Counsel profession** – means the profession made up of Corporate Counsel and Corporate Legal Support Practitioners who are employed by a Client or Employer for the purposes of providing that Client or Employer with a dedicated source of Legal Services and Advice.



- 1.10. **CPD** – means continuous professional development, being the systematic maintenance, improvement and broadening of one’s business and legal knowledge, experience, skills and the development of personal qualities helpful in the execution of one’s legal professional duties, whereby a person makes a deliberate effort to ensure that his/her skills, knowledge and professional competence are kept current and in line with generally acceptable professional standards.
- 1.11. **CPD hours** – means 1 CPD point for every hour of CPD undertaken by the Member or certified Corporate Counsel professional.
- 1.12. **Employer** – means the person or entity who/which employs and makes use of the expertise and skill of Corporate Counsel and Corporate Legal Support Practitioners.
- 1.13. **Legal profession** – means the profession made up of persons holding specific legal skills, qualifications and expertise, including, without detracting from the generality thereof: Corporate Legal Support Practitioner, legally qualified legal practitioners, admitted legal practitioners, Corporate Counsel, state advocates, public prosecutors, magistrates, judges and/or legal advisors who provide Legal Services and Advice to the public and/or the private sector.
- 1.14. **Legal Services and Advice** – means the services provided to a Client or Employer by Corporate Counsel and/or Corporate Legal Support Practitioners.
- 1.15. **Legal Support Practitioner** – means paralegals, risk managers, assistant company secretaries / company secretaries, compliance officers, internal audit, HR legal advisors, legal interns and legal secretaries and assistants who are employed by a Client or Employer for the purposes of providing that Client or Employer with a dedicated source of Legal Services and Advice.
- 1.16. **Member / Corporate Counsel Member** – means a registered member of the Corporate Counsel Association.
- 1.17. **MOI** – means the Memorandum of Incorporation of the Corporate Counsel Association.
- 1.18. **Professional designation** – means a title or status conferred by a professional body in recognition of a person’s expertise and/or right to practice in an occupational field
- 1.19. **Reporting Period** – shall mean the period between 1 January and 31 December of each year.
- 1.20. **South African Qualifications Authority (“SAQA”)** - means the Authority established by the National Qualifications Framework Act (Act 67 of 2008).



## **2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1. The Corporate Counsel Association of South Africa is the SAQA-recognised professional body representing the Corporate Counsel profession across South Africa. This profession encompasses a wide range of roles including Corporate Counsel, paralegals, risk managers, company secretaries, compliance officers, internal auditors, HR legal advisors, legal interns, legal secretaries, and assistants, operating in both the public and private sectors.
- 2.2. The Corporate Counsel Association's vision is to elevate the standing and value of Corporate Counsel nationally and internationally and to be the association of choice for all Corporate Counsel professionals in South Africa.
- 2.3. The Corporate Counsel Association is committed to upholding the highest standards of legal and business integrity, ethics, and professionalism, which underpin the profession and are expected of all practitioners, including Corporate Counsel Association Members. Ethical and professional conduct is a cornerstone of the legal profession, requiring members to act with integrity, impartiality, and in full compliance with the law, free from conflicts of interest or undue influence.
- 2.4. To support this mission, the Corporate Counsel Association is dedicated to the continuous development and improvement of the profession through research, education, advocacy, recognition of prior learning, and professional upliftment. The Corporate Counsel Association ensures its Members are equipped with the necessary ethical foundations, legal knowledge, and practical skills to effectively meet their professional responsibilities. Prior learning and professional experience are formally recognised to enable members to apply their competencies in the workplace.
- 2.5. A comprehensive Code of Ethical Standards and Behavioural Guidelines, aligned with the Corporate Counsel Association's Memorandum of Incorporation (Mol), reinforces a culture of ethical conduct and accountability.

## **3. OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1. Overarching Purpose**

The Corporate Counsel Association exists to promote the collective interests and professional value of Corporate Counsel and to highlight the diverse and evolving roles they fulfil. Its key goals include:

- Acting as the recognised voice and public representative of the Corporate Counsel profession in South Africa.
- Providing leadership and support to in-house legal practitioners.
- Empowering members with resources, networking, and tools to enhance service to their organisations.
- Establishing, upholding, and developing common professional and ethical standards.



- Promoting proficiency, credibility, and professional recognition of Corporate Counsel in both public and private sectors.
- Regulating qualifications and standards for professional designation.
- Monitoring and responding to national and international trends in in-house legal services delivery.

### 3.2. **Strategic Objectives**

Aligned with its Mol, the Corporate Counsel Association pursues the following strategic objectives:

#### 3.2.1. **Establish a Unified National Framework**

Develop a single, integrated national framework for qualifications, learning achievements, prior learnings, skills, and professional expertise within the Corporate Counsel profession.

#### 3.2.2. **Promote Access, Mobility, and Progression**

Facilitate access to, mobility within, and progression through education, training, and career pathways, including the recognition and integration of workplace-based prior learning into formal qualifications.

#### 3.2.3. **Enhance Quality of Education and Training**

Continuously improve the quality, relevance, and recognition of education and training for Corporate Counsel professionals.

#### 3.2.4. **Advance Transformation and Redress**

Actively support the redress of historical inequities in education, training, and employment, with particular focus on previously disadvantaged groups.

#### 3.2.5. **Support Personal and Economic Development**

Contribute to the holistic personal development of Corporate Counsel Association Members and foster the social and economic growth of the Corporate Counsel profession at large.

### 3.3. **Recognition and Development of the Profession**

The Corporate Counsel Association voluntarily undertakes responsibility for:

- Recognising and enhancing the credibility of the Corporate Counsel profession.
- Acknowledging and crediting prior workplace learning, irrespective of formal qualifications.
- Driving continuous professional development through a structured, progressive system integrating:



- Legal-related educational outcomes;
- Formal qualifications;
- Workplace experience and learning;
- Training curricula, workshops, informal courses, development programmes, on-the-job training, and best practice guidelines.

These initiatives are delivered collaboratively with select legal education and service providers and are rolled out nationally for the benefit of Corporate Counsel professionals, particularly Corporate Counsel Association Members.

#### **3.4. Professional Designation Framework**

The Corporate Counsel Association oversees four coordinated and integrated sub-frameworks, each corresponding to a specific professional designation or level within the Corporate Counsel profession. These frameworks include qualification standards, experiential criteria, assessment requirements, and development pathways, and are governed by the Corporate Counsel Association Board and Secretariat.

#### **3.5. Ethical, Social, and Global Commitments**

To strengthen public trust and professional accountability, the Corporate Counsel Association aims to:

- Promote public confidence through regulated recognition systems and thorough assessment procedures for professional designation.
- Encourage ethical conduct, professional responsibility, and social accountability within the profession.
- Ensure Members provide ethical, reliable legal services to organisations, communities, and individuals.
- Uphold standards protecting the public from substandard legal services and professional malpractice.
- Foster respect for the Corporate Counsel profession nationally and internationally.
- Encourage adoption of international best practices.
- Support the development of a national career guidance system for Corporate Counsel professionals.
- Facilitate legitimate access to profession-related data while safeguarding confidentiality and privacy.
- Promote Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as a core professional obligation.

#### **3.6. Commitment to Transformation and Justice**

The Corporate Counsel Association embraces and promotes transformation within the legal sector, with commitments to:



- Diversity and inclusivity;
- Recognition of prior learning;
- Environmental sustainability;
- Broader social justice.

#### **4. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THIS POLICY**

- 4.1 The knowledge required to function effectively within the Corporate Counsel profession is continually expanding and evolving—primarily due to increased regulation and a constantly changing legal and regulatory environment. Ongoing development of professional competence through the enhancement of knowledge and skills is essential. This not only ensures the delivery of high-quality legal services to clients and employers, but also helps maintain the Corporate Counsel Association’s professional standards, uphold public trust, and protect the status of a Corporate Counsel Association Member’s certified professional designation.
- 4.2 This document outlines the Corporate Counsel Association’s CPD policy and procedures, which all Corporate Counsel Association Members are required to follow in order to sustain the abilities, knowledge, and skills expected of Corporate Counsel professionals.
- 4.3 To uphold high standards of ethical and professional conduct, all Corporate Counsel Association Members are obligated to actively engage in Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- 4.4 This Code sets out the Corporate Counsel Association’s requirements for CPD, which apply to all Members and to any individual who has been awarded a Corporate Counsel Association certified professional designation.

#### **5. CPD PRINCIPLES**

- 5.1 The purpose of allocating a duty on all Corporate Counsel Association Members to undertake CPD hours per annum is to ensure that the Corporate Counsel profession, and more in particular, all certified Corporate Counsel Association professionals, develop and maintain professional competence necessary to ensure:
- 5.1.1 high quality service to Clients and to Employers and other stakeholders; and
- 5.1.2 strengthen public trust and competence in the Corporate Counsel profession.
- 5.2 CPD will ensure that Corporate Counsel and Corporate Legal Support Practitioners are able to:
- 5.2.1 function effectively and maintain and improve their competence;





- 5.2.2 continuously learn and keep abreast of applicable laws; legal developments and the changing legal environment thus ensuring that their competencies are maintained at its highest level;
  - 5.2.3 ensure the improvement and enhancement of their knowledge and skills as well as the development of professional and personal qualities;
  - 5.2.4 ensure the professional execution of their duties as Corporate Counsel or Corporate Legal Support Practitioners including the provision of Legal Services and Advice;
  - 5.2.5 throughout one's career as a Corporate Counsel or Corporate Legal Support Practitioner and as a Legal professional, keep abreast of developments and knowledge in one's area of expertise in order to maintain one's competence and professional standards.
- 5.3 CPD activity will assist in:
- 5.3.1 maintaining core skills;
  - 5.3.2 acquiring and maintaining of new technical and special skills and expertise; and
  - 5.3.3 enabling the transfer of legal skills that are used in the Legal profession.

## **6. APPLICATION**

- 6.1 This Code will apply to all Corporate Counsel Association Members.
- 6.2 The Corporate Counsel Association and its Members are required to adopt and promote this Code which is vital to the credibility and good reputation of the Corporate Counsel Association, the Corporate Counsel Association Members and the Corporate Counsel profession.
- 6.3 All Corporate Counsel Association Members must maintain a record of their CPD activities and report the hours completed to the Corporate Counsel Association in respect of the relevant reporting period.
- 6.4 Notwithstanding the need for confidentiality of Members' personal information, the Corporate Counsel Association may provide a CPD compliance report of its Members or its certified Corporate Counsel professionals to any third party as and when requested for the purpose of proving compliance.

## **7. CPD REQUIREMENTS AND REPORTING PERIOD**

- 7.1 CPD is mandatory for all Corporate Counsel Association Members and certified Corporate Counsel Association professionals.
- 7.2 Members of the Corporate Counsel Association, and certified Corporate Counsel professionals will be required to record their CPD activities for a one-year cycle. The cycle runs from 1 January to 31 December of each year i.e. the "Reporting Period".



- 7.3 One hour of CPD will earn the Member and certified Corporate Counsel Professional 1 CPD point (a minimum of 50 minutes constitutes one point). Time used for registration, welcome, breakfast / tea / lunch breaks and any other topics which would not constitute relevant CPD hours and are excluded. If the duration of the programme is between 30 and 50 minutes, a half CPD point can be claimed.
- 7.4 Corporate Counsel Association Members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals are required to complete the minimum number of points of relevant CPD activities detailed below in a one-year period (1 January – 31 December), which may consist of a combination of verifiable and non-verifiable CPD activities as follows:

	Total points	Verifiable	Non-verifiable
<b>Non-certified Corporate Counsel Association Members</b>	5	3	2
<b>Corporate Legal Support Practitioner</b>	20	10	10
<b>Corporate Legal Counsel</b>	20	10	10
<b>Corporate Senior Legal Counsel</b>	15	10	5
<b>Corporate General Counsel</b>	10	5	5

- 7.5 It is the Corporate Counsel Association member and certified Corporate Counsel professional's ethical and professional responsibility to accurately record their CPD points.
- 7.6 Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals are required to maintain their CPD points which could be reviewed at any given time. The onus rests with each Corporate Counsel Association member and certified Corporate Counsel professionals to record and submit their CPD points to the Corporate Counsel Association. The method of recording CPD points will be by way of e-mail.
- 7.7 Corporate Counsel Association members who register as members after 1 October in a particular year will only be required to commence with CPD in January the following year.

## 8. RECORDING CPD POINTS

Each event described under clause 14 below, will carry corresponding CPD points. Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals will have the right to assign the corresponding points upon attendance of that particular event which should be thereafter recorded as per clause 8 below.



## **9. REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING**

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the Corporate Counsel Association member and certified Corporate Counsel professional to maintain a record of their CPD activities. Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals must retain any documentation that will support the verification of recorded CPD activities.
- 9.2 Each Corporate Counsel Association member and certified Corporate Counsel professional must ensure that they report their earned CPD points to the Corporate Counsel Association for the previous year at the end of January of the following year using the prescribed reporting form attached as annexure "A".

## **10. NON-COMPLIANCE**

- 10.1 Non-compliance with this policy will be dealt with as per the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 10.2 Misstated or fraudulent reporting of CPD points will be treated as a separate offence reportable to the Disciplinary Committee as a violation of the Corporate Counsel Association Code of Ethics.
- 10.3 On receipt of the report referred to in clause 9 above, if a Corporate Counsel Association member or certified Corporate Counsel professional's claimed points are deemed inadequate / unsubstantiated, the individual will be allowed thirty (30) days to earn and report relevant points. These points may only be utilised for the Reporting Period being evaluated and may not be claimed for prior or subsequent Reporting Periods.

## **11. AUDIT**

- 11.1 The Corporate Counsel Association may conduct random audits of Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals for CPD points claimed by them. The selection criteria for Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals to be audited will be at the discretion of the Corporate Counsel Association Chief Executive Officer. Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals selected for audit will be notified by the Corporate Counsel Association and will be required to submit CPD documentation to the Corporate Counsel Association within thirty (30) days.
- 11.2 As part of the annual recertification process, certified Corporate Counsel professionals must make a declaration in the required format with regard to their compliance with the CPD requirements as determined by the Corporate Counsel Association Board of Directors from time to time.



## **12. EXEMPTION OR DEFERRAL OF CPD REQUIREMENTS**

- 12.1 A Corporate Counsel Association member or certified Corporate Counsel professional may request an exemption or deferral of CPD requirements, due to extenuating circumstances such as a medical diagnosis, temporary or permanent disability or parental leave.
- 12.2 Parental leave will be limited to four (4) calendar months in a Reporting Period.
- 12.3 Exemption requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 12.4 Written requests must be made to the Corporate Counsel Association and supporting documentation must be submitted with the request. If the request for deferral is granted, the balance of the CPD requirement will be carried over and added to the requirements for the next CPD Reporting Period, effectively increasing the CPD requirement of the subsequent CPD Reporting Period.
- 12.5 Exemption or deferral applications will only be considered for a maximum of two (2) consecutive CPD Reporting Periods.

## **13. NON-TRANSFERABILITY OF CPD POINTS**

- 13.1 Any points in excess of the requirement for a specific Reporting Period may not be applied to subsequent Reporting Periods.
- 13.2 Points earned for any one programme may not be split between two (2) Reporting Periods.

## **14. QUALIFYING PROGRAMS**

Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals may claim points for all CPD activities which are relevant to their knowledge, skills and abilities. The Corporate Counsel Association considers the following activities acceptable for CPD purposes which is by no means an exhaustive list. Corporate Counsel Association members and certified Corporate Counsel professionals should contact the Corporate Counsel Association to clarify whether another activity not listed below may be accepted as a CPD activity.



CPD category (Type of CPD)	Definition	Verifiable or non-verifiable and evidence required	CPD points awarded
<b>Event Participation</b>			
Participation in legal seminars, presentations and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of information to delegates with interaction generally limited to question-and-answer sessions;</li> <li>• A workshop that involves participant interaction via activities, role plays, etc.;</li> <li>• Both accredited and non-accredited workshops will be accepted, and the workshop may or may not have an assessment linked to it;</li> <li>• A meeting of Corporate Counsel Association members, representatives or delegates from the Legal Services industry.</li> <li>• Topics may cover legal theory or soft skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed attendance register;</li> <li>• Certificate of attendance / completion;</li> <li>• Handouts received at the event;</li> <li>• Written notes made by delegate at event;</li> <li>• Evidence of assessment successfully completed.</li> </ul>	For each hour 1 point will be awarded.
<b>Credit-bearing courses</b>			
Satisfactory completion of credit bearing courses presented by educational / training bodies	SAQA and Internationally registered and credit-bearing courses offered are accepted. University courses.	Results sheet indicating successful completion.	10 points per course and/or subject.
<b>Online Programmes</b>			
E-learning Webinars	These programmes are defined as internet based which enable transfer of legal knowledge and legal skills, using a computer. These programmes are offered through recognized e-learning platform(s) and providers.	Certificate of completion; or Proof of registration and/or participation.	1 point is awarded per hour completed



CPD category (Type of CPD)	Definition	Verifiable or non-verifiable and evidence required	CPD points awarded
<b>Training others / transfer of skills</b>			
Presenting / Teaching / Lecturing on legal topics, including soft skills and theory.	<p>Corporate Counsel acts as instructor, discussion leader and/or speaker, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings or engagements that are directed to legal professionals or Clients / Employers;</li> <li>• Corporate Counsel Association courses;</li> <li>• University courses;</li> <li>• Courses presented in-house.</li> </ul>	Course outline and feedback from delegates or participants;	3 points per hour spent on presenting / teaching / lecturing on legal topics, including soft skills and theory.
<b>Examinations</b>			
Professional exams	Any licensing exam and any professional exam that is a requirement for regulatory / professional certification.	Proof of successful completion.	10 points per exam successfully completed.
<b>Corporate Counsel Association and other Legal Professional Training</b>			
Attendance at Corporate Counsel Association and other Legal Professional Training	<p>Training undertaken during Corporate Counsel Association sessions, workshops and seminars or other Legal related training.</p> <p>Training may or may not include assessment. Training may or may not be face to face. Topics covered could include Legal knowledge and/or skills and abilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed attendance register;</li> <li>• Certificate of attendance / completion;</li> <li>• Handouts received at the event; or</li> <li>• Written notes made by delegate at event.</li> </ul>	1 point per hour.



CPD category (Type of CPD)	Definition	Verifiable or non-verifiable and evidence required	CPD points awarded
<b>Corporate Counsel Association committees and workgroups</b>			
Corporate Counsel Association committees and workgroups	Attendance of meetings and participation in working groups and task teams.	Written confirmation by the Corporate Counsel Association of attendance / attendance register	1 point per hour.
<b>Authorship</b>			
Authorship	Design and development of any material on a legal topic, including technical articles, papers or books.	Printed/electronic evidence of publication of article/material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Point for publication less than 10 pages;</li> <li>• 5 points for publication up to 50 pages;</li> <li>• 10 points per publication over 50 pages.</li> </ul>
<b>Pro-bono participation</b>			
Pro-bono participation	Participation in pro-bono activities	Suitable documentation illustrating participation in pro-bono activities.	5 points per hour.