

New Associate member criteria from 2010

These are the new criteria for Associate membership of CIPD which will be introduced during 2010 and will replace the existing Associate member criteria.

What it means to be an Associate member of CIPD

The Associate member applies their specialist skills and knowledge in the context of the organisation's structure, culture and direction, by:

- providing support for human resources (HR) leaders and managers as they work to deliver a range of HR processes in one or more professional areas
- delivering some HR functions, such as administrative, information and processing activities.

Whatever the nature or size of the organisation, the Associate member gives vital support in one or more of the key component areas of human resources. So they may work within the central HR team, or in learning and development, or another of the professional areas within the HR remit.

They may be someone setting out on an HR career, aiming for progression to Chartered Membership as they develop their skills, knowledge and experience.

Or they could be someone who wishes to continue supporting fellow professionals without moving to Chartered Membership, but would like formal recognition for their existing role and contribution.

Whichever it is, the Associate member completes tasks and addresses problems that are well-defined but still have a degree of complexity. Operating within clearly defined limits they exercise some autonomy and judgement, taking and implementing appropriate decisions. The basis for their discretion is their knowledge and understanding of the organisation, and the established range of HR policies, processes, procedures and practices that they help deliver.

Associate membership signifies that this is someone who has been assessed against clear professional criteria – someone who demonstrates that they have the skill, knowledge and approach to make a significant supporting contribution, and deliver excellent results.

It also confirms that they have signed up to the CIPD CPD Policy and Code of Professional Conduct, and work to its standards and criteria.

Meeting the criteria

To achieve Associate membership the individual has to show that they have delivered against the criteria in a work environment.

There are three elements in the criteria.

1. Activities – what the Associate member does
2. Knowledge – what the Associate member understands in order to carry out the activities
3. Behaviours – how the Associate member carries out the activities.

Activities: what the Associate member does

The Associate member uses their specialist HR skills and knowledge to support HR leaders and managers, delivering information and services as and when required: consistently, on time and to standard.

To do this the Associate member:

Maintains and produces management information

- collects and collates financial and non-financial data and statistics on the HR activities and processes within their work role
- converts raw data into meaningful HR and management information, and passes it on to managers and HR specialists, to inform plans, decisions, budgets
- produces clear and meaningful reports and updates, regularly and/or on request
- maintains HR record systems and individual records, with full, accurate and appropriate information and in line with data protection laws and regulations.

Supports HR colleagues and line managers

- provides line managers/others with accurate and timely information/advice on HR policies, procedures and practices, in line with the organisation values and relevant regulations
- helps ensure that all HR processes provide equal opportunity, promote diversity, are based on merit and are applied equitably, fairly, reasonably and without bias
- manages the administration of continuing or one-off HR programmes, workshops, or meetings, and helps in their delivery.

Supports improvement in processes and policies

- looks for continuous improvement opportunities in HR processes, and feeds messages, ideas and observations to senior HR colleagues or managers
- supports change initiatives and programme implementation, maintaining service during the process and at the same time testing new approaches
- helps staff and managers outside HR to understand the need for and benefit of change, their role in the process, the next steps and the expected results.

Maintains their Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

- enhances their professional skills, knowledge and behaviours through reflective and planned CPD.

Knowledge: what the Associate member understands

To carry out the Activities the Associate member has to know about and understand three contexts:

1. the organisation they work in or with
2. their specific work role (eg generalist or specialist role)
3. the wider HR context.

1 The organisation and its context, including:

- the organisation's structure, culture and operations
- its goals, targets and financial structure
- its HR policies, procedures, programmes, processes and practices
- its range of products and services and who its customers are
- how its teams work together to optimise performance.

2 The specific work role and the HR area(s) that are the focus for it, including:

- the relevant and appropriate legal and regulatory framework, and the external bodies and agencies that legislate and/or give advice and support
- how to contribute to the effective implementation of the organisation's HR processes, procedures, practices, tools, techniques and approaches.

3 The wider HR context, including:

- how the different HR activities form an integrated whole, and the way that an action in their own professional area can affect other areas and impact on colleagues
- how to:
 - plan and prioritise activities and their own work effectively, efficiently, on time and within budget
 - communicate effectively with employees at all levels
 - deliver service excellence, handle and resolve complaints and deal with difficult customers
 - use IT effectively and efficiently (specifically HR information systems).

Behaviours: how the Associate member carries out activities

In delivering the Activities the Associate member has to demonstrate how they meet the Behaviour Criteria, organised in three clusters: Insights and influence, Operational excellence, Stewardship.

Insights and influences

Curious

- keeps up to date with developments, ideas and trends in HR, the organisation and its sector. Uses information to inform personal CPD plans
- accepts and acts on feedback on their performance, taking action to broaden their experience, knowledge and skills
- uses information to inform personal CPD plans.

Decisive thinker

- uses knowledge and judgement to identify options and make day to day decisions
- makes sure information is accurate, consistent and relevant, before using it to carry out a task or make a decision.

Skilled influencer

- works with other people to help gain commitment and support for changes or policies, using the appropriate communication channel or method
- puts forward logical and evidenced suggestions.

Operational excellence

Driven to deliver

- identifies the steps needed to achieve agreed objectives, focusing on priorities
- keeps track of progress, to deliver on time and meet or exceed expectations.

Collaborative

- builds and maintains a network of useful contacts and relationships to support colleagues
- shows sensitivity and respect for other people's feelings, cultures and beliefs.

Personally credible

- provides sound, realistic and impartial advice
- consistently delivers their promises and commitments and accepts responsibility for their actions, even when facing opposition.

Stewardship

Courage to challenge

- shows courage to speak up, asks questions or for information, help or advice from other people when faced with unfamiliar issues or circumstances.

Role model

- operates within the organisation's values, processes and expected behaviour
- supports colleagues in times of high workload or pressure
- deals with confidential and sensitive HR matters and data in line with professional good practice and the legal requirements.