

CRE Terms: Professional Designations



For experienced commercial real estate (CRE) professionals, acronyms like CCIM and SIOR are part and parcel of everyday terminology. Often, these kinds of designations serve as professional “short-hand” – indicating credibility, specialized knowledge, and a specific and desirable skill set.

But for someone just starting out or not familiar with the industry, there’s a lot to take in when it comes to the terminology surrounding professional development and specialization in the CRE workplace. Even the most seasoned professional might lose track of an acronym or two amid the sea of professional designations.

Here are some of the most common CRE certifications and their acronyms.

CCIM

One of the most highly valued designations, CCIM or “Certified Commercial Investment Member” is only awarded to CRE professionals who have completed a full 200-hour curriculum of study and have accrued at least two years of working experience (though most members have many more). So, if you see those four letters behind someone’s name, it’s a good indication of a high level of expertise and credibility.

SIOR

As the name suggests, the Society of Industrial and Office Realtors (SIOR) provides a specialized designation for those working in industrial and office brokerage. The National Association of Realtors (NAR) notes that the designation is typically granted in one of six specialist categories including industrial or office transaction specialist (or both), sales management, executive management, and advisory services (for consultants/advisory practitioners).

Like CCIM, the SIOR designation requires a high degree of professional experience and extensive coursework, making it one of the most prestigious designations available to specialized CRE professionals.

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CRE

Membership of the Counselors of Real Estate, “CRE”, is reserved for those who have demonstrated the highest levels of expertise when it comes to providing strategic advice and solutions for complex commercial real estate problems. This designation is also extended by invitation only, and there are only 1,100 professionals who currently hold the CRE credential.

RICS, MRICS and FRICS

RICS or the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors is a UK-based but internationally recognized professional body that offers the RICS, MRICS (Chartered Member RICS), and FRICS (RICS Fellow) designations. Each indicates a different level of real estate expertise and education, with FRICS reserved for those considered high-level leaders in their field.

Additional Designations by Specialization and Sector

Naturally, there are a large variety of other possible designations to keep in mind as well – each with their own value and relevance within specific sectors. For example, those working in property management are likely to come across the designation CPM (Certified Property Manager) which is awarded by the Institute of Real Estate Management (IREM).

Meanwhile, a CIPS or Certified International Property Specialist designation is common among CRE professionals working with portfolios abroad and a GREEN designation signifies someone with a special interest in sustainability and decarbonized portfolios.

Other fast-growing sectors, like Senior Housing, come with their own specializations, adding to the ever-growing list of possible real estate specializations and designations.

