INITIAL APPLICATION FOR A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE

Please note that an application for a practising certificate must be received at ICAS at least eight weeks before the required commencement date of the certificate to allow for the application to be processed.

1. **Personal Identification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full name:</th>
<th>Date of Admission:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member No:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Reason for Requiring a Practising Certificate**

Please tick as appropriate

- I am setting up in practice as a sole practitioner/sole director. [ ]
- I am becoming a partner of a partnership, or a limited liability partnership, or a director of a limited company which is a practising firm. [ ]

*Please note that you should tick this box only if you are becoming a principal of the firm. Members with a courtesy title of “director”, as opposed to those who are directors of a limited company in the legal sense, should not tick this box.*

- I am becoming an employee responsible individual in a practising firm which is a registered auditor under the Companies Act 2006. [ ]

*Please ensure that your firm’s audit compliance partner has written to inform ICAS that your firm wishes to appoint you as a responsible individual, and that you have established with ICAS that you have an audit qualification, before you tick this box. Please contact our Director (Policy), Education, direct telephone number +44 (0) 131 347 0160, for this.*

- I require a practising certificate to enable me to hold an insolvency permit. [ ]
- Other reason: [ ]

*Please specify*
### 3. Sole Practitioners Only (including sole directors)

#### Details of Sole Practice

**Proposed date of commencement of practice:**
**Name and address of principal place of business:**

**Year end of practice:**
**Practice telephone number:**
**Practice email:**
**Practice web address:**

**I also attach a completed Declaration of Compliance Form certifying that I will comply with the professional indemnity insurance requirements set out in Part 4: of ICAS's Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations (see Guidance Notes).**

Please also confirm your home address:

Do you intend to hold clients’ money? Yes [ ] No [ ] (Please tick one)

If “Yes”, a sole practitioner is required under the Clients’ Money Regulations to appoint an alternate. Any alternate must be a CCAB member and hold a Practising Certificate (PC). Please provide details of your alternate, supplying their name, address and membership body in which they hold a PC.

If “No”, sole practitioners are strongly recommended to consider appointing an alternate to act for their clients in the event of their incapacity or death.

### 4. Partners/Directors Only

**Date on which you will be admitted to partnership/become a director:**
**Name and address of principal place of business:**

**Year end of practice:**
**Practice telephone number:**
**Practice email:**
**Practice web address:**

**I confirm I will be covered by my firm’s professional indemnity insurance policy from the date on which I become a partner/director (see Guidance Notes).**

Please note, if the firm is new, a Declaration of Compliance form MUST be completed and submitted for the practising certificate application to be finalised. This can be emailed with the application or posted in hard copy (see the end of the “Guidance Notes” for details). If you are becoming a partner/director in an existing CA practice, which has already supplied ICAS with a completed Declaration of Compliance, a further copy is not required. In this instance, simply tick the box above to confirm that you are covered by that firm’s professional indemnity insurance policy.

**As an insurance policy can take up to 28 days to finalise, this box can be marked “To Follow” in order for us to proceed with the rest of your application. Please note, however, that your practising certificate will not be approved and sent to you until we have received a completed Declaration of Compliance form.**
5. **Nature of services to be offered and relevant experience**

Whether you intend to practise on your own account or as a partner or director of a practising firm, please detail the services you intend to offer. (This information can be emailed as a separate sheet with the application form or sent in hard copy, if necessary.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Services to be offered:</th>
<th>Relevant experience in this area:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Please also provide details of the CPD activities which you have carried out in the two years **immediately prior** to this application.

As ICAS operates CPD on a calendar year basis, you will be required to submit the CPD records for the calendar years that span the two years prior to application. Your application cannot be progressed without this information. Please attach a separate form for each CPD year.

6. **Appropriate Experience**

Please provide details of appropriate experience (the Guidance Notes contain more information on what constitutes “appropriate experience”). You should also submit your current CV with this form. It should be noted your application cannot be progressed without these papers. This information can be emailed as a separate sheet with the application form or sent in hard copy, if necessary.

(1) **In a practising office:** Name and address of firm (please state whether Chartered Accountants, Certified Accountants, or other. If other, please give details of partners’ qualifications):

Dates of employment and position and details of work done:

(2) **Outwith public practice:** Name and address of employer:

Dates of employment and position and details of work done:

Name, qualification and job title of senior colleague to whom you were responsible in this post (preferably an ICAS member, see Guidance Notes under “Approved Practical Experience” section):
7. References

Two separate references are required in support of this application: a character reference and a technical reference and these should be **submitted with this application form.**

**Technical reference:** If possible, the technical reference should be from your present, or most recent, employer, and should include the referee’s job title. It should contain details of the work undertaken for the referee.

**Character reference:** The character reference should be from an independent external source, that is, provided by someone outside of the firm you have been working for or will be working for, for example, a friend or client.

*It would be preferable for the references to be from ICAS members, but this is not mandatory.* References from a family member cannot be accepted.

8. Declarations

I hereby declare that I am suitably qualified and have the relevant experience to enable me to provide the services as detailed in Section 5 of this form to a satisfactory standard.

As a CA, I commit to:
- Acting in the public interest
- Conducting myself with integrity, objectivity and high ethical standards, in keeping with the ICAS Code of Ethics
- Abiding by the Rules and Regulations
- Giving due consideration to the guidance and recommended good practice issued by ICAS

I commit to maintaining a programme of continuous learning which is relevant to my professional development and current responsibilities.

I commit to keeping up to date with Anti-Money Laundering legislation and requirements.

I understand that my practice may not carry on investment business as defined in the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 unless, and until, it has the required authorisation from the Financial Conduct Authority or licence from ICAS or another designated professional body.

I understand that my practice may not carry out work which requires registration as an auditor unless, and until, it is registered as an auditor by ICAS or another recognised body under the Companies Act 2006.

Signature _______________________________________________________________________

Date ___________________________________________________________________________
9. Payment Methods

The fee is an annual fee which changes each year & does not work on a pro rata basis. That is, the full amount will be due & payable, including applications made in the last quarter of any year.*

You can pay by BACS transfer, online or cheque. **The full rate for 2020 is £565.**

Please tick one of the boxes to indicate how you will pay once the practising certificate is ready for issue:

- [ ] I will pay using the ICAS online payment portal. Simply log onto www.icas.com & enter your email address as the “username”. If you don’t have a password, click the reset password option and follow the instructions. Once logged in, click the button on the left-hand side (a link for ‘My Orders’), within your profile section, where your name is displayed. This will take you into the payment portal where you can pay by credit or debit card.

  OR

- [ ] I will arrange a BACS payment transfer directly to the following bank account, with my name and “Initial PC Application” in the transaction reference field:
  
  Bank name: Royal Bank of Scotland  
  Sort code: 83-51-00  
  Account code: 10633841  
  Account name: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland

  OR

- [ ] I have sent a cheque made payable to ICAS for £565 (the full rate for 2020).

*Sole Practitioners Only*  
Please tick [ ]

If your gross fee income will be less than £18,800, please indicate how much it is expected to be in the space provided £ ______________ and tick the box to show that you wish to pay the reduced fee.

If you are returning to practice as a sole practitioner following a career break, or starting up your first practice as a sole practitioner (or equivalent via a company), you may be entitled to a 25% reduction in the annual practising certificate (PC) fee. The reduction is only available for members whose estimated gross fee income will be £18,800 or less for the year they are applying. The 25% reduction will only be permanent if the member’s gross fee income remains under this threshold. If this level of gross fee income applies to you, please complete this section and see the payment methods above. More information is available on page 8 of this form. **The reduced fee for 2020 will be £425.**

10. Completion Checklist

Before submitting the completed application, please ensure that:

- you have attached a current CV
- the Declaration at Section 8 has been signed
- you have attached both a technical reference and a character reference
- you have attached details of your previous two years CPD (attaching CPD records for the calendar years that span the two year period immediately prior to the date of application)
- you have attached a cheque or will arrange payment for the current year’s annual fee.

*For details of where to return the completed application, please see the end of the Guidance Notes section*

If you are setting up in practice on your own account and would like more information about the DPB (Designated Professional Body) licence or audit registration, please contact Regulatory Authorisations at regulatoryauthorisations@icas.com. Further information can be found on the ICAS website, www.icas.com, by searching “audit registration” or “dpb”.
INITIAL APPLICATION FOR A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE - GUIDANCE NOTES

When is a Practising Certificate required?
The ICAS Guide, “When is a Practising Certificate Required?” forms part of the initial PC application pack. This Guide provides assistance in determining whether or not a PC is required for the work you wish to undertake. It is important that you consider whether you need a PC and obtain advice if you are not sure, as practising without a PC could result in disciplinary action.

What does ‘Practice’ mean?
Practice is the provision of services including accounting and related services for which the relevant skills have been acquired by a member by reason of his or her training and qualification, to persons other than his or her employer.

A member engages in practice when he or she provides, or holds him or herself out to provide, such services to the public either personally or through a firm.

Examples of some of the more common reasons for requiring a Practising Certificate include:

- Becoming a principal in an accountancy firm;
- Independently offering accountancy or related services to the public;
- Being an insolvency permit licence holder; or
- An employee responsible individual under the Audit Regulations.

The Practising Certificate does not of itself convey the right to practice in the reserved areas of insolvency or audit.

How long does the PC last for?
Practising certificates are valid for the calendar year or the balance of the calendar year for which they are issued and must be applied for annually after the initial grant. The annual application thereafter is conducted via your Members Annual Return.

How long should my application take to process?
The initial PC application process usually takes three to four weeks for straightforward applications. For employee Responsible Individual applications or members joining an existing firm, the ICAS team will aim to process your application form within two weeks of receipt.

For PC applications involving a new practice set up, applications may take upwards of four weeks, primarily because of the time that the firm will need in obtaining PII quotes, and organising PII. If you wait until you submit your PC application you may find that it will take a number of weeks to organise PII and that this could hold up your application.

The requirement for a practising certificate is overseen by the Authorisation Committee. However, applications are normally dealt with by ICAS staff. The Authorisation Committee will only consider less straightforward applications. If the Committee has to consider your application, the process may take longer as the PPC meets only four times a year.

Please let us know if your application is urgent and requires to be expedited.

What information requires to be submitted with my application?
The following supporting documentation must be sent in with the completed initial application form:

- A current CV
- A technical reference
- A character reference
- Details of your previous two years CPD (covering the two year period immediately prior to date of application)
- A cheque, or confirmation you will arrange payment for the current year’s annual fee.

Most of the application form should be straightforward but a number of the key sections of the application form and supporting documentation are explained below:

Firm Details (Section 3: Sole Practitioners or Section 4 Partners/Directors)
The initial application form asks you to confirm various details of your practice, such as, the proposed commencement date; whether it will be a sole practice or a partnership; and if this will be your principal place of business. The firm’s contact details are also requested.
If you are setting up a sole practice, you will be asked to confirm if you intend to hold clients’ money. If clients’ money is to be held, you are required under the Clients’ Money Regulations to appoint an Alternate. The Alternate must be a CCAB member who is a PC holder and details of their name, address and membership body are requested. Sole practitioners, who are not holding clients’ money, are strongly recommended to consider appointing an Alternate to act for their clients in the event of their incapacity or death.

**Nature of Services to be offered and relevant experience (Section 5A)**

This section of the form requires you to set out in the table the services you intend to undertake and the relevant experience you have had in that service area. In considering your fitness to practice, we require to ensure that you have sufficient experience to conduct the services you intend to undertake. In assessing your experience the Regulatory Authorisations team will assess the experience you have noted in Section 5A and have included on your attached CV.

**Two Years CPD (Section 5B)**

You are required to submit CPD records for the two years immediately prior to this application in order that we can assess whether you have maintained sufficient CPD to ensure that you have kept up to date.

As ICAS operates CPD on a calendar year basis, you will be required to submit the CPD records for the calendar years that span the two years prior to application. For example, if you had applied in August 2018, you would have been required to provide CPD for the period August 2016 to August 2018, spanning three CPD years. Your application cannot be progressed without this information.

**Please use a separate record for each year.** You can also download a pro forma of the CPD record [here](https://www.icas.com/professional-development/recording-your-cpd). Your CPD record is available via the ‘My CPD’ link on your profile panel, after you have signed into the ICAS website.

**Your CV**

In order to consider whether you have relevant experience in the services you intend to provide to the public we require a full career history within you CV.

**Appropriate Experience (in support of Section 6)**

In order to be eligible to apply for a practising certificate, a member must have obtained at least two years’ “appropriate experience”, in accordance with Regulation 3.10, since being admitted as a Chartered Accountant.

Appropriate experience is defined in Regulation 3.10 of the Public Practice Regulations and may include:

- **3.10.1** experience gained in a role in accountancy or related role in public practice, business, public service, or teaching;
- **3.10.2** experience gained as a Principal in countries where a Practising Certificate is not, or was not previously, required; or
- **3.10.3** in the case of a Member admitted under reciprocal arrangements with other professional bodies, appropriate experience gained as an employee or as a Principal after the date of admission to the professional body.”

The requisite two years’ appropriate experience should normally have been obtained within the two years immediately prior to the application being submitted, although career breaks (for example, for maternity leave) will be considered.

If the senior colleague you reported to was not an ICAS member, you should confirm if they were a member of another chartered profession or a person of standing.

**References**

Two separate references are required in support of the application: a character reference and a technical reference and these should be submitted with the application form. It would be preferable for the references to be from ICAS members, but this is not mandatory. References from a family member cannot be accepted.

**Technical reference:** If possible, the technical reference should be from your present, or most recent, employer, and should include the referee’s job title. It should contain details of the work undertaken for the referee.

**Character reference:** The character reference should be from an independent external source, such as a friend or client. It should be someone outside of the firm you have been working for or will be working for.

**Declarations**

You are asked to sign and date the form, confirming that you are suitably qualified and have the relevant experience to enable you to provide the services as detailed in the application to a satisfactory standard. You are also asked to commit...
to the maintenance of a programme of continuous learning, relevant to your professional development and current responsibilities.

Payment Methods
The PC fee is an annual fee which runs for the calendar year. It is likely to change each year and does not work on a pro rata basis. That is, the full amount is due and payable, including applications made in the last quarter of any year.

Please do not try to make a payment until you have been notified that your application has been approved. Our system does not add on a Sales Order of the licence fee until an application has been approved.

You can pay the fee by BACs payment; by using the ICAS online payment portal or by cheque.

A practising certificate cannot be granted until payment of the relevant year’s annual fee has been made and that payment has cleared on our system.

ICAS has a defined policy for members’ annual subscription which is aligned to the Joseph Rountree Foundation Standard (JRFS) whereby a permanent discount is applied. In recognition of the fact that the costs of practice for many members are a barrier for those who only wish to retain a few select clients, this policy also covers the PC fee.

If your expected gross fee income for the year in which you are applying will be less than the JRFS threshold of £18,400, you may be eligible for the 25% PC fee discount. If you wish to apply for the reduced fee, you are asked to confirm your expected gross fee income and indicate, via the tick in the box, that you wish to pay the reduced fee.

This reduction will then apply for as long as your gross fee income remains under the £18,400 threshold. Please note, we will verify this amount against the gross fee income amount provided in your PII Declaration of Compliance Form. This will ensure that the discount is correctly applied. You will then continue to pay for your PC upon completion of your Members Annual Renewal.

Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII)
Information relating to professional indemnity insurance (PII) is included as part of the initial PC application pack. PII is compulsory for all members who have a practising certificate and are engaged in public practice. Evidence of PII held must be supplied before a member can be granted a practising certificate.

If you are joining an existing practice, and that practice has already supplied ICAS with a completed Declaration of Compliance, a further copy is not required. You will simply be asked to confirm that you will be covered by that firm’s PII policy.

If the firm is a new firm a Declaration of Compliance form MUST be completed and returned. The requirements regarding PII are contained in Part 4 of the Public Practice Regulations. As a PII policy can take up to 28 days to finalise, the initial PC application form can be marked to indicate that the PII details will follow in order for us to proceed with the rest of the application. Please note, however, that your practising certificate cannot be sent to you until we have received a completed Declaration of Compliance form.

The completed application can be emailed to regulatoryauthorisations@icas.com. However, if you wish to post a copy of the application, please send it to: Regulatory Authorisations, CA House, 21 Haymarket Yards, Edinburgh EH12 5BH

How do we assess your application?
In order to protect the public we are required to ensure that you are first assessed as ‘fit to practice’ before granting you a practising certificate. This assessment includes a number of important checks. The main checks are:

- **Fit and proper checks:** we require to ensure that there are no fit and proper issues. We will check with our Investigations department whether you have any discipline history that might affect your application. We also subscribe to the Financial Conduct Authority’s Shared Intelligence service (SIS) and conduct a SIS check on all applications. We will also ensure that your character reference is in order.

- **Experience & Technical Knowledge:** we require to assess whether you have the necessary experience and competence to conduct the services you intend to conduct. As part of this assessment we will consider your career history on your CV, Sections 5 and 6 of the application form, your CPD records and your technical reference.

- **Public protection:** we will ensure that if you are a Sole Practitioner and hold Clients’ Money that you have appointed a suitable Alternate. We also require to ensure that your practice activities will be covered by appropriate PII which meets the requirements of our Professional Indemnity Insurance Regulations.
If any concerns are raised as part of these checks, or we require further information from you, we will contact you to discuss these matters with you. Less straightforward applications are usually referred to the Regulatory Authorisation Committee for adjudication. This could delay approval of your application.

**What happens once I am awarded my PC?**
You will be informed, by letter, that your application has been approved and you will receive a hard copy of your practising certificate licence in the post.

Once your application has been approved, a copy of our welcome guide will also be emailed to you, covering details about your ongoing obligations and the support that is available to our practising members.

**What happens if I am not granted a PC?**
Only the Authorisation Committee can take the decision to reject a PC application. We will communicate to you the concerns raised by the Committee and what actions you can take in order that you can re-apply in the future. The majority of rejections relate to a lack of recent relevant experience and we will provide advice to you on ways that you can obtain the relevant experience before re-applying going forward.

**Help and Support**
We are here to help, so please contact us if you would like advice or support.

ICAS have a dedicated practitioner section of the website called Practice Hub (search “practice hub” at icas.com). This should provide you with a one stop shop for your practice requirement needs. It includes the General Practice Procedures Manual for free, videos, help-sheets, guidance, technical information, anti-money laundering guidance and much more.

As well as the information on the Practice Hub, you can also contact the Practice Support team by telephone (0131 347 0249) or by email (practicesupport@icas.com) for free advice. Practice Support also offer services such as Practice Review and Practice Advisory where more detailed assistance is required.

If you have any enquiries regarding Practising Certificates or Professional Indemnity Insurance please contact us by email on regulatoryauthorisations@icas.com or 0131 347 0286.

**Completed Applications**
Once completed, the initial application form can be returned as follows:
**By email:** Please email regulatoryauthorisations@icas.com.
**By post:** Please sent to Regulatory Authorisations, ICAS, CA House, 21 Haymarket Yards, Edinburgh, EH12 5BH

**Data Protection**
The personal data requested in this form is being collected to allow ICAS to fulfil its legitimate interest as a professional body and regulator of accountants. It is also required for the performance of tasks which are carried out in the public interest. It will be shared only so far as required to meet these purposes. ICAS is fully committed to handling personal data in accordance with data protection legislation and best data protection practices. Please review our privacy notice for more information:
https://www.icas.com/privacy
CPD PLAN / RECORD IN SUPPORT OF AN INITIAL APPLICATION FOR A PRACTISING CERTIFICATE

As part of the initial application process for a practising certificate, ICAS asks you to provide details of your previous two years CPD experience. As ICAS operates CPD on a calendar year basis, you will be required to submit the CPD records for the calendar years that span the two years prior to application.

This process is something that you should be doing to some extent anyway. If your firm is not an ICAS Accredited Employer you should complete the pro forma CPD record or complete the record on-line (see Guidance Notes). A copy of this document is also available from the ICAS website by logging in to icas.com and searching “CPD”.

Personal Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full Name</th>
<th>Membership ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

CPD YEAR:

STEP 1- Define current and future role(s)

What is expected of you in your current role?

You may like to consider the expectations being placed upon you by employers, clients, colleagues, regulators and the public, and your ethical obligations to them. Consideration can be given to your future career options and goals.

STEP 2 – Decide on your training and development needs

What skills and knowledge do you need to maintain or develop to meet these expectations and what training gaps have you have identified as a result? This could include personal as well as technical skills, especially if you manage others.

You are encouraged to carry out this assessment at the start of the year but this assessment is expected to be on-going to take into account any changes in role, organisation or business environment.

STEP 3- Identifying CPD activities
How will you address your development needs? You are encouraged to use this section of the plan to diary or list the CPD activities you are aiming to undertake throughout the year.

A wide range of activities can be recognised for CPD purposes and is recommended. If you can identify a meaningful learning outcome from a particular activity then it will be valid for CPD purposes. Examples of CPD activities can be found by searching “cpd” on the ICAS website, icas.com. Details of ICAS courses can be found by searching “icas courses” on the ICAS website at icas.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 4 – Reflect and Record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This section of the plan should be used to record when you have undertaken a CPD activity. For each activity, what were the key learning points? How have you applied them? How do they address your needs listed in Step 2?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, what were the most important things you learned last year? What were the tangible outcomes of these for your business?