



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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CPD CONNECTIONS

BY JENNIE MCGINNIS

WITH THE END OF THE YEAR in sight you may now be evaluating your continuing professional development (CPD) achievements for the year and ensuring that you remain in compliance. For many members, meeting attendance is a key way to earn CPD credits—a centralized opportunity to take in a number of sessions about various topics or to develop your skills. Attending meetings has many other benefits, primarily the opportunity to network. While attending a meeting can fulfill some of your CPD

requirements, no single meeting offered by the SOA offers enough credits to completely fulfill them. How can these credits be supplemented? What if you are not able to attend an in-person meeting during the year?

Given that many SOA members face this situation, the solution may be clear. Many members make use of webcasts offered by the SOA and other professional organizations. Others use self-study to keep up to date on the latest regulations and our ever-

changing industries or to review professional matters. There are many other educational opportunities available as well, and there are ways to get even more out of meetings, webcasts and self-study. Here are a few.

Virtual sessions are offered for selected sessions at the Life & Annuity Symposium, Health Meeting, Valuation Actuary Symposium and Annual Meeting (also referred to as the flagship meetings). These virtual sessions are accessed in a similar manner as webcasts and also include live video feed. The selected sessions are typically held around the lunch hour (for those in the Americas region) and are chosen in part based on expected attendance at the live meeting.

Session recordings are available for nearly all flagship meeting sessions (exclusions include those that are more hands-on or interactive) back to 2007. Recordings have also been available for virtual sessions and webcasts since 2010. Audio is recorded and synched to the slide deck or other presentation materials. You may purchase recordings for entire meetings or individual sessions. For those who register for webcasts, subsequent access to the recording is included in the fee. Any meeting session recordings are now free to SOA members one year after the event.

Where do I find it?

GO TO THE SOA'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CALENDAR (www.soa.org/pdcalendar.aspx). It provides access to the variety of offerings outlined in this article.



Registrations for items in the first three categories take place through the website and require an SOA log-in. Podcasts can be listened to online—simply select a series and click play. Alternately, iTunes users can subscribe to the SOA's Podcast Channel, and Android users can listen via the SOA RSS feed via any podcast app.

To get started volunteering with the SOA, complete the volunteer interest form available at <http://www.soa.org/about/volunteer/forms.aspx>.



Jennie McGinnis

CPD TERMINOLOGY REFRESHER	
U.S. Qualification Standard (Section 2: General Qualification Standard)	“Continuing education is ‘ relevant ’ if: (1) it broadens or deepens an actuary’s understanding of one or more aspects of the work an actuary does; (2) the material expands an actuary’s knowledge of practice in related disciplines that bear directly on an actuary’s work; or (3) it facilitates an actuary’s entry into a new area of practice.”
	“‘ Organized activities ’ [are those] that involve interaction with actuaries or other professionals working for different organizations”
Canadian Institute of Actuaries	“Acceptable CPD activities must be relevant at the time they are completed and appropriate to support the member in maintaining his or her level of skill and knowledge as the actuarial profession evolves.”
	“ Structured —Activities planned in advance or where more than one point of view is provided”
Society of Actuaries	“CPD credits are job relevant if they broaden or deepen a member’s knowledge of work and are: (1) required for the member’s current role; (2) in related disciplines that bear directly on the member’s work; or (3) in a new area in which the member contemplates practicing in the future.”
	“ Structured credit is any organized activity or any experience which is derived from an organized activity in which there is an opportunity for interaction among participants.”
<i>Note: the SOA CPD Requirement allows SOA members in the United States to meet the SOA requirement by meeting the provisions of the U.S. Qualification Standard and for SOA members in Canada to meet the SOA requirement by meeting the provisions of the Canadian Institute of Actuaries CPD Requirement.</i>	

credit. Serving on a committee that provides opportunities to stay current (or perhaps ahead of the curve) on industry developments, presenting at a meeting or via webcast, writing an article, and a variety of other roles all offer an opportunity to enhance your actuarial skills.

Perhaps it goes without saying, but regardless of the delivery method used, the learning activity must fulfill the definition of continuing professional development to earn credit. In my experience many actuaries give specific focus in their CPD selections to being able to fulfill the structured credit requirement.

In my opinion, the reason for including the organized credit requirement was the desire to encourage interaction with others to stretch members’ thinking. Therefore, with any of the options listed above there’s an opportunity to go “above and beyond” by interacting with others while learning. Finding others who are interested in a topic allows you to tap into the knowledge of those who are more experienced, or perhaps to be that experienced person for someone else. It is said, after all, that one indication of mastery is the ability to explain a topic well to someone else.

So, how can you connect with others to gain the interactive element?

Naturally, a starting point is your own personal network. In the office, consider reserving time after a webcast or virtual session to delve further into the topic at hand. Start a “paper club” with coworkers or members of your local actuarial club to review recently released research papers, actuarial

A variety of **e-Learning courses** are available to SOA members. While all e-Learning courses used in prequalification education are accessible, additional courses have been created specifically for continuing education purposes. In addition to repurposing prequalification courses (targeting information that’s more useful to a practitioner and significantly decreasing the average amount of time required to complete the course), the SOA has been producing an average of three new professional development courses each year. Beginning this fall members will also have access to a portfolio of e-Learning courses focused on business and communication skills

that has been developed by an external vendor for audiences from the broader industry.

SOA **podcasts** are free to access and can be listened to via the Web and on Apple and Android devices. Episodes are primarily created by sections and have also been developed to highlight changes in the education system. If you’re interested in staying up to date on other activities at the SOA, also be sure to regularly check the SOA’s blog at <http://blog.soa.org>.

Volunteering with the SOA or another related professional organization also offers an opportunity to earn professional development

SOA COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK FOR ACTUARIES

Today's actuary is called upon to bring an increasing number of skills to the profession. The SOA Competency Framework for Actuaries presents a synthesis of the knowledge, skills, behaviors and attributes that contribute to outstanding performance. The forward-looking professional development opportunities provided by the 2013 Valuation Actuary Symposium reflect the full framework. Each session offered is identified by the primary competency it addresses.

The SOA Competency Framework Self-Assessment Tool will help you identify which competencies are important in your present and future work. Complete the assessment and use the results to guide your professional development planning for the coming year.

Get full details on the SOA Competency Framework at SOA.org/competency-framework.



standards, and other relevant articles. When working through an e-Learning course, take advantage of the online discussion group to interact with others currently taking the course. Members also have the opportunity to support candidates through the recently released social learning environment (see Leslie Fausher's "Social Learning with the SOA" article in the February/March 2013 issue of *The Actuary* for more information).

In addition, the SOA and several sections have formed LinkedIn groups to help facilitate networking. These groups can be leveraged to seek out others who have similar interests—you may wish to interact with a group that already exists or post a comment in the SOA's general group and see what develops. Where you find similar interests take advantage of the opportunity

to link up in a more formal fashion, such as becoming a member of sections with posts that strike your interest. More information on LinkedIn and other social media platforms can be found in Kevin Pledge's "Beyond Social Networking" article in the April/May 2013 issue of *The Actuary*.

Whether or not you're able to attend an SOA meeting, plenty of avenues are available for earning CPD credit. And there are ways to take part in live events without even being there. Besides virtual sessions, all flagship meetings can be accessed virtually via the SOA's Event app (currently available for Apple and Android users, with Web versions available for Blackberry and Windows users). The app allows access to schedules, slides, and attendee and presenter information, as well as a live Twitter feed.

No matter how you earn your CPD credits, make the most of your learning by getting connected—whether in person or virtually! **A**

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