Cayman Islands Institute of Professional Accountants

HELPSHEET

# APPLYING FOR AND RENEWING A PUBLIC PRACTICE LICENCE


Licensing Criteria ..... 2
Legal Status ..... 2
Competent and Capable ..... 3
Accessible and Committed ..... 4
Good Character ..... 4
Submitting an Application ..... 4
Supporting Documents and Fees ..... 5
Evidence of Legal Status ..... 6
What Next? ..... 7
Renewal of Licences ..... 7
Contact Ciipa ..... 8

**This helpsheet explains how to apply for, and renew, a licence under section 11 or 12 of the Accountants Act (2024 Revision) (the "Act"). It should be read with the Accountants (Application for Membership) Regulations (the "Regulations").**

## Licensing Criteria

1. A person may apply to Council for a licence to engage in public practice from or within the Islands if they:
    a) are registered as a member under section 8 of the Act and continue to meet the qualifications for membership;
    b) are, or seek to be, a sole practitioner public accountant, or a partner, director or person holding an equivalent position in a firm of public accountants;
    c) are registered as a relevant sole practitioner, or the firm of which they are a partner, director or equivalent has registered as a relevant firm under section 38 of the Act;
    d) pay the prescribed fee; and
    e) satisfy any prescribed requirements relating to fitness and propriety.
2. Council will approve an application only if it is satisfied that the applicant is:
    a) sufficiently qualified, competent and capable of carrying on public practice, both at the time of the application and for the period of the licence;
    b) of good character, meaning a status resulting from carrying out professional duties while consistently adhering to accepted moral and ethical principles; and
    c) acting in a professional manner and with integrity in the performance of their duties as a practitioner member.
3. Capability and integrity include being Accessible and Committed to the Cayman Islands. A licence may be granted subject to conditions that Council considers appropriate.

## Legal Status

4. Applicants who are Caymanian or permanent residents apply under section 11 of the Act. Applicants who are not apply under section 12 and must have the right or permission to work in the Cayman Islands.
5. Where an applicant's qualification for membership rests on permission to engage in a gainful occupation granted under the repealed Immigration Law (2015 Revision), Council may issue a licence only if it is satisfied that (a) the applicant, or a firm with which the applicant is affiliated, has a place of business in the Islands from which public accounting services are carried on, and (b) there is a special need to issue the licence, having regard to the circumstances Council considers relevant. A licence granted on that basis is for a limited duration and subject to conditions (section 12(3)–(5)). It will be more difficult for a temporary work permit holder to meet the Commitment criteria below.

## COMPETENT AND CAPABLE

6. Council will determine your competence and capability by reference to International Education Standard 8 (IES 8), which applies to engagement partners responsible for audits of financial statements, that is, a CIIPA licensed practitioner.
7. IES 8 specifies the following learning outcomes: (a) Audit; (b) Financial Accounting and Reporting; (c) Governance and Risk Management; (d) Business Environment; (e) Taxation; (f) IT; (g) Business Laws and Regulations; (h) Finance and Financial Management; (i) Intellectual, Interpersonal and Communication, Personal, Organisational; (j) Commitment to the Public Interest; (k) Professional Skepticism; and (l) Professional Judgment and Ethical Principles. These are expected to result from serving for several years on engagement teams, so your practical experience, and the level at which it was acquired, is most important.
8. To help you decide whether to apply, Council typically expects you to have:
    a) at least seven years of post-qualification practical experience;
    b) five of which must be in assurance in a firm that was approved, as a training firm or equivalent supervisor, by CIIPA or an Approved Overseas Professional Accountancy Institute ("OPAI") at the time of the experience; and
    c) a reasonable proportion of those five years in the last 24 months and in supervisory or managerial roles on assurance engagement teams.
9. Council will determine whether you have demonstrated competence and capability for a licence in your particular position. It is likely to expect more experience than the typical minimum where (a) there are significant gaps in your experience, or (b) your experience has not included: sufficient complexity and specialisation; adequate exposure to audits in specific industries; an opportunity to consult with others; being subject to engagement reviews; working alongside a more senior and experienced partner; or other aspects that Council determines are necessary.
10. You demonstrate competence by completing Form 5A (Statement of Professional Competence), which every applicant must submit. It documents your experience on at least 10 engagements and shows how you have acquired the knowledge, skills and experience required to carry on public practice, including all the professional competencies in Table A of IES 8. References are not a substitute for Form 5A: they address your good character, professional conduct and integrity.
11. Your qualifications and continuing professional development (CPD) are also evaluated. CPD is prescribed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations as: (a) 120 hours in each three-year period ending 31 December, of which at least 60 hours are verifiable; (b) a minimum of 20 hours in each year ending 31 December; (c) an appropriate proportion in a chosen speciality; (d) maintenance of competence in audit, even if no audit work is currently being undertaken; and (e) compliance with IES 7 and IES 8 as issued and amended by the International Accounting Education Standards Board. Evidence is to be provided in an Excel file.

## Accessible and Committed

12. The nature of public practice in global financial services can result in practitioners operating from multiple locations. This must not hinder your duty to act in the public interest.
13. To be considered capable of discharging your duties as engagement partner on assurance engagements, and committed to the public interest, you will need to satisfy Council that you: (a) are accessible to CIIPA, other regulators, oversight bodies and authorities, clients, colleagues and other service providers; and (b) have made a personal and professional commitment to the Cayman Islands, so that it is your primary place of residence, personal and professional life. You will be asked to declare that you are resident in the Cayman Islands in accordance with the CIIPA Residency Policy.
14. Factors that influence Council's determination include: (a) your firm's history and plans; (b) the time you spend in the Cayman Islands compared with elsewhere; (c) your ownership of property and your main place of residence; (d) the location of your other personal and business interests; and (e) where your immediate family reside and where your children attend school.
15. If you hold a temporary work permit, you will need to satisfy Council that there is a special need to issue the licence (paragraph 5).

## Good Character

16. Good character is assessed on an exceptions basis. You provide a police clearance certificate, a professional reference and an independent professional reference, and you make declarations about your disciplinary, bankruptcy, criminal and regulatory history. Where these cast any doubt on your good character, Council will make further enquiries.
17. You are expected to have behaved, and to continue to behave, in accordance with the CIIPA Code of Ethics and the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA) Code of Ethics.

## Submitting an Application

18. Apply online through the CIIPA membership portal (Glue Up): . Sign in to your member account, complete every required field, upload your supporting documents and complete the Licensed Practitioner Declaration. Form 5A, if needed, is downloaded from the website, completed and uploaded to the application. Please see the link here to Form 5A. If you are not a Regular member you can apply on the website with the following link for Regular Membership.
19. The application asks for your full name and contact details, all public practice firms with which you will be affiliated, your title and main responsibilities, your legal status in the Cayman Islands, and your professional status (designations and qualifications, the name of your OPAI, your OPAI membership number, the date you qualified or became a member, and your years of audit and other experience). Council may ask for evidence to verify this information, or for supplementary information or clarification, at any time.

20. All applications are reviewed by the Membership and Licensing Committee, which makes a recommendation to Council. Applications must be received at least two weeks before the Council meeting at which they are to be considered.

## Supporting Documents and Fees

| Document | Notes |
|---|---|
| a) Professional reference: one written reference, addressed to CIIPA, from a Partner or Director (or equivalent senior individual) at your current or most recent firm, commenting on your good character, professional conduct and integrity, and suitability to hold a practising licence. | Confirm your role, seniority and dates of employment. Letterheaded, signed, dated, with direct contact information. See the Helpsheet: Providing a Reference for a Licence Application. |
| b) Independent professional reference: one written reference, addressed to CIIPA, from a professional person who has known you for at least two years and can comment on your professional conduct, integrity and character. | Not connected with your current firm. Letterhead is not required if the referee is unconnected with your employer, but your relationship, the referee's professional status and contact details must be clear. |
| c) Police clearance certificate, issued in the last six months, or the equivalent evidence of no criminal convictions. | Issued by the law enforcement authority of the jurisdiction in which you have most recently lived for at least six months. If unavailable, CIIPA may make its own enquiries and request alternative evidence, such as an affidavit of no convictions or offences. |
| d) Form 5A – Statement of Professional Competence (mandatory). | Download Form 5A from the CIIPA website, complete it and upload it to your application. See paragraphs 6 to 11 above and IES 8, Table A. |

| Document | Notes |
|---|---|
| e) CPD evidence in an Excel file. | At least 20 hours in the year ending 31 December and 120 hours in the three-year period ending 31 December, of which 60 are verifiable (Schedule 2 of the Regulations and IES 7). |
| f) Up-to-date curriculum vitae, covering at least the last eight years. | Employment history and professional experience relevant to the application. |
| g) Evidence of your legal status in the Cayman Islands. | See paragraphs 22 and 23. |
| h) Application fee | CI$750, paid with your application. A further fee of CI$5,000 is payable on the first grant of your licence (see paragraph 25). |

*If your documents are in a former name, also upload a copy of your marriage certificate. Your name must appear in a consistent format throughout the application.*

### Declarations

21. You will be asked to declare, among other things, that: the information is true, complete and accurate; you will comply with the CIIPA Code of Ethics and the IESBA Code; you have met the ethics and CPD requirements of CIIPA and of your OPAI, and the CPD and professional competence requirements of IES 7 and IES 8; you are in good standing with your OPAI; you will take part in CIIPA's quality assurance process; you are resident in the Cayman Islands in accordance with the CIIPA Residency Policy; you have never been excluded from a professional body, previously been subject to disciplinary action by any professional body, disqualified as an auditor or director, declared bankrupt, or convicted of a criminal offence; you are not under any investigation that may affect your suitability; and you will tell CIIPA of any change. You will also be asked to give a waiver and indemnity, which authorises CIIPA to make enquiries and share information in carrying out its functions under the Act. If there are any exceptions, explain them in a cover letter. Council decides at its discretion whether an exception prevents a licence being granted.

## Evidence of Legal Status

22. Only registered members of CIIPA can be licensed. Every applicant must upload evidence of their legal status in the Cayman Islands with their licence application, together with the expiry date of any permit or permission, even if the same evidence was provided when you became a member.

23. The evidence required is: (a) Caymanian: a copy of your electoral roll registration, a copy of your status grant, or your birth certificate and your parents'; (b) permanent resident: your Residency and Employment Rights Certificate or other Immigration Board document, and the latest receipt for payment of the PR fee; (c) work permit holder, or holder of other permission pending a work permit grant or renewal: a copy of the work permit, or of your passport stamp with the photo page on the same page, certified as true copies from the same passport, plus the receipt for renewal if renewal is in process.

## WHAT NEXT?

24.

25. If your documents are acceptable and you meet the criteria, the Membership and Licensing Committee will consider your application and may recommend to Council that a licence be issued. If Council approves, we will invoice you the first-grant fee of CI$5,000 and issue your licence once it is paid. You can expect confirmation of licensing by email, typically within one week of Council's decision unless specified by the Compliance Officer.
26. If Your name and prescribed details will be added to the list of licensed practitioners and notified in the Gazette.
27. If Council decides you do not meet the criteria, your application will be declined, and you will be notified within 10 days of the decision. You may be invited to reapply once the criteria are met. You may appeal a decision to decline a licence (see section *27* of the Act and the Helpsheet: Appealing a Decision).
28. A licence may be issued subject to conditions imposed directly on your licence (sections 11(3) and 12(2A) of the Act, or section 12(5) for licences granted under section 12(3) or (4)), or indirectly through conditions on your firm's registration.

## RENEWAL OF LICENCES

29. You must renew your licence annually, and pay the renewal fee, by 31 December each year (Regulation 7(5)). Your renewal application must confirm or notify any changes to the information in your application or last renewal and include an updated declaration.
30. Towards the end of the year CIIPA will invite you to renew. You will complete and sign the declaration and return it and will be invoiced the annual renewal fee of CI$5,000.
31. You are required to submit proof of legal status at the time of renewal if the following has occurred: your status has changed since your initial application or last renewal, or your work permit has expired and a further permit has been issued. For Permanent Residents a copy of the latest receipt of payment for your PR fee is required. For Work permit holders a copy of your WORC Amendment Letter or receipt showing proof that the variation in job title was submitted, is required if your job title has changed.
32. Council will expect you to be able to demonstrate that you continue to meet the ongoing requirements, including competence, capability, accessibility, commitment and good character. We will seek confirmation that you remain in good standing with your OPAI and, where a fee is charged for it, include the cost in your invoice.
33. You must also renew your regular membership in addition to renewing your licence.

## CONTACT CIIPA

If you have any queries prior to submitting an application for registration, please contact us:

- Email admin@ciipa.ky
- Telephone: +1345 749 3360
- Website: www.ciipa.ky