



REFERENCE

ICPA Glossary of Terms

Defined terms used across the ICPA standards suite

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This glossary defines the technical terms used across the ICPA standards, policies, procedures, and guidelines. Where a term appears in italics in another ICPA document, it carries the meaning given here. The 2026 edition reflects a year of public consultation, peer review, and alignment with the International Standard for Accreditation of Conformity Assessment Bodies (ISO/IEC 17011:2017) and the International Education Standards (IES) framework. It supersedes all prior editions and remains in force until the next biennial revision.

A

- Accreditation** — formal recognition by ICPA that a body meets the Professional Standards Framework.
- Accredited body** — an institution currently holding ICPA accreditation, listed on the public register.
- Appeal** — a formal challenge to an adverse ICPA decision, handled under the Appeals and Complaints Procedure.

C — E

- Conditional accreditation** — a two-year accreditation granted subject to remediation of specified findings.
- Continuing professional development (CPD)** — structured learning undertaken by professionals to maintain competence after qualification.
- Digital credential** — a machine-verifiable representation of a qualification, conforming to the Digital Credentials Standard.
- Evaluator** — an independent expert listed on the ICPA Evaluator Roster, eligible to serve on evaluation panels.

I — M

- Independent Review Panel (IRP)** — the five-member body that hears appeals against ICPA decisions.

Issuer — the accredited body issuing a digital credential.

Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) — a bilateral agreement under the MRA Framework recognising another body's qualifications as equivalent to those covered by ICPA accreditation.

P — R

Professional Standards Framework (PSF) — the master ICPA standard against which institutional and programme accreditation is assessed; current edition PSF 2026.

Public register — the authoritative public list of accredited bodies, maintained at register.i-cpa.org.

Revocation — withdrawal of a previously issued credential, reflected in the issuer's verification endpoint.

S — Z

Surveillance — the continuous monitoring of accredited bodies between full evaluation visits, governed by the Surveillance Methodology.

Verifiable credential — a credential whose cryptographic properties allow a third party to verify issuer, subject, and integrity without contacting the issuer.