

CPA Public Policy Guidelines

Definitions of Policy Statements, Position Papers and Discussion Papers

A **policy statement** is a straightforward declaration of a CPA policy on a particular topic or topics. Such statements are designed to clarify intent, to guide action, and to prevent misunderstandings that might lead to unauthorized or inappropriate conduct.

Policy statements are short, concise and dated. They contain the following elements:

- Why the policy was created
- To whom the policy applies
- How the policy is to be applied

A **position paper** sets out the opinion or stance of the CPA vis-à-vis a particular issue. A position statement is more comprehensive than a policy statement; it contains background information and examination/discussion in order to provide a more complete understanding of the issues involved and of the rationale for a position and perhaps a policy. A major purpose of a position statement is to highlight psychology’s unique expertise.

As new evidence accrues, CPA may change its position on a particular issue, and thus, policy and position statements and discussion papers ought to be reviewed on a regular schedule by the PPC. Position papers typically include recommendations related to implementation of a position.

A **discussion paper** is produced for the purpose of providing balanced information on a particular topic without espousing or advocating a particular CPA position. A discussion paper does not stand by itself as a statement of a CPA policy or position, but may be used to formulate a policy statement or position paper.

	Length	Format	Review Frequency	Owner
Policy	Max 250 words	Point form; bullets	3 years	CPA
Position	No limit	Report format	3 years	CPA
Discussion	No limit	Report format	Archived after 3 years	Authors

1. Position and discussion papers are typically developed under the guidance of CPA's Public Policy Committee (PPC) and recommended for approval to the CPA Board as per the PPC's Terms of Reference. CPA's Board, senior staff and Sections may initiate policy statements, position papers and discussion papers for approval by the Board.
2. Although policy statements typically initiate with the Board and position and discussion papers are typically developed under the guidance of the PPC, any member, Section, or Committee of the Association can make a recommendation for a policy statement, position paper or discussion paper to the CPA Board. Recommendations from CPA members, Sections or other Committees (i.e. other than the PPC), as well as those from any individual or group external to the CPA (e.g. other stakeholders or organizations), for the development of a policy statement, position paper or discussion paper by the CPA must be in the form of a written request and directed to the CPA Board of Directors through its Chief Executive Officer. The Board may then refer the recommendation to the PPC for review and recommendation.
3. The Board and its designated officers shall act expeditiously on all requests and recommendations. All recommendations for the development of policy statements, position papers and discussion papers must include:
 - information about the relevance of the issue to psychology in Canada as a profession and/or science;
 - documentation, based on facts and knowledge, in support of the need for the proposed policy statement/position;
 - the relevancy and consistency of the proposed statement/position with the CPA Code of Ethics.
4. All policy statements and position papers and discussion papers must be in concert with the mission of the Association and comply with the Canadian Code of Ethics.
5. The author and publisher of all policy statements and position papers will be the Association itself. The writers of a discussion paper will be listed as its authors. Policy statements, position papers, and discussion papers written for and disseminated by CPA must be approved by the CPA Board and CPA retains copyright over them.
6. Policy priorities identified and recommended to the CPA Board need to be timely, responsive and reflective of Canadian interests and concerns.
7. Any articulated policy must be based on sound empirical evidence within the science and practice of psychology.
8. In general, statements and positions should reflect the consensus views of the discipline and/or profession of psychology.
9. In the event that there is urgent reason to take a position or make a statement that is not already an official CPA policy, or consistent with a statement or position previously made public by CPA, this can only be done by the CEO and President in concert.

10. CPA's Head Office will handle all translation and dissemination of all approved policy statements, position papers and discussion papers.

Approved by the CPA Board of Directors, June 2012