



**The National Standard for
Continuous Professional Learning and Development
for Certified Management Accountants**

Approved May 3, 2003



The National Standard for the Accreditation of Certified Management Accountants

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**The National Standard
for Continuous Professional Learning and Development
for Certified Management Accountants**

Introduction

CMA Canada, a partnership of The Society of Management Accountants of Canada and The Societies/Order of Management Accountants of each province and territory, has established the Standard for Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Certified Management Accountants. This national standard includes member obligations, CMA Canada partner obligations and monitoring, reporting and compliance requirements, and the specifications and characteristics of each.

A standard is defined by the International Standardization Organization (ISO) as a documented agreement containing technical specifications or other precise criteria to be used consistently as rules, guidelines, or definitions of characteristics to ensure that materials, products, processes and services are fit for their purpose. A standard, however, is not framed with the intent to act as a restraint on programming, to limit innovation or freedom in design to meet the requirements of the standard nor to limit the properties of a program or service to those expressed in the standard.

Through its published National Standard for Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Certified Management Accountants, CMA Canada provides assurance that CMAs surpass customer expectations and demonstrate through their careers, the competencies of strategic financial management professionals.

Certified Management Accountants operate in the territory of management accounting, either as employees or consultants. *“The territory of management accounting is defined as that part of the management process that develops and uses financial and non-financial information for the purpose of adding value for customers, shareholders and other stakeholders in dynamic and competitive environments.”*

In order to provide greater specificity, interpretations of selected specifications used in the National Standard for the Standard for Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Certified Management Accountants will be provided as appendices to this document.

Certified Management Accountants are obligated by their Provincial/Territorial Society/Order ethical codes to demonstrate throughout their careers the competencies of strategic financial management professionals.

Attributes	Specifications	Characteristics
Aim	Certified Management Accountants are obligated by their Society's ethical code to develop and maintain the skills, knowledge and attributes expected of professional management accountants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Member obligations are expressed in all provincial or territorial ethical codes. ▪ The CMA Canada partner organizations will promote the professional obligations inherent in membership to all CMAs.
Design	This standard recognizes the skills, knowledge and attributes required of professional management accountants at various phases in their careers and assists them in identifying any deficiencies. ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CMA Strategic Management Accounting Practice Standards and Management Accounting Guidelines shape and describe the evolving skills, knowledge and attributes required of professional management accountants at various phases of their careers. ▪ The CMA Canada partner organizations will either directly provide relevant professional learning and development opportunities for CMAs or facilitate access to programs offered by other organizations to assist members at various stages of their careers.

¹ For illustrative purposes only a *Career Progression Model* is provided to indicate the changing professional requirements at different stages of a CMA's career. Additionally, members should consult CMA Canada publications on career management found on the CMA Canada Web site.

Attributes	Specifications	Characteristics
Monitoring and Reporting	<p>The CMA Canada partner organizations will monitor their members' professional learning and development activities.</p> <p>CMA's will maintain documentation of their professional learning and development activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitoring may include approving either providers of programs or specific programs. Professional learning and development opportunities through members' employers or firms should be viewed as equivalent to those available in the open market for the purpose of satisfying members' professional obligations. ▪ CMA's will maintain sufficient and appropriate documentation of professional learning and development activities to support verification.
Compliance	<p>CMA's will comply with their obligations under their Society's ethical code.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CMA's who fail to comply with their obligations will be subject to sanctions. ▪ Such sanctions will promote the maintenance of member professional competence. ▪ In recognition of the learning, evaluations and examinations inherent in the CMA Accreditation process, CMA graduates are excused professional learning and development obligations for a period following the receipt of their designations.
Outcome	<p>Through continuous improvement, Certified Management Accountants meet or exceed customer expectations of their professional skills, knowledge and attributes.</p>	



**An Example of a Career Progression Model
for Continuous Professional Learning and Development
for Certified Management Accountants**

Career Phase	Role	Required Knowledge, Skills and Attributes	Acquisition of Knowledge
CMA at Career Peak	Strategic Leader ③ Decision Maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Vision ▪ Process Management Skills ▪ Strategic Leadership Skills ▪ Consultative Skills ▪ Strategic Management Accounting & Finance Skills ▪ Business Functions 	Continuous Professional Learning and Development
CMA at Mid Career	Tactical Leader Decision Maker Provider of Business Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process Management Skills ▪ Strategic Management Accounting & Finance Skills ▪ Strategic Leadership Skills ▪ Business Functions ▪ Management Skills ▪ Consultative Skills 	
Recent CMA Graduate	Provider of Business Advice and Information ②	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Functions ▪ Process Management Skills ▪ Integrative Skills ▪ Decision Support Skills ▪ System Design Skills ▪ Management Skills 	
Accreditation Candidate	Provider of Information and Business Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advanced Management Accounting & Finance Skills ▪ Process Management Skills ▪ Business Functions ▪ Leadership Skills ▪ Integrative Skills ▪ Communication Skills ▪ Decision Support Skills ▪ System Design Skills 	
Pre-Professional Member	Provider of Information ①	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technical Skills ▪ Business Functions ▪ Communication Skills ▪ Decision Support ▪ System Design 	
Career Phase		Acquisition of Knowledge, Skills & Attributes	
1 – 2		By Education, Examination, Experience	
2 – 3		By Experience, Education, Evaluation	

Definitions to Accompany Career Progression Model for Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Certified Management Accountants

Business Functions

This phrase connotes a comprehension of the component elements of an enterprise within an integrative framework that comprise the member's specific business and its positioning within the competitive market place.

Communication Skills

Communication skills enable a member to organize data in a logical fashion and to present results to others in a coherent and professional manner, using appropriate techniques.

Competence

Competence implies being able to perform a work role to a defined standard, with reference to real working environments. Competence is assessed by a variety of means, including workplace performance, simulations, written tests or self-assessment.

Consultative Skills

Consultative skills refers to the cluster of knowledge, skills and attributes that enable a member to assess current circumstances, develop strategies for growth and development, and to implement recommendations, taking into account the change management process.

Education

Education refers to systematic instruction which is normally but not necessarily conducted within an institution of learning. Education may also encompass learning conducted in other environments such as in the workplace.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process whereby knowledge, skills or attributes are measured.

Examination

Examination is the process whereby the knowledge or abilities of learners is tested.

Experience

Experience refers to learning which occurs as a result of observation or acquaintance with actual developments, events or processes.

Decision Support

Decision support is the cluster of technical skills that are employed by members to provide data, interpretation, and analysis to management.

Interpretive Skills

Interpretive skills enable members to analyze and review data, to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant issues, to distinguish among issues of varying degrees of importance, to analyze and select from alternatives, and to suggest appropriate solutions.

Management Skills

Management skills are those processes which facilitate the acquisition, allocation and utilization of physical and human resources to accomplish established goals.

Organizational Principles

Organization principles connote an understanding of behaviour and motivation of individuals and groups; a knowledge of organizational structure or culture and behaviour of individuals and groups therein; and the ability to design a structure to facilitate communication, problem-solving and goal congruence.

Professional Learning and Development

Professional learning and development refers to a continuous process of development or maintenance of knowledge, skills or attributes which may arise from professional experience or occur within a structured learning environment.

Process Management

Process management provides the means to understand, measure, and react to what customers see as value. It is the management of essential activities that span functional boundaries linking together human resources, management proficiencies and technologies to enable an organization to focus its strategy and to increase its value to its customers.

Definitions to Accompany Career Progression Model for Continuous Professional Learning and Development for Certified Management Accountants (continued)

Strategic Leadership Skills

The contemporary understanding of strategic leadership skills encompasses the facilitation, coaching, team building and motivational processes that establish direction, build capabilities and implement continuous planned change within the organization.

Strategic Management Accounting

Strategic management accounting is that galaxy of tools and approaches that enable enterprises to function more effectively in a competitive environment by providing a framework for process management in order to deliver enhanced value to stakeholders.

Strategic Vision

This refers to an individual's ability to conceive and articulate a future position for an organization.

System Design

System design involves the creation of structures to capture, analyze and control information in order to facilitate business processes.

Technical Skills

These skills comprise the components of the CMA Entrance Examination Syllabus, primarily accounting, finance, management, quantitative analysis, human resources, and information technology.

Training

Training includes work-based learning and experience activities for developing an individual's competence to perform tasks relevant to the role of a professional accountant.