Llywodraeth Cymru
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Becoming a Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (MCIPS) A Guide for Learners

Commercial and Procurement



October 2026

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd / This document is also available in Welsh.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth a galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome correspondence and telephone calls in Welsh.



Introduction

The procurement profession plays a vital role in delivering efficient, sustainable and commercially effective public services across Wales. Procurement professionals are responsible for how public money is spent on goods, services and works by setting strategic sourcing priorities and managing markets, to securing value for money, embedding social value and ensuring compliance with procurement policy and legislation. Strong professional capability in procurement is essential to delivering objectives of the Welsh Government and achieving the outcomes set out in the Wales Procurement Policy Statement (WPPS).

As the profession evolves, so too does the need for clear, accessible pathways. These pathways support individuals at every stage of their career to develop the knowledge, procurement and commercial skills and gain professional recognition. A key indication of professional competence within procurement is full MCIPS, Membership of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS). MCIPS is an internationally recognised professional accreditation that demonstrates an individual meets the required standards of knowledge, experience and ongoing professional conduct expected of a qualified procurement practitioner.

This document sets out the range of routes available in Wales to achieve MCIPS, supporting the WPPS and wider ambitions for a capable and resilient procurement workforce. It brings together apprenticeship pathways, professional development programmes, work-based assessment routes and higher education options into one place.

Selecting the appropriate route

Whether you are beginning your procurement journey, building on existing experience, or progressing your professional MCIPS status, this resource is designed to help you identify the route that best aligns with your existing experience and future career goals.

Routes presented within the guide include:

- Commercial, Procurement and Supply Apprenticeship (Wales)
- CIPS Professional Qualifications
- CIPS Corporate Award Applied Learning Programme
- CIPS Accredited Degree Programmes
- CIPS Management Entry Route.

The guide has been developed to recommend the suitability of each route in line with the learner's individual context. Where appropriate, this should be considered in discussion with your line manager, alongside your work and personal circumstances, career and education history, and learning style.

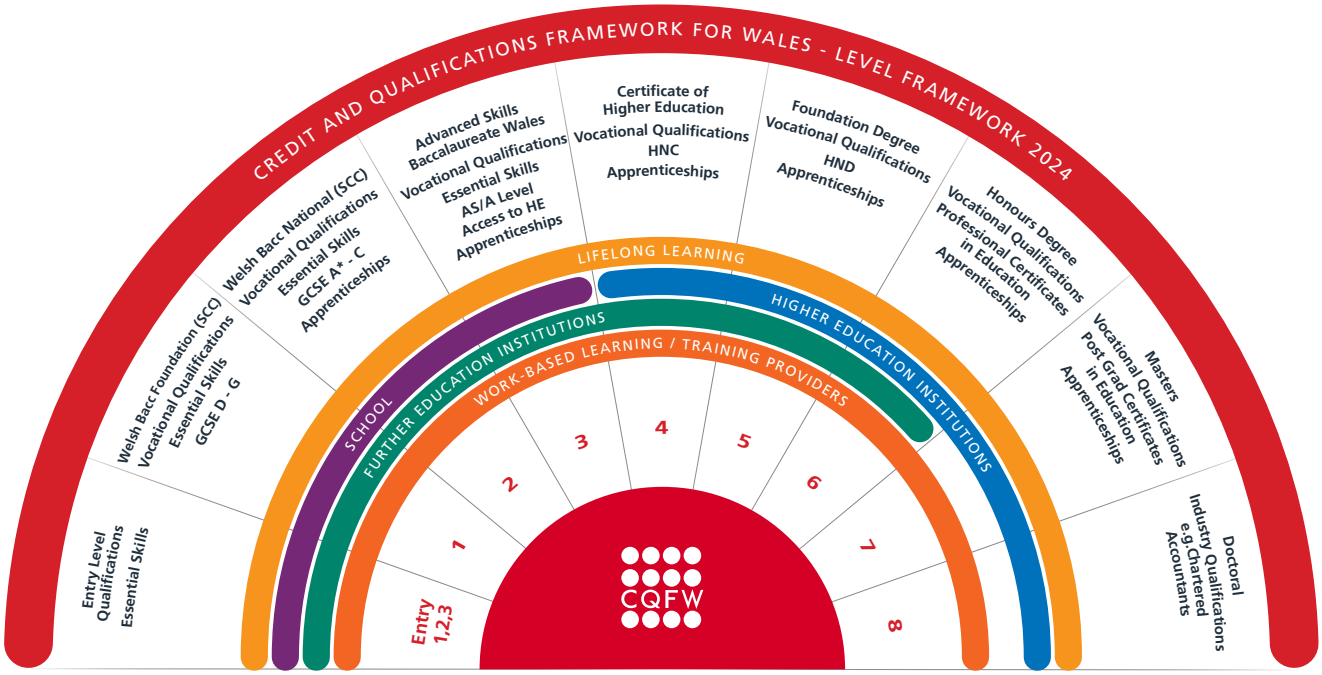
Consideration should also be provided to the level of qualification. All qualifications are designed to support entry, level 1, to level 8, doctoral. The Credit and Qualification Framework (see CQFW Fan diagram 2024) will support your decision making.

CREDIT & QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR WALES
FFRAMWAITH CREDYDAU A CHYMWYSTERAU CYMRU

CQFW Fan Diagram 2024

The Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales is a fully inclusive learning framework. The Levels capture all learning from the very initial stages (Entry, 1, 2 & 3) to the most advanced (Level 8).

The fan diagram below illustrates the levels and examples of qualifications and learning provision that are included in it.



- Pre-entry level accreditation is delivered in schools, FE Institutions and within lifelong learning. This level is differentiated further to provide a progression route for those learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).
- Where level 3 provision is integrated into HE provision, e.g. a degree course with an integrated foundation year, then a student is considered to be studying for a HE qualification in all years of that course.

For further details: Visit **gov.wales/cqfw** or e-mail **CQFW.Enquiries@gov.wales**



Commercial, Procurement and Supply Apprenticeship (Wales)

The Commercial, Procurement and Supply Apprenticeship is a work based development route designed to build professional procurement capability while individuals are employed in a procurement or commercial role. It combines practical, on the job experience with structured learning aligned to Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply (CIPS) standards, enabling apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of a modern procurement professional. In line with the apprenticeship standards for Wales, apprentices must demonstrate both the knowledge and competence required for their role. This apprenticeship achieves this through the successful completion of two qualifications.

The apprenticeship provides a recognised pathway to CIPS qualifications and can support progression towards MCIPS, depending on the level undertaken and the individual's prior experience. It covers core areas such as stakeholder engagement, procurement strategy, sourcing and contract management, ethical procurement, stakeholder engagement.

The apprenticeship is currently available at the two levels outlined. Individuals can progress beyond these levels through a range of alternative routes to MCIPS.

Study Route	Level 3	Level 4
Duration of Study Participants must achieve both competence and knowledge qualification	**Estimated 12-18 months.** Training hours – on and off the job (490 hours). Further information is available **here**.	**Estimated 12-24 months.** Training hours – on and off the job (930 hours). Further information is available **here**.
Suitability	New or existing procurement team members. No, or limited business and/or procurement experience. Entry levels roles.	New or existing procurement team members. Some prior business or procurement experience, in roles leading some procurement activity or No, or limited business experience and/or procurement experience with prior qualifications (such as A level or equivalent).
Approach	Blended and applied learning.	Blended and applied learning.



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Study Route	Level 3	Level 4
Assessment Method	Knowledge – examination. Competence – evidence/portfolio.	Knowledge – examination. Competence – evidence/portfolio.
Cost Per Route	Medr funding is allocated directly to the Welsh Apprenticeship Training Providers.	Medr funding is allocated directly to the Welsh Apprenticeship Training Providers.
Training Provider	**List of Apprenticeship Training Providers**.	**List of Apprenticeship Training Providers**.
Exemptions	Discuss with Training Provider.	Discuss with Training Provider.
Funding Route	**Medr – the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research**.	**Medr – the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research**.
Qualification	Level 3: **Knowledge** **Advanced Certificate in Procurement Certificate Advanced CIPS** and Competence **Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations (Wales)**.	Level 4: **Knowledge** **Diploma in Procurement and Supply CIPS** and Competence **Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations (Wales)**.
	The competency qualifications at Level 3 and Level 4 are additional stand-alone qualifications that are completed in addition to the CIPS Level 3 Certificate or Level 4 CIPS Diploma.	
Entry Requirements	**Further information is available here**.	**Further information is available here**.
Useful Information	Further information is available **here**.	



CIPS Professional Qualifications

CIPS Professional Qualifications provide a globally recognised, structured pathway for developing competence and professionalism within procurement and supply. The qualifications are built around the CIPS Global Standard for Procurement and Supply, ensuring consistent expectations of knowledge, skills and ethical behaviour across the profession worldwide.

Progressing through the CIPS levels enables individuals to build expertise across areas such as commercial strategy, ethical and sustainable procurement, sourcing, contract management and leadership. Successful completion of the required levels and associated experience supports progression to MCIPS, demonstrating full professional competence and commitment to continuing professional development.

Study Route	CIPS Professional Qualification
Duration of Study	CIPS learning is designed to be flexible and work compatible. Study time is usually described as guided learning hours, the time an average learner spends engaging with learning materials, assessment preparation and consolidation. Guided learning hours are often spread over a period of 9-15 months per the level, depending on CIPS programme level, intensity and mode of study.
Suitability	**CIPS Level 2 Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations** · New starters to procurement or supply chain roles. · Individuals supporting administrative procurement activity. · Individuals exploring requiring foundation knowledge, with no prior procurement experience or qualifications.
	CIPS Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations · Individuals progressing from level 2. · Individuals with responsibility for supporting procurement activity/completing basic procurement tasks. · Individuals seeking to build on introductory procurement and supply chain knowledge.
	CIPS Level 4 Diploma in Procurement and Supply · Individuals progressing from level 3, or with prior education or relevant work experience. · Individuals looking to progress from an operational understanding of procurement into professional procurement practice with responsibility of procurement activities.



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Study Route	CIPS Professional Qualification
Suitability (Cont'd)	**CIPS Level 5 Advanced Diploma in Procurement and Supply** · Individuals progressing from level 4. · Individuals seeking to develop their knowledge, understanding and capability to perform effectively in a range of higher-level and more complex procurement and supply roles. · Experienced procurement professionals with influencing responsibility.
	CIPS Level 6 Professional Diploma in Procurement and Supply · Individuals progressing from level 5. · Individuals operating at a strategic level within procurement and supply, who require advanced professional knowledge and expertise. · Those looking to develop strategic leadership capability.
Approach	Various study models are available to suit the learners needs: · Blended learning · Distance learning · Flexible learning · Full time learning · Part time learning.
Assessment Method	Examination.
Cost Per Route*	CIPS Level 2 Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations – approx. £2,100. CIPS Level 3 Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations – approx. £2,350. CIPS Level 4 Diploma in Procurement and Supply – approx. £4,000. CIPS Level 5 Advanced Diploma in Procurement and Supply – approx. £4,000. CIPS Level 6 Professional Diploma in Procurement and Supply – approx. £4,100.
Training Provider	Find a training provider **here**.
Exemptions	Module exemptions maybe available for individuals with prior relevant learning. Further information can be found here: **Exemptions Qualifications | CIPS**.



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Study Route	CIPS Professional Qualification
Funding Route	Self/Employer funded. Individuals looking to study Level 3 and Level 4 Qualification should consider the Welsh Commercial, Procurement and Supply Apprenticeship. Funding to study may be available via the apprenticeship training providers in Wales. Funding for Levels 4 and Level 5 may be available via the Welsh Government Personal Learning Account programme. Individuals must meet key criteria. Further information can be found **here**.
Available Qualifications	CIPS Level 2 – Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations. CIPS Level 3 – Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations. CIPS Level 4 – Diploma in Procurement and Supply. CIPS Level 5 – Advanced Diploma in Procurement and Supply. CIPS Level 6 – Professional Diploma in Procurement and Supply.
Entry Requirement	Please contact the relevant study centre to discuss the entry criteria.
Useful Information	**Procurement Qualifications | CIPS**.

* Study fees are variable and set by individual Training Providers. Prices quoted are a guide and obtained from publicly available sources and accurate as of April 2026.



CIPS Corporate Award – Applied Learning Programme

The CIPS Corporate Award Programme provides an employer supported route for individuals to develop and demonstrate professional procurement competence in line with the CIPS Global Standard for Procurement and Supply. Learner's complete assignments and assessments by applying CIPS professional standards within their own organisational and commercial environment, ensuring learning is practical, relevant and grounded in real world experience.

This route enables individuals to evidence their knowledge, skills and ethical practice through work based application, supporting progression towards MCIPS on full completion of the programme and meeting CIPS eligibility requirements for MCIPS. The Corporate Award programme helps strengthen professional judgement and commercially focused capability that is transferable across roles, organisations and sectors. Visit the CIPS website **here** for a recorded overview of the programme and the accompanying CIPS Product Sheet.

Study Route	Practitioner (Level 4)	Advanced Practitioner (Level 5 & 6)
Duration of Study	12 Months.	18 Months.
Suitability	Individuals who are seeking a work-based, non-exam route to professional procurement accreditation, with no prior CIPS qualification required. Not yet operating at diploma or MCIPS level, but who are actively working in procurement or supply-related roles and are able to apply learning through their day-to-day responsibilities.	For experienced procurement and supply professionals who are seeking a work-based, non-exam route to full MCIPS status. Individuals who can demonstrate existing professional competence.
Approach	Virtual classroom.	Virtual classroom.
Assessment Method	Applied learning. Assignment.	Applied learning. Assignment including a final project submission.
Cost Per Route	Employers can expect to pay between £4,000-£6,000 plus VAT depending on the programme level. Contact CIPS directly to explore **here**.	
Training Provider	CIPS.	CIPS.



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Study Route	Practitioner (Level 4)	Advanced Practitioner (Level 5 & 6)
Exemptions	N/A	The CIPS Competency Assessment provides a route for experienced practitioners to enter the programme directly, without first completing the Practitioner level. **CIPS Applied learning Programme**. Contact CIPS for further information.
Funding Route*	Self/Employer funded.	Self/Employer funded.
Qualification**	Non-qualification Diploma Membership.	Non-qualification MCIPS.
Entry Requirement	None.	Must hold CIPS Diploma or enter via the CIPS competency assessment.
Useful Information	Further information can be obtained **here**.	

* Subject to eligibility and availability, Welsh Government funding may be available to support Welsh public sector delivery of the **Wales Procurement Policy Statement (WPPS)**. For further information please contact **CommercialCapability@gov.wales**.

** The CIPS Corporate Award Applied Learning Route is a route to achieve MCIPS and is not a regulated qualification. The examination route is the only way of gaining this qualification.



CIPS Accredited Degree Programmes

Study Route	Master's Degree Programmes. Undergraduate, postgraduate or fast track programmes
Duration of Study	Degree programmes can range between one year to four years depending on the inclusion of an industry placement or a fast-track option. Browse the CIPS accredited degree programme providers **here**.
Suitability	Students aiming to start a career in procurement and supply or those individuals wish to transition into or build a career in this area, or those that already hold an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification. Individuals who hold the CIPS qualification (the CIPS Applied Learning may also accepted for entry) and have three to five years of relevant industry experience and are seeking further studies.
Approach	CIPS accredited degrees are delivered through universities, typically via campus-based study, with delivery arrangements set by the individual institution.
Assessment Method	Different programmes offer varying assessment methods approach may include coursework, exams, project work or work-based placements or a mix of individual and group tasks or dissertation.
Cost Per Route	Programme costs will vary depending on the accredited degree and study route duration. Typical costs for a full-time fee per year can range from £9,00 to £13,000*.
Training Provider(s)**	Welsh universities with CIPS degree options. Cardiff University. University of South Wales.
Exemptions	Contact the relevant university of choice for further detail regarding exemptions.
Funding Route	Self/Employer funded.
Qualification	BSc or MSc.
Entry Requirement	Requirements will vary by degree choice. Contact the university directly for information.
Useful Information	**www.southwales.ac.uk/** **www.cardiff.ac.uk/study**

* Typical costs are correct as of the publication date.

** There may be alternative CIPS accredited degree programmes outside of Wales. Explore further **here**.



CIPS Management Entry Route

The CIPS Management Entry Route provides an accelerated entry point into the CIPS framework for experienced professionals who are working in procurement, supply, or a closely related commercial role.
It recognises prior learning and professional experience, allowing individuals to access CIPS study at an advanced level without following the full sequential progression from entry level. This route supports faster progression towards MCIPS by enabling experienced practitioners to focus on developing strategic, leadership and professional capability aligned to the CIPS Global Standard for Procurement and Supply.

Study Route	Experiential Management Entry Route
Duration of Study	N/A
Suitability	Professionals with significant procurement, commercial or supply chain experience who are not formally CIPS qualified. Individuals working at, or aspiring to, management or leadership level within procurement. Career changers bringing transferable commercial or contract management experience into the profession.
Approach	Application form via the CIPS website. Apply **here**.
Assessment Method	Submission of evidence of experience, ethics test, online assessment, and a 90-minute interview.
Cost Per Route	£1,000
Training Provider	N/A
Exemptions	N/A
Funding Route	Self-funded/Employer.
Qualification	N/A
Entry Requirement	Affiliate member. Passed CIPS Ethics Test. At least 5-10 years of strategic experience. Check eligibility **here: Management Entry Route (MER) Eligibility Tool**.
Further Information	**Mer Upgrade Membership| CIPS**.

Capability

Routes to MCIPS

The Global Standard bands	Delivering		Managing	Leading		Influencing
Example Job Titles	*Assistant Buyer, Inventory Planner, Category Officer, Purchasing Assistant*	*Buyer Contracting Officer Supply Chain Analyst Procurement Executive*	*Category Manager, Contracts Manager, Senior Buyer, Procurement Manager*	*Commercial Manager, Senior Category Manager, Supply Chain Manager, Head of Sourcing*		*Head of Procurement, Procurement Director, Supply Chain Director, Operations Director*
Entry requirements	No entry requirements ENTRY POINT	No entry requirements ENTRY POINT	2 A Levels or 2 years' experience in a business role HIGHEST ENTRY POINT	Level 4 Diploma or Practitioner Applied Learning	Levels 4 Diploma & Level 5 Advanced Diploma*	3 years' experience in a post of responsibility
Qualifications	**Level 2** Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations	**Level 3** Advanced Certificate in Procurement and Supply Operations	**Level 4** Diploma in Procurement and Supply	**Level 5** Advanced Diploma in Procurement and Supply	**Level 6** Professional Diploma in Procurement and Supply	**MCIPS Chartered** 30 CPD hrs & Ethics test
Apprenticeship standards		Level 3 Apprenticeship	Level 4 Apprenticeship			
Applied Learning (Corporate Award)			Practitioner Applied Learning	Advanced Practitioner Applied Learning		
Experiential route					Management Entry Route	
CIPS Credited Degrees	If you have completed a CIPS accredited degree and have at least three years procurement experience, you'll be able to apply to upgrade to MCIPS here. USW offer the fast-track MSc Strategic Procurement Management CIPS accredited degree. Further information is available here.					
			Undergraduate Degree			Masters Degree

Further information

If you have any questions about the routes outlined in this guide, or would like further information to help you identify the most appropriate option, please contact the Commercial Capability team.

CommercialCapability@gov.wales