

Certified Public Accountants Association

Misselling Policy

Policy statement

As a professional association with a public interest function the Certified Public Accountants Association (CPAA, the Association) wants to ensure that those who register as members, or pursue any of our qualifications, do so fully aware of what they are subscribing to and what value membership can add to their professional life and work.

The Association seeks to understand possible risks of misselling and develop robust control measures to ensure that these risks are mitigated.

The CPAA seeks to provide a clear and honest view of itself and does not seek to deliberately mislead people.

What is the CPAA and why do people join

The Association is a niche professional association focused on UK practitioners. The CPAA represents and supports UK based accountants engaged in public practice and those working in or with UK based accountancy practices. An international grade of membership is offered to those who want an affiliation with a UK based professional accountancy association. Accountants join the CPAA (please note some of the below are restricted to only certain membership types, for full details of the benefits offered please visit the CPAA's website www.cpaa.co.uk):

1. As the Association represents their interests with HMRC and other regulators
2. To participate in the CPAA's CPD program (which includes over twenty hours of high quality technical CPD each year)
3. For industry news and updates relevant to practising accountants
4. To participate in the CPAA member insurance scheme
5. To join a community of practising accountants
6. For support documents and guidance relevant to accountancy practice

The Association offers accountancy qualifications which are focused on the knowledge and skills needed in small accountancy practices. People take CPAA qualifications and register as a student:

1. As CPAA qualifications specifically cover knowledge and skills needed in small accountancy practices
2. To receive comprehensive tuition support covering topics assessed in CPAA qualifications
3. General knowledge and support relevant to a broad range of accountancy/bookkeeping qualifications

Misselling risks

CPA designation

The term 'Certified Public Accountant' and the acronym 'CPA' are commonly used throughout a number of jurisdictions and in popular media to denote a qualified accountant. In jurisdictions where the 'CPA' designation is awarded, it often carries the same weight as 'Chartered Accountant' or 'CA' in the United Kingdom. In many jurisdictions those offering certain accountancy services must be a member of/supervised by an organisation using the name 'Certified Public Accountant'.

Prospective members and students unfamiliar with the market for professional accountancy qualifications in the United Kingdom may mistakenly believe that the CPAA is equivalent to these international organisations, or that CPAA is in some way affiliated with them. The Association is a niche professional association focused on UK practitioners. The main accountancy bodies in the United Kingdom are the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), Institute of Chartered Accountants Scotland (ICAS), Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). CPAA is not affiliated with any international accountancy body or regulator.

Regulations of 'accountants'/tax agents

Many people wrongly assume that to use the title 'accountant' (or related titles, such as 'bookkeeper') or to register as a tax agent, you must register with a regulatory body. This is not true. Though all accountancy service providers must be supervised by a professional body supervisor or HMRC. A list of professional body supervisors can be found on the website for the Office for Professional Body Anti-money laundering Supervision (OPBAS) - <https://www.fca.org.uk/about/how-we-operate/who-work-with/opbas>. CPAA is not a professional body supervisor. All practising members of the CPAA must be supervised by either a professional body supervisor or HMRC.

Recognised qualification

Most qualifications offered by professional accountancy bodies in the United Kingdom are not regulated (they are not Awarding Organisations supervised by OfQual). The major exemption to this being the AAT. CPAA's qualification are not regulated.

Other accountancy and bookkeeping qualifications have built recognition within the industry. CPAA's qualifications are relatively new and do not carry the same industry recognition as others. Most employers within the United Kingdom's accountancy sector, who look for specific qualifications, will often look for the ACA (offered by the ICAEW and ICAS), ACCA, CIMA and AAT qualifications.

How we avoid misselling

The CPAA reviews all literature it produces (including copy on its website) to ensure that it provides a clear and unambiguous representation of the CPAA and what it offers.

CPAA employees and representatives dealing with applicants and enquiries for membership make clear what the Association is, the services/benefits it offers and will signpost to other organisation when they feel they are likely to offer more relevant benefits/services.

In rare circumstances the employee(s) reviewing an application may, with the agreement of the Operations Manager, reject an application on the grounds that they will not receive any substantive benefit from joining the CPAA and do not demonstrate an understanding of what the CPAA is.

Policy review and raising concerns

If you have any concerns about this policy or possible misselling please contact Lee Haywood (lhaywood@cpaa.co.uk)

Version Control

Version	Details of Changes	Effective From
V1	--	July 2023