

**The Parliamentary Academy Residency Programme
Briefing Note for Delegates and Mentors**

Confidential - Internal Purposes Only

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PROGRAMME BACKGROUND

The CPA Headquarters Secretariat will be organising our fourth year of CPA Parliamentary Academy residency programmes in 2025. The Advanced Professional Development and Skills-Building Residency Course Programme is a five-day programme to enhance participants' people and soft skills across critical areas such as leadership, strategic thinking, communications, and team management. The skills developed through this programme are designed to be universally applicable within parliaments and beyond.

The full programme will be shared with delegates in due course.

ABOUT THE CPA PARLIAMENTARY ACADEMY

The CPA Parliamentary Academy was established in 2021, and comprises online courses, and externally delivered training for parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from across the Commonwealth. The residency courses are intended to complement the online courses, providing face-to-face interactive learning and knowledge-sharing at a more advanced level.

The CPA Parliamentary Academy brings together:

- An online learning portal for Members of Parliament, Clerks and parliamentary staff to access online training and professional development via the CPA's new modern and accessible website. This includes video and online resources.
- Three residency-based programmes on advanced parliamentary development for Commonwealth Parliamentarians and officials that complement the online courses.
- Access to externally delivered courses with the CPA's partners in leading international universities and professional development training institutions.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Flight Itinerary

Flights to Malta are being organised by respective Branches. If there are any issues with your flight, please contact your Branch Secretary or your assigned Travel Agent immediately. Please ensure you notify the CPA HQ if there are any changes to your itinerary.

Accommodation

Accommodation has been arranged for all approved participants to stay at the **Grand Excelsior Hotel**. **Check-in is 3pm and check-out is at 12pm.**

Grand Excelsior Hotel
Great Siege Road,
Floriana,
FRN1810,
Malta

[Grand Hotel Excelsior Malta](#)

The CPA will cover the cost of a Deluxe Room, based on single occupancy bed and breakfast (only). Observer parliamentarians are responsible for making payment to the hotel on check in.

Any additional night's accommodation outside of the official booking (23 February-1 March) is the responsibility of the Branch or participant travelling. The CPA HQ take no responsibility for securing or changing bookings. Participants or Branches should liaise directly with the hotel (quoting the following: **Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Advanced Parliamentary Development Programme**).

Ground Transport

Participants should make their own arrangements for airport transfers to and from the hotel. Participants may choose to arrange transport at their own cost via the airport taxi stands. Alternatively, participants can use the Uber App to order a taxi.

Some Branches may have organised transport via their High Commissions and should therefore liaise directly with these missions for transfer arrangements.

The majority of the programme will take place in the Grand Excelsior Hotel, the last day will take place at the Parliament of Malta. However, where travel outside walking distance forms part of the programme, transport will be arranged by either the Parliament of Malta or the CPA HQ.

Travel and Health Insurance

The CPA Headquarters Secretariat does not cover participants for health or travel insurance. As such you are therefore advised to check your Parliament's travel insurance policy. Should you not be covered, we highly recommend you source travel insurance prior to departure.

Visa

Some delegates may require a visa to enter Malta. You can find more information regarding visa requirements from Maltase government website, linked below.

[Central Visa Unit Sec Page - Schengen Visa - Identità](#)

Working with the Maltase Parliament, we can issue visa support letters to delegates upon request. Other than issuing these letters, the CPA and the Parliament of Malta have limited ability to support visa attainment.

PRE-TRAVEL ADVICE

Documents:

- Ensure you have checked that your passport and any visas are in date for the duration of the visit.
- Take a Yellow Fever vaccine certificate if traveling via a high-risk country.
- Take copies of your e-ticket reservations and hotel reservations.
- Make copies of all key personal documents. Bring originals with you and one set of copies. Leave another set with your next of kin, and one at your workplace. The copy documents should include:

- Passport
- Visas
- Credit cards
- Contact numbers
- Prescriptions
- Driving license
- Carry passport-sized photographs with you when travelling and remove all non-essential paperwork from wallets.
- Check that your overseas life and medical insurance will cover the region you will be operating in.

Luggage:

- Secure your luggage by locking it for all ground transport legs of the journey. It may need to be left open for inspection at certain international airports but can usually be locked before loading into the hold of the aircraft. Wrapping suitcases in industrial cling film will provide further security for personal belongings as it is much harder to tamper with the contents. Label all luggage with your destination office address; this will reduce the likelihood of someone discovering an individual's nationality.
- Where practical, travel light, and always carry a separate small piece of hand luggage containing personal items such as wallets, mobile phones, laptops and your travel documents. Do not pack sensitive or proprietary information in your checked luggage.
- Avoid taking unnecessary valuables.
- Check that you have the correct travel adaptors to charge your electronic items; these are available to purchase at most major airports.
- Consider placing personalised or high visibility straps around your bags to help identify your luggage at your destination.
- Following FAA protocol, security personnel may ask you questions about control of your luggage. Know what items you are carrying and be able to describe any electrical items.

General:

- Check that your flights have not been delayed or the times changed.
- Change a small amount of your home currency into the local currency.

On Arrival

The way the locals perceive you is critical and can affect the level of risk you attract.

- Stay alert and aware of your new surroundings.
- Remain discreet and try to blend in with the crowds.
- Avoid wearing expensive items and drawing unnecessary attention to yourself.
- Do not withdraw money from ATMs in the arrivals hall.

COVID Testing

We strongly encourage that all participants take Rapid Antigen Tests with them and ideally test regularly throughout the programme. Should you feel unwell at any point, please self-isolate and contact either the CPA Secretariat team, a member of hotel staff or a member of staff from the Parliament.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Programme Location

The Residency programme will take place in the Floriani Hall, Grand Excelsior Hotel.

Attendance

To maximise the benefits of the programme, participants are expected to attend **ALL** of the programme learning and development sessions. Failure to do so will result in the participant not completing the course and gaining the necessary course certificate. Excessive absences from the programme may result in the participant or Branch being held accountable to reimburse costs associated with the participants involvement in the programme. See section on 'CANCELLATION, WITHDRAWAL, CHANGE AND ABSENTEEISM POLICY' for further information.

There will also be a number of experienced Mentors participating in the Residency Programme as resource persons, to provide valuable guidance and insight into their roles. Delegates are encouraged to speak with Mentors on a 1-1 basis for any advice/information on the periphery of the programme schedule.

Acclimatisation Day

Other than for the purposes of registration, it is important to note that the organisers have set aside Monday 24 February 2025 as an opportunity for participants to acclimatise to the venue location. This day has also been set aside for participants to attend an **evening Reception** hosted by the Speaker of the Parliament of Malta; the time will be confirmed in due course.

Registration and Accreditation

The registration desk will be located in the Grand Excelsior Hotel on Monday 24 February 2025, the time will be confirmed in due course. You will be issued with your accreditation pass (which should be worn at all times throughout the duration of the programme) and welcome pack.

The organisers will set up a WhatsApp group and sign up to the Network Community Platform, at the commencement of the programme (as part of the registration process) to enable networking, sharing photos and arranging extracurricular activities. This is optional and participants are free to opt out if they wish.

Money

The currency used in Malta is the Euro (EUR). Please see <https://www.xe.com/> for the most up to date exchange rates. Foreign currency is not accepted in Malta. Credit cards are widely used and ATMs are widespread in the city. Tipping is customary.

Weather

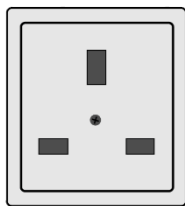
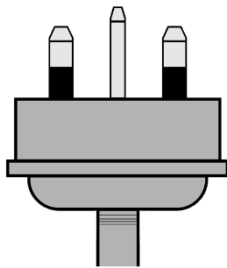
The average temperature in Malta in February for a typical day can range from a high of 16°C to a low of 9°C.

Dress Code

Business casual attire is advised for the duration of the programme. Formal business wear should be worn when visiting the Parliament. Please feel free to dress casually outside of the official programme times.

Electricity

Malta uses type G plugs – three pin plugs used in the UK



Laws and customs

Please keep in mind the Malta is a majority Catholic country. Please be respectful of local customs and behaviour especially if travelling to religious/holy sites.

Emergencies

Emergency numbers for police and ambulance services in Malta is 112.

Costs

Branches (and or participants) will be responsible for the following:

- Accommodation outside of the official programme dates of 23 February – 1st March 2025
- Costs and booking arrangements for return flights to Valetta, Malta
- Airport transfers in country of origin
- Airport transfers in Malta
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance
- Meals, except those annotated as part of the official programme
- Personal expenses incurred by participants (laundry, telephone, room service, mini-bar, etc).
- Surcharges for additional guest
- Additional taxes associated with the above

Respect Policy

The CPA Headquarters Secretariat is committed to, and recognises the value of, maintaining environments of mutual respect, courtesy and dignity at all its events and programmes. **Any instances of bullying, harassment, inappropriateness, cultural insensitivity or otherwise unacceptable behaviour will be treated as a serious affront to the organisation and shall be dealt with immediately.** In some cases, such behaviours may lead to refusal of certain parties to partake in future programmes.

If you wish to report any complaints or issues that fall into any of the above criteria, please contact: Sharon Moses at sharon.moses@cpahq.org or speak to a member of the CPA Headquarters Secretariat present.

Reading

To be fully active in the programme, all participants will be required to be fully versed in the course material that is being circulated prior to arrival. Day 1 of the programme has been set aside to provide sufficient reading and study time.

Feedback

If you have any feedback on the programme, logistics or for the duration of your deployment, do please relay this information to CPA. You can do so by emailing any of the staff on deployment with you, or our Secretary General.

Accompanying persons

To enable an open and dynamic programme, and to ensure that there are sufficient space, accompanying officials will **not** be permitted access to the programme and will not be able to observe or participate in any of the sessions. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

KEY CONTACTS

CPA HQ

Avni Kondhia, Programmes Manager – CPwD and Youth Engagement, avni.kondhia@cpahq.org
Marshall Tisdale, Programme Officer, marshall.tisdale@cpahq.org
Matt Salik, Head of Programmes, matthew.salik@cpahq.org

Parliament of Malta

Emma Terribile, Research Officer, emma.terribile@parlament.mt
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CANCELLATION, WITHDRAWAL, CHANGE AND ABSENTEEISM POLICY

The following is an extract from the CPA Travel Policy and Manual alongside additional information and clarification. The CPA Travel Policy and Manual was approved by the CPA International Executive Committee in April 2023.

This Policy provides travellers with examples of acceptable and unacceptable mitigating circumstances for withdrawing, cancelling or changing booked travel and accommodation to attend a CPA activity or meeting which will incur a financial penalty to the CPA.

Given the high financial and environmental costs associated with the delivery of in-person programmes and activities, it is essential that travellers can commit to fully attend such activities. As such, any last-minute withdrawal or change to a traveller's attendance, which has resulted in the CPA incurring an unnecessary cost, these costs, in part or as a whole will be passed on to the traveller or Branch unless they are able to produce justifiable reasons. Furthermore, travellers or their Branches may be liable for costs associated with changes to bookings due to inaccurate or misleading information being provided. For example, incorrect passport details provided when booking flights or not informing the CPA if group booking accommodation is required.

For the purposes of this Policy, justifiable reasons or 'mitigating circumstances' are serious occurrences beyond the traveller or Branch's control, and which significantly disrupts the traveller's ability to participate fully in an activity, programme or meeting in-person. Mitigating circumstances refer only to the following situations:

- a) Experiences unforeseen/unexpected visa issues (having applied for visas in good time and having followed the application requirements).
- b) General elections are unexpectedly called
- c) Suffers significant illness, accident, or injury.
- d) Experiences sudden death or illness of immediate family member.
- e) Victim of a serious crime.
- f) Seriously impacted by an unexpected natural disaster.

Travellers will be expected to provide proof of the above in good time, in writing, with accompanying evidence to the CPA Headquarters Secretariat. The decision as to its validity will be determined by the CPA Secretary-General and all decisions are final.

The CPA Headquarters Secretariat recognises that exceptional circumstances may arise that do not fall within the predefined categories. In such cases, participants may submit a written request explaining their situation, along with any supporting evidence. The CPA Secretary-General will review these requests on a case-by-case basis, considering the specific circumstances.

Where such evidence is unable to be provided or an adequate justification given, the Branch in question will be invoiced for the costs incurred. The Branch is then at liberty to pass on such costs to the traveller(s) should they feel that is appropriate.

It is important to highlight that should such fees not be paid; this may count towards the Branch's financial standing with the Association. Consequently, the Branch may be restricted in being represented at future events and activities hosted by the CPA until such sums are recovered. In circumstances whereby a Branch or traveller is unable to reimburse the CPA due to serious financial constraints, they must inform the CPA's Finance Team at finance@cpahq.org immediately.

The following definitions are also provided for clarity:

- **'Last-minute'** is defined as anytime following the approval of a participant's nomination to attend a CPA activity and where a cost for that participant has been incurred by the CPA.
- **'Having applied for visas in good time'** means having submitted visa applications and associated permissions via internal/external Ministries immediately following the approval of nominations and receipt of visa support letters/note verbale.
- **'Proof'** can mean police reports, death certificates, medical records, visa application forms, etc.

Absenteeism

The following is an additional policy associated with the level of attendance of travellers (parliamentary participants, mentees and resource persons) involved in CPA funded or part-funded in-person activities.

The CPA is keen to ensure that the value of its activities is of maximum benefit to its participants, and by extension their Parliament and wider jurisdiction. In-person activities funded and delivered by the CPA are costly and so it is important to strive towards value for money for the organisation and its Branches. CPA's funding is primarily derived from Branch membership subscriptions which the CPA Headquarters Secretariat must ensure is used appropriately. Furthermore, the CPA and its Branches can be exposed to reputational risks if partner organisations offer their time and support for its programme on the understanding that there are people in attendance to gain insight from their contributions. Finally, other activity attendees can miss out on valuable networking and shared learning opportunities where participants fail to attend key programme elements.

Therefore, unless otherwise notified or directed, participants attending CPA in-person activities are expected to attend the full schedule of programme activities. Should a participant wish to excuse themselves briefly from the programme; to attend an important or unavoidable meeting or engagement, this should be agreed with the CPA in advance. Such absences should only be as long as is necessary to carry out the engagement and would not allow for a full day's absence. In the instance that a participant fails to attend the entire or majority of programme sessions and meetings, the CPA Headquarters Secretariat may communicate such absences to the CPA Branch Secretary and CPA Branch President(s) as appropriate. This policy will not apply to programme activities which are deemed as optional or voluntary. These instances will be clearly communicated to participants in advance.

Where costs have been incurred by the CPA Headquarters Secretariat for that participant's attendance (such as accommodation or flight costs), these costs may be transferred on to the CPA Branch or related participant to reimbursement to the CPA.

The mitigating policies stipulated above may also apply in the case of absenteeism. In which case, a CPA representative overseeing the activity must be notified at the earliest juncture should any of the following prevent a participant's involvement in the programme.

Where a CPA Branch's participant(s) repeatedly fail to fully attend CPA in-person activities, the CPA Headquarters Secretariat may take this record of poor attendance in to account when accepting nominations at future activities.