

Certified Professional Designations



Contents

- 1. Introduction 2
- 2. What is CPD? 2
- 3. How will CPD help me? 2
- 4. What is a professional designation? 2
- 5. OPSA Professional Designations 3
- 6. How do I get a designation? 3
- 7. What are the minimum qualification and experience requirements? 3
- 8. What are the costs involved? 4
- 9. How do I apply for a designation? 4
- 10. Once I have been awarded the professional designation, how do I earn CPD points? 4
- 11. How will OPSA know what learning I have done and how many CPD points I have earned? 6
- 12. Audit Process 7
- 13. Late Submissions 7
- 14. Appeals 7
- 15. What support will OPSA offer applicants? 8
- 16. What happens if I do not earn 20 CPD points within the 2-year period? 8

Certified Professional Designations for Office Professionals in South Africa

1. Introduction

OPSA's mission is to promote and develop performance standards and roles for administrative professionals and is committed to:

- Providing guidance and advice for continued personal and professional growth
- Recognising members' achievements through the OPSA Awards and other ad-hoc competitions.
- Providing members with opportunities for mentoring and networking
- Building the administrative and secretarial profession by attracting the best talent to office occupations
- Helping employers understand the true value administrative staff bring to their organisation

2. What is CPD?

CPD stands for Continuing Professional Development. It is a commitment to lifelong learning and it refers to the process of tracking and documenting the skills, knowledge and experience that you gain both formally and informally. It is a record of what you experience, learn and then apply.

3. How will CPD help me?

Participating in CPD helps you to reflect, review and document your learning and assists you in developing and updating your professional knowledge and skills. It will give your employer the assurance that you have the skills required for the job as well as show your commitment to lifelong learning and professional development.

4. What is a professional designation?

A professional designation is earned by a person in a particular field by meeting certain requirements, and successfully completing an assessment to show competence in performing a certain job or task. It is an official endorsement from a professional body of your skills and experience.

An OPSA professional designation is valid for 2 years. In order to keep the designation valid, a total of 20 CPD points (see below) must to be earned in the 2-year period to show your commitment to

lifelong learning and to ensure that you have kept yourself up to date with the skills and knowledge required in the workplace.

5. OPSA Professional Designations

In line with global practice, OPSA has introduced three Professional Designations for our members:

1. Certified Office Professional (COP)
2. Certified Managerial Office Professional (CMOP)
3. Certified Office Manager (COM)

These professional designations give employers an indication of the levels of competence of the members who qualify for them. Designations are awarded based on an assessment against a set of eligibility criteria. OPSA Professional Designations are internationally benchmarked.

6. How do I get a designation?

Applications for professional designations will be considered three times a year. Applicants are required to submit the application form with supporting documentation (as indicated on the application form), showing they meet the minimum qualification and experience requirements. Once the applicant has been approved, they will be sent a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) to complete. This must be completed within 3 (three) months. If you cannot complete the PoE within the stipulated time period, you may apply in writing to the CPD Director for an extension. Intakes for professional designations will be March, June and September.

Deadline dates for applications:

- March 2017: 22 February 2017
- June 2017: 25 May 2017
- September 2017: 25 August 2017

Once the completed PoE has been assessed, you will be notified of the outcome.

7. What are the minimum qualification and experience requirements?

Certified Office Administrator (COA)

- A matric certificate or a SAQA recognized NQF Level 3 Business Administration or Public Administration qualification
- Two to four years' practical work experience in an administrative role
- The successful completion of an industry related portfolio of evidence to determine the level of your skills

Certified Managerial Administrator (CMA)

- A SAQA recognized NQF Level 4 Business Administration or Public Administration qualification or higher
- Five to nine years' practical experience in an administrative role
- The successful completion of an industry related portfolio of evidence to determine the level of your skills

Certified Managerial Administrative Professional (CMAP)

- A SAQA recognized NQF Level 5 Business Administration or Public Administration qualification or higher
- Ten or more years' practical experience in an administrative role
- The successful completion of an industry related portfolio of evidence to determine the level of your skills

8. What are the costs involved?

If your application is approved, an annual professional membership fee of R1800.00 (Ex VAT) per annum becomes due before your designation can be awarded. This fee includes professional membership, 2 free workshops per annum, discounts to OPSA hosted events and other events and products as negotiated by with OPSA.

9. How do I apply for a designation?

If you wish to apply for a professional designation, download, complete and submit the form to cpd@opsa.org.za. You will be contacted by a member of the CPD Division and the journey will begin! (The application form can be downloaded from the website www.opsa.org.za).

10. Once I have been awarded the professional designation, how do I earn CPD points?

The designation is valid for a period of 2 years. Once you have been awarded the designation, you have made a commitment to continuous learning and are required to achieve 20 CPD points within the 2-year period.

CPD Points can be earned as follows:

Activity	Points allocated	Evidence required
OPSA endorsed short courses	2 points per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your certificates of attendance and/or competence The dates you attended training or conferencing The duration of the training and the name of the training provider
OPSA endorsed conferences	1 point per day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your certificates of attendance and/or competence The dates you attended training or conferencing The duration of the training and the name of the training provider
Coaching and mentoring (minimum of 10 hours)	2 points	A brief report co-signed by both the mentor and mentee. Full contact details of both parties must be provided so that the sessions can be verified.
Publishing articles in industry related publications	2 points	A copy of the publication where the article appeared and the date that it appeared.
Reading and responding to articles and participating in webinars	1 points	Written verification from organiser
Participating in relevant quizzes and surveys	1 point	Written verification from organiser
Attendance of industry related webinars and podcasts	1 point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verification of attendance of completion (usually sent via email) Session or course title and description Date and length
Formal education at a South African University	15 points (max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your certificates of attendance and/or competence The dates you attended training or conferencing The duration of the training and the name of the training provider
Facilitation of an OPSA endorsed program	3 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of the program A letter from the organizer confirming the event
Toastmasters or similar achievement recognition	3 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certificate of achievement Date of achievement

Activity	Points allocated	Evidence required
Microsoft Office Certification or similar software achievement recognition	5 points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your certificates of attendance and/or competence • The dates you attended training or conferencing • The duration of the training and the name of the training provider
Leadership positions within an association or committee – office bearer (minimum of 12 months) on committees and boards	5 points	A letter from the organization that includes the position held, primary duties of the position, and dates of term.
Community involvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through skills transfer – offering free workshops to administrative staff of community organisations • volunteer work in a community per year • an integral part of organising committee for an event held by OPSA 	3 points	Written verification (on letterhead) from the Chairperson/organizer of the program, dates, duration and type of involvement.

11. How will OPSA know what learning I have done and how many CPD points I have earned?

Once evidence of continuous learning has been submitted to OPSA at cpd@opsa.org.za, the information will be captured by the CPD Coordinator on the OPSA member database and an updated schedule will be emailed to you indicating your current status.

Some tips:

Keep track of your points: Once you have achieved your professional designation, start a spreadsheet (or something similar) to track points as earned. Set a goal to earn at least 10 points per year rather than wait and struggle to gain all the points at the end of the 2 years.

Not only will the spreadsheet help you stay on track, it will help you with your personal development planning.

Keep a file of supporting documentation: In addition to your spreadsheet of points earned, start a file of your supporting documentation (this can be asked for if an audit is required).

For all professional development, your supporting documentation must verify attendance and include:

- the subject and/or description of education
- date of completion
- length of education

For leadership positions and community involvement, attain a letter from the organization that includes:

- the position held
- primary duties of the position, and
- length of term served

12. Audit Process

In order to protect the integrity of OPSA professional membership and designations, OPSA will randomly audit a percentage of applications to renew professional membership. It is very important to document your professional development and leadership activities as suggested in point 11. If your application to renew your professional membership is audited, you will be required to verify, with supporting documentation, the activities listed on your spreadsheet. Additionally, you may be asked to submit supporting documentation if it is needed to determine eligibility of an activity.

13. Late Submissions

Members who have missed the date to renew professional membership are given a 30-day grace period in which they can submit a late application. No special permission is necessary if applying within the grace period. **It is important to note that the grace period is not extra time to accumulate points, it is additional time to submit the information.** All points submitted must be earned within the original 2 year period. Individuals are required to pay the OPSA Professional Membership fee of R1000.00, plus a R200 late fee when renewing their professional membership during the grace period. If the application is approved, professional membership will be backdated to the month/year originally due.

14. Appeals

Those who are beyond the 30-day grace period must submit an appeal before applying to renew their professional membership. This type of appeal is for those who experienced extenuating circumstances which prevented them from earning points or renewing their professional membership within the 2-year period. Examples include, but are not limited to, serious personal illness, serious illness of a family member, tragic event or long-term unemployment. If the appeal is accepted, the individual may be given additional time to earn points. Letters of appeal may be sent to

cpd@opsa.org.za and should include the circumstances, documentation, and your plan for gaining the required points.

15. What support will OPSA offer applicants?

- OPSA will host various events throughout the year that will focus on building the skills and knowledge of OPSA members and for which points will be allocated.
- OPSA will partner with training providers and points will be awarded to approved programs.
- OPSA will endorse and allocate points to workshops and conferences for approved programs.

All approved training programs, workshops and conferences will be advertised in Terrific Tuesday as well as on the website.

16. What happens if I do not earn 20 CPD points within the 2-year period?

If you do not earn 20 CPD points in the 2-year period, your professional membership with OPSA falls away. If you wish to re-apply for the designation, you will have to start the process from the beginning with an assessment. The onus is on you to ensure that you do continuous learning within the 2-year period and keep up to date with what is happening in the industry.

If you have any queries with regards to CPD or professional designations, please send your query to cpd@opsa.org.za.