
CIPS Approved Study Centre Criteria Guidance

Guidance for applicant centres and study centres on the evidence requirements for:

- **Becoming a CIPS approved study centre**
- **Continuing to meet CIPS' approved study centre criteria**
- **Meeting CIPS' criteria for 'Centre of Merit' and 'Centre of Excellence'**

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Part 4 (pages 22 - 23)
List of documents available on CIPS website to assist study centres with the above processes.
New within the 2019 version of this guidance:
The criteria have been reviewed and revised and therefore, please ensure that you do not use any previous versions of this guidance document.

Part 1: New applicants for CIPS study centre approval	
Before making an application Applicant study centres must provide CIPS with:	
A completed application form: Form SC1 – CIPS Study Centre Approval application form.	The application form is available from CIPS once you have completed the online ‘Health check’ via the CIPS website: https://www.cips.org/learn/qualifications/education-partners/become-a-study-centre/
A Management Letter indicating support for the introduction of CIPS programmes at the centre.	A template for this letter can be found via the CIPS ShareFile system.
A Business Plan, in which the centre sets out their rationale and financial credibility for offering CIPS programmes, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of market research showing a market need and demand in their locality for provision of CIPS programmes • Evidence of a sufficiently stable financial basis for becoming a CIPS study centre to ensure that learners will receive high quality provision for the foreseeable future 	Guidance notes for compiling the Business Plan can also be found via the CIPS ShareFile system.

The Study Centre Criteria Guidance document provides comprehensive guidance on:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The criteria to be met in order to achieve and retain study centre approval with CIPS • Examples of the evidence required by CIPS to confirm that each criterion has been met

New applicants: Completing the application form (Form SC1)

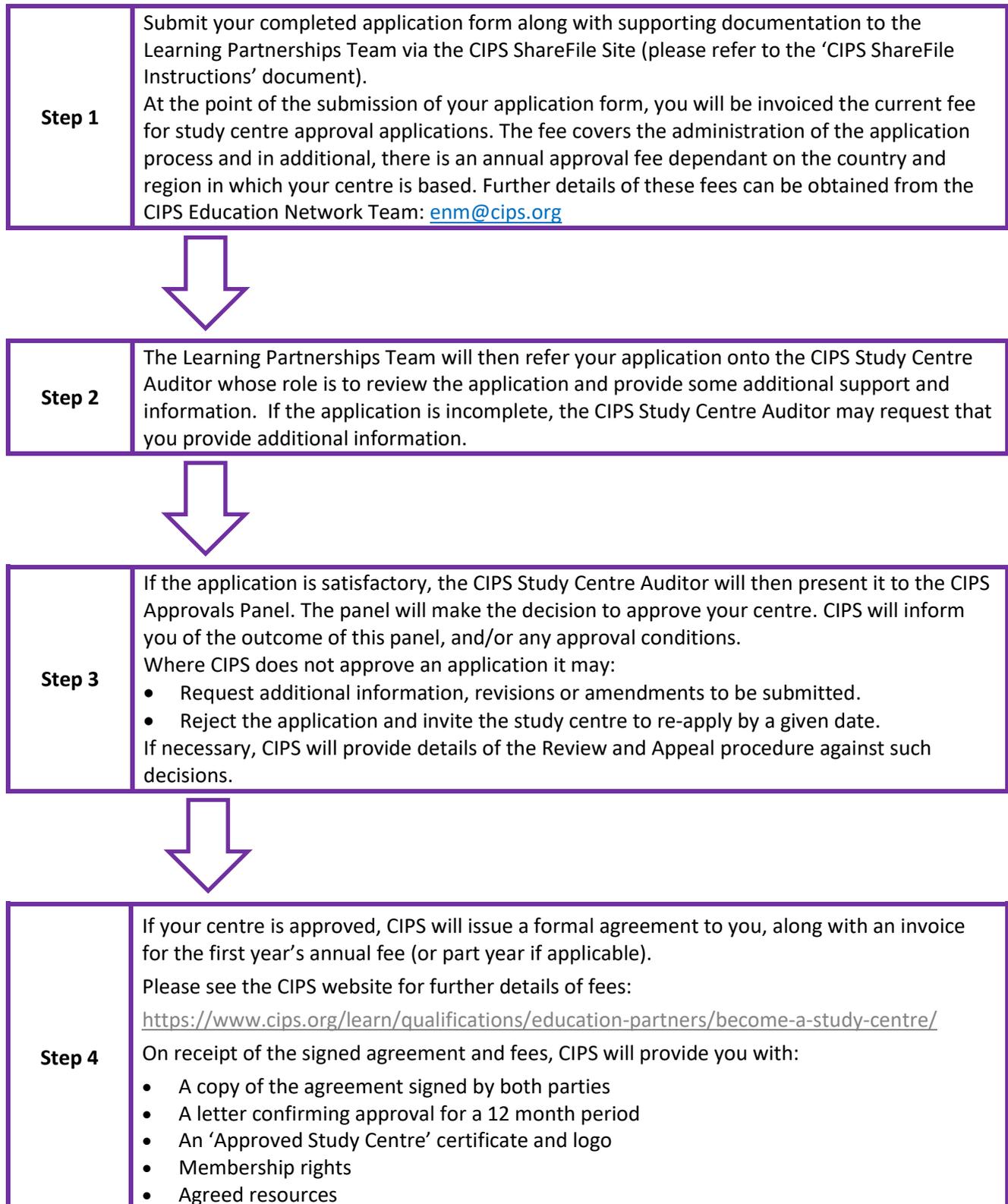
The study centre criteria are set to ensure that high standards are maintained across the study centre network, and that the CIPS Awarding Body can confidently confirm regulatory compliance to its regulators.

CIPS awards, ‘study centre status’ based on the validity of the evidence presented by the centre against the ‘Approved Study Centre Criteria’ (refer to Part 2 of this form). This document suggests ways in which your centre can provide evidence that you meet the criteria.

It is important to provide appropriate evidence for each criterion. Centres are advised to construct a portfolio or file of relevant evidence, appropriately cross-referenced, e.g. *‘Criterion 2.1 Learner handbook’ (page, paragraph etc. if relevant)* and submit this with the application. After approval, this portfolio should be kept up to date for the CIPS annual monitoring activity.

In some cases, systems or processes will not yet be in place: in these cases a description of the proposed system/process should be included. During the centre approval application process, and/or the subsequent monitoring activity, after study centre approval is awarded, CIPS will need to verify the statements made and processes described.

The application process





Step 5	CIPS carries out annual monitoring procedures and study centres are subject to a biennial monitoring activity visit from one of our CIPS Study Centre Auditors. The annual monitoring activity reviews check compliance with approved study centre criteria and generate appropriate action plans if necessary.
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Graded Study Centres

After two years as an approved study centre, and provided certain additional criteria are met, it is possible to apply for an upgrade to 'Centre of Merit'. After a further two years continued demonstration of additional criteria, 'Centre of Excellence' can be achieved.

Details of the Centre of Merit and Centre of Excellence grading criteria can be found within Part 3 of this guidance document.

Part 2: All centres: the Approved Study Centre criteria

(Applicable to new applicants and existing CIPS approved study centres)

Guidance notes for meeting the evidence requirements for the CIPS Approved Study Centre criteria.

1 Business structure, financial stability and policies.

1.1

The study centre has clear commitment from Senior Management to being a CIPS Approved Centre and makes adequate provision for its learners to complete their programme of study.

Evidence that you will need to provide

Approval stage; New applicants:

- A **Management Letter** of commitment on headed paper supporting the application. CIPS has provided a template for the required Management Letter which includes all the items referred to in various sections of the Centre Approval Application form. This letter must be on headed paper, and the Head of Centre (or other person authorised to do so on her/his behalf) must sign the letter to indicate their agreement to the items listed (*see CIPS Management Letter template for all required items*).
- **Business plan** relating to proposed engagement with CIPS (see CIPS Business Plan guidance notes). CIPS will also request management accounts or complete a credit check on the company. For centres applying in South Africa CIPS will also request copies of tax clearance certificates.

On-going monitoring stage; Existing centres:

- An updated management letter of commitment on headed paper *which reinforces that your study centre has a clear commitment to deliver CIPS qualifications and has the appropriate structure and resources in place to do so.*
- In unforeseen circumstances should the centre be unable to continue to offer CIPS programmes, there should be provision for ensuring that learners are able to complete their course elsewhere, or by using a different mode of study (e.g. distance learning). Please indicate a commitment to this provision within the Management Letter.
- You may also wish to provide a copy of your centre's learner contract or agreement which confirms your commitment, e.g.
'[STUDY CENTRE] will ensure that if a class ceases to be viable, we will arrange completion of your course through you joining another group, transferring to another centre, or through open/distance learning.'

1.2	The Study Centre has appropriate policies in place to safeguard learners and the learning process.
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p>Approval stage:</p> <p>The centre should have in place an appropriate range of policies that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliant with latest statutory and regulatory requirements • Supported and monitored by management • Understood and complied with by the delivery/assessment/internal quality assurance team and by learners • Linked to clear procedures that ensure that policy appears in practice • Subject to regular review and updating where appropriate <p>Please provide a copy of all policies listed below. Justification must be given for any policies that are considered not to be relevant to the centre. CIPS will check that each policy is up-to-date (i.e. includes reference to latest legislation/regulation, where appropriate).</p> <p>Please show how relevant policies are issued/made known to staff and learners at the centre (e.g. included in induction/ staff/ learner handbook).</p> <p>Please provide written procedures that show that policies are put into practice.</p> <p>Please provide a copy of, or describe the centre’s system for policy monitoring and review/update by management.</p> <p>Policies required:</p> <p>If you are unable to provide evidence of the below named policies, please explain how your centre polices are relevant and are adhered to.</p> <p>1. Malpractice & Maladministration policy and procedure</p> <p>Must include preventative measures, monitoring procedures, and actions to be taken in the event of malpractice or maladministration being identified, including notifying CIPS, and if necessary the regulator.</p> <p>2. Complaints policy/procedure and/or Appeals procedure (for learner complaints)</p> <p>Must include a clear procedure for learners to follow, showing stages of complaint-handling within the centre, and the point at which unresolved complaints should be referred to CIPS. It should also include an appropriate means of monitoring, record-keeping, and reporting on complaints, and usage of data for quality-improvement.</p> <p>3. Data Protection</p> <p>The centre must have secure management information systems for storing learner information that are accessible only to approved staff. Policy should cover centre’s position on storing and archiving data, location of data, roles and responsibilities of staff with regard to record keeping. The centre must ensure that staff are aware of their legal obligations and that the relevant data protection notices are accurate and compliant with legislation. The Centre General Data Protection Regulation Policy should be clearly communicated to learners/other data subjects.</p>

1.2 (cont.)	The Study Centre has appropriate policies in place to safeguard learners and the learning process.
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p>4. Reasonable adjustments policy Should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information for learners about the provision of learner support services, either provided in a learner handbook or provided to learners elsewhere, e.g. during the enrolment process or at induction • Details of the centres arrangements for providing equality of opportunity and access to learning and assessment • Details of the centres arrangements for facilitating reasonable adjustments for candidates with particular requirements, difficulties or disabilities • Cross reference to CIPS policy on reasonable adjustments <p>5. Health and Safety Confirmation of the centre’s undertaking that all premises, facilities and equipment to be used for delivery and/or assessment (of CIPS programmes) comply with the relevant health and safety legislation. For non UK centres, if you do not have a policy please provide any certificates you have been awarded for Health and Safety as well as the criteria for gaining the certificates (or a link to the appropriate Health and Safety authority website)</p> <p>6. Safeguarding Where there are learners under the age of 18 or vulnerable adults, the centre should meet the requirements of current safeguarding legislation, in relation to checks on the employment of staff. The Safeguarding Policy should commit the centre, based on a risk assessment of its learner body in relation to (a) children and (b) vulnerable adults, to having a sufficient number of trained and competent staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding, and a means of communicating relevant information and material effectively to staff. This may only be applicable to UK study centres.</p> <p>7. Equality & Diversity Must be compliant with equality legislation, and include appropriate systems for monitoring, record-keeping, reporting, and usage of data for quality-improvement.</p> <hr/> <p><i>On-going monitoring stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please detail if any changes have occurred regarding your policies since your initial approval or since your last submitted annual monitoring report.

2	The learner experience from enquiry/enrolment to course delivery and post course guidance
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2.1a	<p>Clear information, advice and guidance about the centre, its delivery model(s), and about CIPS qualification content, procedures and progression are provided to potential and new learners.</p>
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p>Approval stage; New applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enquirer information is accurate and up-to-date. Please provide copies of all documents that your centre gives to potential and enrolled learners. These documents should enable enquirers to determine whether they are suitable to undertake CIPS programmes, and to understand their entitlement as a learner at your centre, as well as directing them to further sources of advice and guidance. This could be in the format of a handbook or a link to your website if you have an online version. • Induction covers all items listed, sufficient to give new learners clear, complete, and accurate information to enable them to embark on the course. Please provide a copy of your centre’s induction programme for CIPS courses, with an indication of when induction takes place. <u>Induction</u> should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guide to centre facilities • identifying learner’s study & assessment needs • available learner support • course requirements, schedule, timetable, teaching methods, available resources, handbooks • CIPS on-line exam entry system: guidance on correct entry procedure to CIPS exams • opportunities to consider programme options and choices (if any) • progression opportunities through the CIPS qualifications • CIPS membership • centre policies and how they can be accessed (as listed in criterion 1.3) • centre complaints procedure • a draft CIPS learner handbook must be developed <p>On-going monitoring stage; Existing centres:</p> <p>Learner handbook contains accurate up-to-date information about CIPS and its programmes, including requirement to contact CIPS to register, obtain information on assessment, possible exemptions and relevant policies (<i>see also CIPS website: ‘Guide to Exemptions from CIPS Examinations’</i>).</p> <p>They should also provide clear information about the procedures to be followed in order to enrol, register, study and achieve CIPS qualifications at your centre, and post-qualification progression routes either at your centre or elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are learners on CIPS programmes* <i>*If there have been no enrolments to CIPS programmes twelve months from the approval date and if there continues to be no enrolments to CIPS programmes, CIPS reserves the right to suspend or withdraw Study Centre Approval.</i> <p>Annual monitoring against the approved study centre criteria will commence one year from the date of approval.</p>

<p>2.1b</p>	<p>Evidence that learners are appropriately prepared for CIPS examinations, e.g. by completing assignments, past papers, etc. Learners also receive suitable feedback and guidance for improvement.</p>
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p><i>Approval stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please describe your centre’s procedure for explaining assessment methods and requirements at the initial induction. <p><i>On-going monitoring stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many learners will not have been required to produce a sustained piece of written text, from memory, for a long time. Learners taking CIPS Diplomas (Constructed Response exams) will be required to do this via paper based or computer based exams. <p>Whilst classroom-based discussion around exam questions is a useful tool, it will not prepare the learner for the 2 or 3 hour exams that they will face. Written/typed assignments or timed practice in completing the answers to exam questions are an important part of the learner’s preparation. Equally important is the written feedback that follows such tasks, which enables them to see how to improve.</p> <p>Please show how your centres provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for practising exam techniques and • Constructive feedback following such exercises <p><i>This could be in the form of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Assignment task/feedback sheet</i> • <i>Revision sessions, past papers set/marked and feedback given</i>

<p>2.2</p>	<p>Information provided to learners clearly details the course structure as required by CIPS, including full coverage of module content and required Guided Learning Hours (GLH). Study Centres need to be aware of the number of hours assigned for TQT.</p>
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p>Approval stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide details of your programme for CIPS qualifications: • qualifications (to be) offered • programme/schedule for each course, showing how content will be covered, and how CIPS requirements for GLH will be/are met and will be communicated to the learner (see below). A sample of a completed scheme of work (SoW). • named tutor(s) for each module. <p>On-going monitoring stage :</p> <p>A scheme of work should be provided that covers the full module content, shows sensible breakdown of topic areas, time allocation, use of resources, activities and assessment of learning (schemes of work should be available for all modules offered):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All CIPS modules taught • CIPS provides a simple scheme of work template, but centres may wish to use their own version. Regardless of whether delivery is classroom-based, or via blended learning, distance learning, e-learning, etc., the scheme of work should indicate how the topic content will be covered within the time available, and the delivery methods and resources to be used, including use of online/interactive resources, to give learners a reasonable variety of learning opportunities. • The scheme(s) of work should show an appropriate variety of learning opportunities (to include the GLH).

Guided Learning Hours (GLH): the specified GLH for each CIPS module is detailed within each specification document within each qualification level webpage

<https://www.cips.org/learn/qualifications/certificate/>

However, it is recognised that many CIPS learners may not need 100% of GLH to be tutor-led, so **CIPS will accept a medley of approaches (see list below), provided that evidence is available to show that the full requirement for GLH is covered.**

You must keep records to show how the learner is given their GLH entitlement using an appropriate range of the approaches listed below. The combination of approaches must be justifiable, e.g.

- Taught programmes should show the majority of GLH as tutor-led;
- Distance learning programmes should show the study time allocated for each work-package, plus other methods of learner support making up the full GLH;
- ‘Customised’(blended) programmes should show how the learner is given the GLH entitlement inside and outside of tutor-led hours

For every CIPS module there must be evidence to show the learner’s entitlement to the required GLH using an appropriate selection of the following approaches:

- Classroom tuition, lectures
- Seminars/tutorials
- Supervised study where the tutor is present to give subject-specific guidance
- Virtual rather than face-to-face contact, where the tutor is directly accessible by the learner through the use of telephone, email, email discussion groups, virtual learning environments (VLEs) and other technology-aided means (e.g. through telephone or video-conferencing or webcasting)
- Induction activity specific to the module or programme of study
- Records of interaction between the learner and the tutor in the form of feedback on marked work
- Work-packages (distance learning). The study hours expected of the learner must be shown in each work-package
- Subject-specific reading / activity set prior to workshops or class-based sessions.

Study Centres must be aware that an Awarding Organisation must assign a number of hours for TQT and Guided Learning hours. Total Qualification Time is comprised of the following two elements:

- the number of hours which an awarding organisation has assigned to a qualification for Guided Learning, and
- an estimate of the number of hours a Learner will reasonably be likely to spend in preparation, study or any other form of participation in education or training, including assessment, which takes place as directed by – but, unlike Guided Learning, not under the Immediate Guidance or Supervision of – a lecturer, supervisor, tutor or other appropriate provider of education or training.

Please refer to the relevant Syllabus guide and CIPS website for TQT hours.

2.3	The Study Centre has sufficient competent, qualified and experienced staff and/or associates to meet CIPS requirements for qualifications delivery.
Evidence that you will need to provide	<p>Approval and On-going monitoring stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide CVs of teaching staff, including details of professional/specialist/teaching qualifications (see below), and evidence of recent work experience in the industry. • CVs must show at least one person with seniority and competence to manage the internal quality assurance process and must be up to date to ensure it shows the current work they are completing with your centre. <p>The course team <u>must</u> include:</p> <p>Professional competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one person (and preferably more) on the teaching team must have a degree-level qualification in a ‘relevant subject’ (procurement, purchasing, supply chain management, etc.) in order to deliver the specialist purchasing modules in all programmes. CIPS will determine whether an alternative ‘relevant subject’ qualification is acceptable. • All tutors should have experience of teaching their subject, recent practitioner experience, and ideally they will be MCIPS or equivalent. • A copy of all relevant <u>subject qualification certificates</u> must be obtained and kept on the course file (unless the person is CIPS-qualified). • Monitoring of teaching standards should also take into account the fact that teaching staff are required to be up-to-date and use latest research, journals, etc. in their teaching (CPD). • <i>If tutors are CIPS members, they can submit a copy of their MyCIPS CPD log.</i> <p>Please note: It is not essential for everyone on the team to have a ‘relevant subject’ qualification, provided they have access to the colleague(s) with professional qualifications for advice/mentoring. You should obtain up-to-date authentication for all relevant qualifications listed in the tutors’ CVs in the form of copy-certificates, and keep these in your course file for future monitoring activity reviews.</p>
Evidence that you will need to provide	<p>Teaching competence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one member of the teaching team must hold a recognised teaching qualification. This person is responsible for carrying out observations on other team members who do not hold teaching qualifications, and reporting to management on the outcome of these observations. The centre management is expected to act upon these reports, provide appropriate training and support to improve the teaching skills of team members, and if necessary remove and replace member(s) of the team who do not reach a satisfactory standard of teaching qualifications and/or skill. • Where possible, copies of any <u>teaching qualification certificates</u> held by members of the team to be evidenced and kept on the course file. At least one teaching qualification certificate to be evidenced. <p>Contingency strategy for teaching team cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a list of back-up teachers that demonstrate appropriate qualifications/expertise to deliver CIPS courses in the short term.

2.4	The Study Centre has appropriate systems in place to track the progress of learners towards their target awards, and their subsequent achievements.
<i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i>	<p>Approval stage :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centres should have recording system(s) capable of gathering, storing, and providing accurate information to CIPS (and the regulators) covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learner recruitment • attendance • achievement (results) • completion • Learner selection and admission is conducted with demonstrable commitment to equal opportunities and additional physical or learning needs in all areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your centre’s application and enrolment forms and processes should be inclusive and free of discrimination, whether direct or indirect. • Enrolment forms should allow the applicant to disclose personal information about disability or additional learning needs only if they choose, and should gather equality monitoring data in confidence (i.e. by collecting statistical information not linked to names). • Many applicants for CIPS courses have full time jobs: wherever possible enrolment arrangements should be tailored to suit applicants unable to attend standard enrolment events. • Learner selection; details of how your centre assesses an applicant’s suitability for the relevant CIPS qualification level. <p>New applicants: include copies of these forms and procedures with your submission.</p> <p>On-going monitoring stage :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner recruitment, attendance/completion, and achievement records are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complete, accurate, up-to-date and available for external monitoring purposes • securely stored/accessed in line with the requirements of CIPS, the regulatory authorities, and data protection legislation

<p>2.5</p>	<p>Study centre staff are tracking progress and learners have regular opportunities to review their progress against the requirements of the award and seek guidance where necessary. Appropriate feedback is provided to learners to enable them to progress their learning.</p>
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p>Approval and On-going monitoring stage :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 121 or other appropriate support arrangements are in place - the learner handbook/manual makes reference to 121/on-course support/guidance. <p>Please note: where Distance Learning is offered, ‘appropriate’ support arrangements should include tutorial support to enable learners to engage with their tutor in office hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning reviews or 121s are timetabled within course programme. • The centre provides a point of contact for learner support/guidance. • Tutor feedback provided to learners identifies areas of strength and areas of development and provides guidance as to how to improve or develop skills and knowledge further. • Appropriate support provided for learners, post exam results. <p><i>The Learner Handbook/ Manual/other similar title is an invaluable source of useful information for CIPS learners, and if carefully put together will provide evidence for a wide range of Centre Approval criteria.</i></p>

<p>2.6</p>	<p>The Study Centre has adequate resources and systems in place to support the continued delivery of CIPS programmes.</p>
<p><i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i></p>	<p>Approval stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support facilities are adequate and made appropriately available for CIPS learners - your centre’s IT and IT support facilities available to learners on CIPS programmes. • Classroom areas are appropriate - classroom and private study space(s) to be used. <p><i>Where possible, please include a photo(s) or plan of the centre to show the classroom(s) and private study space as well as the IT facilities with centre branding or name included (if possible)</i></p> <p>On-going monitoring stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading / resources available cover the full range of programme/module topics and include up to date material. • Continued delivery of CIPS programmes, with no significant gaps where students are not recruited. <p><i>If there is a gap in the delivery of the CIPS qualifications, this will result in an automatic review of your study centre status. The requirement for all study centres is to provide continued delivery of the CIPS qualifications to adhere and maintain compliance with the CIPS Approved Study Centre criteria.</i></p>

2.7	The Study Centre is aware of how to obtain on behalf of its learners a Unique Learner Number (ULN) and a learner record (UK only).
<i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i>	<p>Approval and On-going monitoring stage :</p> <p>A unique learner number (ULN) is a 10-digit reference number that anyone over the age of 14 involved in UK education or training can use to keep an official record of their achievement in their 'Personal Learning Record'. Learners will retain the same number for accessing their Personal Learning Record throughout their lives, whatever their level of learning and wherever they choose to participate in education, training and learning.</p> <p>The number is generated by providers of education and training via the Learner Record Service portal, and must be quoted whenever a study centre enters a learner for an exam in a CIPS qualification that attracts public funding (currently the Certificate and Advanced Certificate).</p> <p>To obtain a ULN for your learners you will first need to sign up to the LRS Organisation portal. For more details please visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/learning-records-service</p> <p>CIPS will expect to see that the centre will be able to respond to requests from learners for a ULN (<u>applicable within the UK only</u>).</p>

3	Quality assurance processes
3.1	Staff demonstrate good practice by following schemes of work containing clear aims, objectives, and coverage of content for each module.
<i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i>	<p><i>On-going monitoring stage only :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide details of how your centre monitors the teaching staff correctly following the scheme of work and the outcome of the monitoring results. • Schemes of work and who is responsible for the design, authoring and delivery
3.2	The Study Centre has systems that ensure effective monitoring of teaching standards.
<i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i>	<p><i>Approval and On-going monitoring stage :</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please provide details of how teaching standards are monitored, how and when teaching observations of tutors take place and how feedback from monitoring is used to improve teaching standards. • Monitoring of teaching standards should cover the range of teaching methods/techniques that are used.
3.3	Appropriate and effective mechanisms are in place for gathering feedback from learners.
<i>Evidence that you will need to provide</i>	<p><i>Approval and On-going monitoring stage:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner satisfaction surveys should be an integral part of the centre’s continuous improvement programme, allowing consumers of the service to provide feedback to the staff team on such issues as: subject delivery, homework, examination preparation, accommodation, accessibility, course administration, organisation, customer care and catering. Surveys should cover all levels taught, all tutors involved in the delivery and should be analysed with appropriate action plans in place to address any concerns or issues. • These surveys may only be in the planning stage at the time of applying for CIPS Centre Approval, but you should give examples of the methods by which you intend to obtain feedback, and your course programme or timetable should indicate how and when this will happen, and how the information gained will feed into your internal quality assurance programme.

3.4	Internal quality assurance activity takes place, which records use of learner/employer feedback, results and other relevant information to identify and address areas for development and promote continuous improvement.
Evidence that you will need to provide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data/recording systems are in place to monitor quality assurance. • Course review/evaluation plans or procedures. You will be asked to complete an annual monitoring report to CIPS that includes brief comments on the outcome of your results analysis, so that you and your auditor can discuss any areas of concern at the annual monitoring visit. This is why it is important to have a system for capturing accurate results data in relation to your learners. <i>It is important to collate and analyse enough relevant data to be able to draw valid conclusions, and are able to discuss your conclusions, and any related action plans, with your auditor.</i> <p>Approval stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please include your plans for carrying out course review/evaluation: when this will happen, the method or process to be used, and how the outcomes of the process will feed into a cycle of continuous improvement. • Please include a draft agenda for quality assurance meetings. <p>On-going monitoring stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Study Centre co-operates with CIPS monitoring activities, and provides access to premises, personnel and records. • Written records of how all the below are used as part of internal quality assurance activities, leading to action plans and actions ultimately completed. Please include examples • The process should involve learners, staff and employers where relevant. It should address quality of delivery, learner achievement (including learner achievement in relation to your centre’s equal opportunities policy), and progression, and lead to plans for improvement. • An important aspect of quality improvement is to review your learners’ exam results. This enables you to identify potential issues that need to be rectified, such as poor results in a particular module, or from a particular teacher. It also allows you to recognise when a poor result is due to factors relating to the size or characteristics of a particular cohort, and therefore unlikely to be a cause for concern in terms of quality improvement actions. • If you have received any relevant quality or monitoring reports from other external organisations, please include these. • The member(s) of staff leading this activity should be sufficiently senior, qualified/experienced to be able to carry out the internal QA function.

Part 3: CIPS Graded Study Centre Criteria: additional criteria for Centres of Merit & Centres of Excellence

CIPS study centres value the opportunity to achieve ‘graded’ status because:

- Grading motivates study centres, giving them something to aspire to, or something to maintain
- Grading tells employers and potential learners something about the exceptional quality of provision and performance that can be found at a study centre.

Categories for CIPS approved study centres:

CIPS Approved Centre (AC)	For all newly approved centres and those that continue to meet the ‘approved centre’ criteria.
CIPS Centre of Merit (CM)	For centres that can show standards of provision and performance that exceed the ‘approved’ standards.
CIPS Centre of Excellence (CE)	For centres that can demonstrate exceptional performance across all aspects of their provision.

Changing your study centre grade:

- Study centres can request an upgrade if they meet the ‘approved centre’ criteria **and** the relevant additional criteria listed in this document
- Claims to each grading criterion must be supported by evidence
- Changes to grades can only be made following a study centre monitoring activity
- Study centre grades can go down as well as up i.e. the criteria will be used to assess maintenance of current grade, as well as for upgrades on an annual basis.

To qualify for ‘CIPS Centre of Merit’ a study centre must:

- Continue to meet all the ‘approved centre’ criteria
- Have been a CIPS Approved Centre for at least two years
- Satisfy all 10 essential criteria listed below
- Satisfy 5 other criteria from the list below
- Have written support for the proposed upgrade from the CIPS Auditor allocated to the centre.

To qualify for ‘CIPS Centre of Excellence’ a study centre must:

- Continue to meet all the ‘approved centre’ criteria
- Have been a CIPS Centre of Merit for at least two years
- Satisfy all 10 essential criteria listed below
- Satisfy 10 other criteria from the list below
- Have written support for the proposed upgrade from the CIPS Auditor allocated to the centre.

CIPS Graded Study Centre Criteria: additional criteria for Centres of Merit & Centres of Excellence

Note: all study centres must also meet the criteria for CIPS Approved Centres.

Centre of Merit: E1-E10 plus 5 other criteria.

Centre of Excellence: E1-E10 plus 10 other criteria.

E1 Business structure, financial stability and policies		
E1.1 Evidence of strong management support, with appropriate resource allocation, in relation to CIPS programmes at the Study Centre.	Essential criterion 1	Evidence of management commitment shows that CIPS programmes are properly resourced.
E1.2 Evidence of Study Centre's willingness and capacity to develop CIPS programmes if the opportunity/market/financial climate allows.		Must be evidenced, e.g. in strategic/business plans – verbal assurances not sufficient.
E1.3 Have a good reputation among Procurement & Supply stakeholders e.g. companies/employers, nationally/locally.		Must be evidenced, study centre to provide examples.

E2 The learner experience		
Rationale: Learners would expect to be able to access progression through all 3 levels at a graded study centre.		
Centre of Excellence: E2.1a Deliver full range of modules for CIPS programmes at L4 – L6.	Essential criterion 2a	Centre of Excellence: Not sufficient to claim 'able/prepared to deliver L4-L6'. Study centre must either be <ul style="list-style-type: none"> currently delivering programmes at L4 – L6, or have recent (last 2 years) experience of running L4 – L6, with current teaching team expertise to provide all 3 levels
Centre of Merit: E2.1b Deliver Levels 4 and 5, with the capability to deliver Level 6 if demand warrants it.	Essential criterion 2b	Centre of Merit: Current teaching team has expertise to provide all 3 levels.
E2.1.2 Deliver CIPS courses within other programmes		E.g. apprenticeships
E2.1.3 Demonstrate consistent levels of recruitment to CIPS programmes	Essential criterion 3	Learners on-programme at each qualification level up to Level 5 is consistent over time - no significant recent decline from previous years - showing that learners seek out this centre because of its grading.
E2.1.4 Required Guided Learning Hours (GLH) deliver enriched learner entitlement.		All study centres must meet CIPS' requirements for GLH, but to meet this criterion the study centre must offer the full GLH entitlement in a way that offers a well-balanced programme that fully meets the needs of its learners and adds value to the normal learning experience.

E2.1.5 Be producing consistently high achievement rates.	Essential criterion 4	Above national average at all levels taught.
E2.1.6 Evidence (within the last 12 months) of high learner progression rates to next level or of progress within employment as a result of qualifications gained.		Must be evidenced.

E2 The learner experience		
E2.2.1 Have a teaching team of 3 or more (and preferably all members) must hold a recognised teaching qualification.		'Visiting' tutors who teach one-off sessions cannot be included.
E2.2.2 Have at least one MCIPS on the teaching team as well as a range of qualified procurement professionals (i.e. relevant degree-level professional qualifications)	Essential criterion 5	Rationale: Shows commitment to profession and CPD, an exemplar to learners.
E2.2.3 Have other subject specialists/experts on the teaching team		i.e. not procurement specialists (see above), but with additional expertise to teach specific modules
E2.2.4 All members of the core teaching team must hold a recognised teaching qualification.		
E2.2.5 All members of the teaching team undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD) relevant to their subject area within each 12 month period.	Essential criterion 6	Records show that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each tutor's professional/career development needs have been discussed • relevant CPD for each tutor has been reviewed and is supported by the centre • agreed CPD has been carried out
E2.2.6 The study centre is a CIPS Approved Examination Centre and offers examination provision to meet learner needs.	Essential criterion 7	Rationale: Offering exams gives learners the 'full package', which they would expect of a graded centre. This includes accommodating learners who have been granted a reasonable adjustment by CIPS.
E2.2.7 The study centre is a CIPS Approved Examination Centre and processes its learners' exam entries via the CIPS online Group Assessment Entry system.		

2		Learner experience	
E2.3.1	Maximum tutor to learner ratio of 1:15		Allows tutor to engage with individuals, or in small groups, as required.
E2.3.2	The Study Centre offers flexible delivery methods where appropriate as evidence of its commitment to equality of opportunity and support for all entrants to CIPS programmes.		Link between delivery methods and equality/diversity issues must be made.
E2.3.3	The Study Centre has industry-standard equipment and resources, including access to extensive resources, including official sources and electronic journals.	Essential criterion 8	
E2.3.4	The Study Centre has facilities (buildings, equipment, catering, etc.) that exemplify best practice.		Facilities should be appropriate for learners who are likely to be professional people, probably studying whilst working.
E2.3.5	The Study Centre gets consistently good feedback from learners.		Evidenced over time, through documented systems for gathering and analysing learner feedback
E2.3.6	Study Centre has good links (or planned links) with local CIPS branches and/or employers/ businesses.		If available, please provide a record of contacts made, support received, meetings attended, etc.

E3 Quality assurance processes		
<p>E3.1 No significant action points of a negative nature were recorded during the monitoring activity or the previous 2 annual monitoring activities. All action points were completed within the set timescales.</p>	<p>Essential criterion 9</p>	<p>Auditors will indicate any negative action points that are considered to be significant. Timescales for actions are agreed with centre contact during the monitoring activity, so should be achievable. SC should notify CIPS in advance if there is a good reason why an action point cannot be completed by the deadline.</p>
<p>E3.2 The Study Centre has evidence of a high level grade in a recognised quality assurance system – e.g. ISO 9001, Ofsted inspections - with no significant negative issues in the previous 24 months arising from (a) other external audits or inspections, or (b) upheld complaints received by CIPS, that would compromise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of the programme • the learner experience • CIPS reputation 		<p>Negative issues can come from a range of sources (not including CIPS monitoring activity - these are covered in 3.1), but will only be taken into account if relevant and justified. Sources could include other awarding bodies' reports, quality inspections, customer service awards, Investors in People etc. etc. Complaints will only be taken into account if they have been upheld and relate to the quality of delivery or administration at the centre.</p>
<p>E3.3 The Study Centre has evidence of improvement resulting from results analysis, learner feedback, internal or external QA review, etc.</p>	<p>Essential criterion 10</p>	<p>Study centre must be able to show that learner feedback, examination results and other data (e.g. feedback from CIPS annual monitoring reports) is regularly and routinely gathered and analysed, and used to contribute to continuous improvement.</p>
<p><i>Essential criterion 1 to 10 = all required for Centre of Merit or Centre of Excellence</i> <i>5 additional criterion required for Centre of Merit</i> <i>10 additional criterion required for Centre of Excellence</i></p>		

Part 4: Useful documents and downloads

All the documents listed below are downloadable from CIPS website:

<https://www.cips.org/learn/qualifications/education-partners/study-centres/documents-and-resources/>

The following documents are available:

Approved study centre criteria (Form SCG1)	A summary of the criteria to be met by all approved study centres. These criteria are also provided in this guidance document (Part 2, Sections 1 - 3) together with guidance on how to meet them.
Study centre approval application form (Form SC1)	The application form also includes the approved centre criteria, with space for the applicant centre to cross-reference to the evidence they are providing.
Study centre agreement (SC6)	CCEA, Ofqual and Qualifications Wales require awarding bodies to enter into a written agreement with its approved study centres. The agreement must set out the responsibilities and obligations of the awarding body and the centre. Newly approved study centres are required to sign the agreement before final approval is confirmed. The template allows you to see in advance what you will be asked to sign up to.
Business Plan Guidance Notes (SCG2)	As part of the application process, study centres are required to submit a business plan that sets out the rationale for the application. This should include details of the market need and demand for CIPS courses, and information about the organisation's financial stability. The guidance notes advise you on what is required in the business plan.
Template Management Letter (SCG3)	A number of criteria can be met by a letter from the manager at the study centre confirming compliance. A template management letter is available, covering the relevant items. Applicant study centres can download the template, add their organisation's header and manager's signature, and enclose it with their application to confirm that these criteria will be complied with.
Template Learner Handbook (SCG4)	This template provides a skeleton for a learner handbook, and includes the topics that CIPS believes are necessary to ensure that learners have the information they need to embark on CIPS courses at a study centre. Other versions of a learner handbook are equally acceptable, including those that provide the information, but not necessarily in one document.
Template Scheme of Work (SCG5)	Many study centres will produce schemes of work using their own template; some may not normally use the term 'scheme of work' to describe the programme of study provided to learners. This template shows what CIPS is looking for, and can be used by study centres who find it helpful. Other versions of a scheme of work that show how the topic content of a module is programmed to fit into the time available are equally acceptable.

Template Malpractice and Maladministration policy (SCG6)	Ofqual, the regulator of qualifications in England, CCEA in Northern Ireland, and Qualifications Wales, in Wales all require awarding bodies to ensure that their study centres are equipped to deal with cases of malpractice and/or maladministration. CIPS study centres are not involved in internal assessment of qualifications, so opportunities for malpractice are limited; however we have provided a template policy and procedure to help you comply with this requirement. You can adapt or adopt this policy, or produce one of your own.
Appeal against centre approval refusal (SCG8)	Should your application be refused by CIPS Approvals Panel, there is a Review and Appeal process, described here.
Approved study centre annual monitoring report (SC2)	Approved study centres are required to complete and submit a monitoring report to CIPS on an annual basis. The report asks for an analysis of your results over the last 12 months, and asks you to comment on a range of other matters that will inform the forthcoming monitoring activity. The template report form allows you to see and download the report in good time.
Satellite centre application form (Form SC3)	If you wish to extend your provision to a new area, but the management, resources and staff team remain the same, you can apply for approval to open a 'satellite centre', giving details of the new location. Once approved, the location of the satellite centre appears on CIPS website alongside your original centre. The application form is on the website.
Approval to deliver additional qualifications (Form SC5)	When you apply for study centre approval you are asked to say which qualifications you wish to deliver, and your approval is for these qualifications only. These qualifications are also listed on CIPS website. Should you decide to offer additional qualifications at a later date, you should complete this form and return it to CIPS.
Approval to become a CIPS examination centre (Form EC1)	Once you are established as an approved study centre, you are encouraged to apply to become a CIPS approved examination centre, so that you can offer examination facilities to your learners in surroundings that are familiar and convenient for them. There are additional security criteria to be met, which are outlined in the application form.

Useful Contacts	
Administrative Support:	
Learning Partnerships Team (for study centre queries)	enm@cips.org
CIPS Helpdesk	helpdesk@cips.org
Bookshop	bookshopinfo@cips.org
Examinations	examcentre.management@cips.org
Qualification queries	qualifications@cips.org