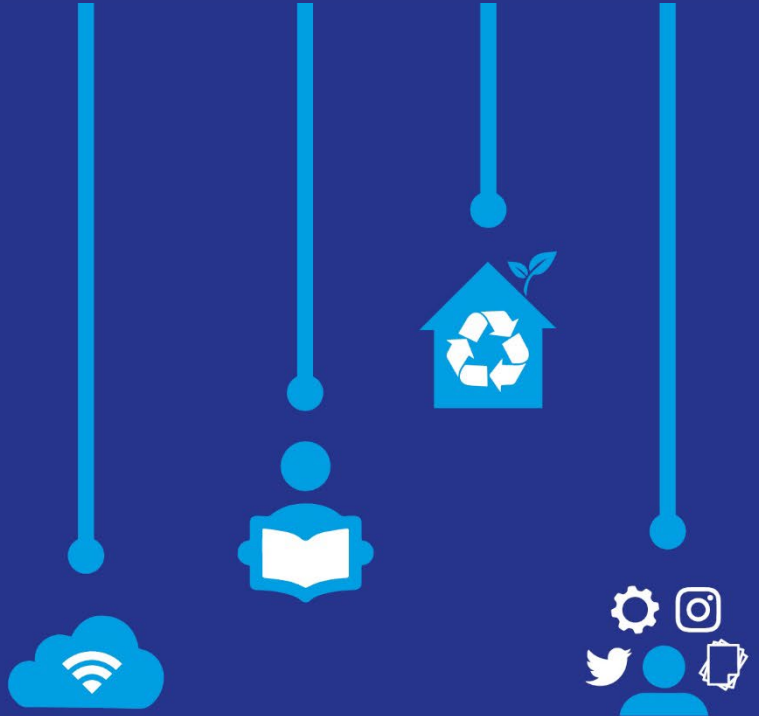




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Welsh Government

Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) Corporate Award Programme

Frequently Asked Questions

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This document was created by the Welsh Governments Commercial and Procurement, Capacity and Capability Team to support Welsh public sector employers, and potential students, understanding of the Welsh Government sponsored CIPS Corporate Award programme.

For further information in relation to this document, please contact
CommercialCapability.Gov.Wales

Programme Overview

What is the CIPS Corporate Award Programme?

The CIPS Corporate Award Programme is an initiative within the Welsh Government's Capacity and Capability agenda. This programme is designed to offer Welsh public sector staff targeted professional development, while addressing sector-wide capacity challenges and enhancing the profile of procurement in Wales. The Corporate Award comprises of two levels, Practitioner and Advanced Practitioner. An overview of each level is outlined below:

	Practitioner	Advanced Practitioner
Content	Develops a robust understanding of procurement essentials	Builds professionalism to deliver greater organisational value and reduce risk
Level of Learning	First year of an undergraduate degree	Honours degree
Duration	9 Months	14 Months
Outcome	Diploma membership	MCIPS - your professional license
Global Standard Competency Level	Operational	Managerial and Professional
CIPS Entry Criteria	None	Must hold CIPS Diploma or complete a competency assessment at the required level

Where can I find out more information on the Corporate Award?

Further information on the CIPS Corporate Award programme is available for both Practitioner and Advanced Practitioner levels. You can explore in detail by following the links below:

Practitioner: <https://www.cips.org/employers/people/corporate-award>

Advanced Practitioner: <https://www.cips.org/employers/people/corporate-award>

How is the Corporate Award structured & where can I find out more information on the programme structure?

The programme is delivered through a modular, work-based applied learning structure that enables participants to achieve their MCIPS designation within an accelerated timeframe. Comprising two levels, Practitioner and Advanced Practitioner, the programme is currently delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams, allowing participants the flexibility to balance their studies with other commitments through remote, face-to-face instruction.

Participants will be provided a full timetable ahead of programme onboarding.

For further information the CIPS Corporate Award product sheet is available via the CIPS website. Click [here](#) to access the website.

What level should I apply to study?

Candidates should carefully consider their previous education and experience when deciding which level of the programme is most suitable.

If a candidate has not completed Level 4 but believes they possess significant relevant knowledge or experience, they may opt to take the **CIPS Competency Assessment** at their own expense.

The Competency Assessment is integrated with our Applied Learning programme and is designed to evaluate a learner's procurement knowledge. Successful completion provides eligibility to begin the higher Level 5/6 Advanced Practitioner Applied Learning programme, bypassing Level 4.

The assessment is conducted online, consists of 110 multiple-choice questions, and takes approximately 90 minutes to complete.

If a candidate does not pass, they may either enrol in the Level 4 Practitioner Applied Learning programme or wait 12 months before retaking the assessment.

Will I receive a professional qualification by completing the full CIPS programme?

The CIPS Corporate Award is an applied route to achieving MCIPS and is not a regulated qualification. The examination route is the only way of gaining this qualification.

Application Process

How & when will the programme be advertised?

The CIPS Corporate Award programme is advertised through Welsh Government's Commercial and Procurement communication channels. To remain updated with programme updates, please follow our newsletter and socials. Registration links can be found below:

- **Newsletter:** [Sign up to our newsletter here](#)
- **X:** [@ ProcureWales](#)
- **LinkedIn:** [Welsh Government Commercial Procurement Directorate](#)

The Welsh Government aim to advertise funded programme opportunities over the summer period and open the formal application process in the Autumn. Successful candidates will be confirmed a start date for the Winter of the same application year.

What is the process for selection?

When completing an application for the CIPS Corporate Award Programme, candidates must review the scoring methodology.

Stage 1: Application Scoring

All applications will be reviewed and scored by a panel of commercial procurement professionals using a 1–7 scoring scale. This stage assesses the quality and relevance of responses provided in the application form.

Scoring Scale

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not Demonstrated	Minimal Demonstration	Moderate Demonstration	Acceptable Demonstration	Good Demonstration	Strong Demonstration	Outstanding Demonstration
No positive evidence and/or substantial negative evidence demonstrated	Limited positive evidence and/or mainly negative evidence demonstrated	Moderate positive evidence but some negative evidence demonstrated	Adequate positive evidence and any negative evidence would not cause concern	Substantial positive evidence of the competency or behaviour	Substantial positive evidence; includes some evidence of exceeding expectations at this level	The evidence provided wholly exceeds expectation at this level

Eligibility Threshold

Candidates must score a minimum of 5 in each open text response of their application to be considered eligible for sponsorship. This score reflects substantial positive evidence of alignment with programme goals and candidates' suitability.

Candidates must have a minimum of 12 months prior experience in a public sector procurement role by the time the programme commences.

The Welsh Government reserves the right to request that candidates applying for Level 4 (Practitioner) who have significant experience in commercial or public sector procurement roles undertake a competency assessment. Successful completion of this assessment may allow for direct entry to Level 5/6 (Advanced Practitioner).

Please note: The cost of the competency assessment must be covered by the candidate's employer.

No clarifications or further opportunity will be provided for candidates to strengthen the application.

Scoring Criteria

1. **Motivation and Commitment:** Demonstrates strong personal motivation and commitment to professional development.
2. **Relevance to Role:** Shows clear relevance of the programme to current procurement responsibilities.
3. **Organisational Impact:** Explains how the training will benefit the organisation and contribute to strategic goals.
4. **Public Sector Contribution:** Highlights how the applicant's learning will support broader public sector objectives.
5. **Skills Development:** Identifies specific skills to be developed and how they will be applied.
6. **Quality of Response:** Overall clarity, coherence, and persuasiveness of the application.
7. **CIPS Global Standards:** Candidates must demonstrate an understanding of the learning outcomes at the relevant level and apply this within their response. For further guidance on the skills requirements for this programme level please refer to the CIPS programme syllabus.

Stage 2: Strategic Allocation

Highest scoring applications that meet the scoring threshold will be considered for final allocation based on strategic factors to ensure fair representation.

Sector and Geographical Spread

Places will be allocated to ensure a balanced representation across:

- Public sector organisations
- Procurement functions
- Geographical regions within Wales

Organisational Prioritisation (By Exception)

If an organisation submits a high volume of applications, they may be asked to prioritise candidates.

This ensures equitable access and avoids overrepresentation from any single organisation.

What are the eligibility criteria for a place on the programme?

- Candidates must have passed any applicable probationary period.
- Candidates must have a minimum of 12 months public sector procurement experience.
- Candidates are members of the Welsh public sector procurement workforce.

Are there any conditions on acceptance if I am offered a place?

Yes, the conditions of the programme are outlined in the Learner Agreement. All candidates must submit a signed copy of the Learner Agreement with their application to be considered.

You and your employer will be required to complete the Learner Agreement confirming acceptance of the conditions and return with your application form.

Are the dates flexible?

No – The course delivery dates will be fixed & diarised accordingly in alignment with the CIPS timetable.

Costs and Funding

How much will it cost?

Welsh Government currently fully fund the costs of the programme. This is inclusive of your membership fees. Candidates must review the conditions of funded positions, found within the Learner Agreement.

Will I have to pay my own CIPS membership?

No, the costs of membership are inclusive of your tuition fees. Should you defer your studies, you will be required to fund your own membership fees when rejoining the programme.

The repayment in the case of withdrawal was previously my responsibility, why has this changed to the employer?

Welsh Government do not hold the information to enable us to recover any losses and relies on your good faith to share information on your employment status. Your employer will be best placed to manage this information with us and agree a repayment plan with you, if necessary. Terms of repayment are stipulated in the Learner Agreement.

Who is responsible for repaying my fees in the case of my withdrawal, do not complete the course (for various circumstances) or if I cease employment within the Welsh public sector?

Your employer will be responsible for repaying your fees in the case of a withdrawal in line with the conditions within the Learner Agreement. However, your employer may seek to recover these costs from you if appropriate.

Programme Delivery and Structure

What happens when I join the programme?

Where there are multiple cohorts, students will be allocated a cohort group by the Welsh Government to ensure a fair geographical and sector split. The Welsh Government will provide the list of students to CIPS who will then manage the onboarding process liaising directly with each student from the handover point. Onboarding will have concluded when CIPS issue a welcome pack to you, confirm your timetable and membership number. The terms of the Learner Agreement will commence from onboarding. They will also issue students with the invite for the induction session which is held prior to the classroom learning.

Where will the modules be delivered & can I do any of the courses online?

Yes, virtual classrooms will be held via Microsoft Teams.

Are there exams?

No. This is an assignment-based programme.

What are the expectations on me in terms of the study commitments & how much time do I need to commit to completing this course?

A pre-recorded webinar has been published on YouTube by CIPS, this outlines what is expected of you as a student when committing to the programme learning. You can access the CIPS webinar [here](#). Appendix 1 sets out the estimated guided learning hours over the duration of the course. Note that the practitioner syllabus is under review which may slightly affect the duration of the programme.

Deferrals, Withdrawals and Terminations

Am I able to defer my place on the programme?

You can defer your place for up to 12 months by submitting a deferral form to CIPS and the Commercial Capability mailbox, including a proposed rejoining date. Your employer is responsible for any extra costs caused by deferral, and requests are reviewed based on extenuating circumstances provided in the form.

What if I fail?

If you do not achieve the minimum pass mark after three resubmissions, you will fail the module. You may resit the module at your employer's expense (approximately £995 + VAT), as Welsh Government funding does not cover resits.

What if I start the programme and then need to terminate my studies?

Students can terminate their studies under certain conditions. The Learner Agreement sets out the conditions for terminations and repayment.

What is the latest I can withdraw from the programme if my circumstances change?

Withdrawals are allowed until the onboarding stage when CIPS establishes student memberships. After this point, funding is lost and cannot be reclaimed from CIPS. Withdrawals require confirmation of extenuating circumstances from your line manager. Your organisation may need to pay some or all programme costs, which budget holders must accept by signing the Learner Agreement and application form. Withdrawals are tracked and reported to the Commercial Procurement Senior Leadership Team.

Guided Learning Hours

Appendix 1 – Guided Learning Hours – Practitioner Programme

Practitioner	
Induction	3hrs
5 x 2-Day Training Modules	80hrs
3 Normative Assessments (40 Hrs Self Study per Module recommended over 4-week period)	120hrs
Integrative Assessment (80 hrs Self Study min recommended)	80hrs
Total Practitioner Level	283

Note:

The calculations for the Induction Event have been calculated a 3hr event delivered by webinar. If the induction event is delivered as a 1-day face-to-face event, then the guided learning hours (GLH) will be calculated at 8 not 3.

Self-study has been calculated based on 2 hours min per day over 4-week period to develop assignment for each paper.

Training day is based on an 8-hour normal training day.

Ethics Test:

If a student takes the Ethics Test an additional 4 hours should be added to the total.

CIPS Corporate Award Advanced Practitioner Guided Learning Hours

Advanced Practitioner	
Induction	3hrs
10 x Days Training Modules	80hrs
Workshops	80hrs
4 Single Module Normative Assessments (40 hrs Self Study min per Module)	160hrs
1 Double Module Normative Assessment (80 hrs Self Study min recommended)	80hrs
3 x Project Surgeries	3hrs
Research Project	120hrs

Total Advanced Practitioner Level	526hrs
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Note:

The calculations for the Induction Event have been calculated a 3hr event delivered by webinar. If the induction event is delivered as a 1-day face-to-face event, then the guided learning hours (GLH) will be calculated at 8 not 3.

Self-study has been calculated based on 2 hours min per day over 4-week period to develop assignment for each paper.

Training day is based on an 8-hour normal training day.

Ethics Test:

If a student takes the Ethics Test an additional 4 hours should be added to the total.