



Practising Certificates Scheme – what you need to know

Frequently asked questions

This document sets out further information on the [PC Scheme](#) and answers some of your questions.

General

How long is a PC valid for?

Unless a Practising Certificate (PC) is withdrawn or suspended, it will last for 12 months from the date on the certificate. Members who wish to continue to hold a PC will need to renew their PC ahead of the renewal date and we would recommend renewing this with plenty of time ahead of the PC renewal date.

The PC Scheme indicates that ‘in exceptional circumstances’ it may be possible to accept an appointment before obtaining a PC, so long as the PC is obtained within a specified time period after appointment. What sort of circumstances would that apply to and what are the likely timeframes?

We expect this to apply in situations where a Member accepts an appointment at very short notice due to unforeseen circumstances, such as long term absence of the incumbent role holder. In this situation, we would expect the Member to submit a PC application as soon as possible, ensuring that a PC is in place no later than 12 weeks after taking on the role.

Can the IFoA provide some examples of the type of information that it would expect to be disclosed as part of its suitability requirement?

It will be for the individual Member to reflect upon whether there is any information that they think might be relevant to their suitability to hold a PC. Some examples of the sort of information that might be relevant include: ‘unspent’ criminal convictions relating to relevant offences, bankruptcy in circumstances that might be relevant, disqualification as a company director; or adverse findings of another regulatory body.

The IFoA will consider any information provided and decide whether this has a bearing on an applicant’s suitability to hold a PC, having regard to the role and the public interest.

More information and guidance can be found in the [PC Handbook](#).

What is a conditional PC?

Where gaps are identified during the assessment of a PC application and the IFoA feels the applicant could take steps to fill those gaps in a set period of time, a PC with conditions may be issued.

The granting of a conditional PC would require the PC Holder to take certain steps within a specific time period. That might include, for example, completion of additional training on a particular topic; attendance at IFoA Reflective Practice Discussions; or taking part in mentoring as a mentee. This will be followed up by the IFoA to ensure that the conditions have been met within the set time.

Will the IFoA have the ability to apply discretion in exercising its duties?

The IFoA will still have the ability to apply discretion, where appropriate, and to avoid an unfair outcome in relation to a PC application.

Demonstrating competencies

Do I have to provide information on each of the competencies set out in the framework?

Yes, we would expect you to be able to demonstrate that you meet each of the specific competencies set out in the framework. However, we anticipate that you will be able to address and cover multiple competencies in the different examples or other evidence provided, rather than necessarily having to demonstrate each competency separately.

We have produced a video guide to assist members in applying for a PC which you can view [here](#).

Do I have to demonstrate each competency through experience of reserved work?

You can demonstrate that you meet the competencies through using examples of your experiences of carrying out reserved work. However, you can also demonstrate that you meet the competencies through describing other relevant work or roles you have carried out or even by describing other experiences or activities, such as training and volunteering. It is also possible to provide a reference or supportive statement to support an application.

It is worth noting that you are required to demonstrate a sound understanding of the technical areas relevant to the PC(s) being applied for, therefore although some aspects could be demonstrated through other experiences, we will still expect there to be evidence demonstrating sound knowledge of the core technical skills.

Do any examples that I provide need to be within a specific time period?

The PC Scheme does not define specific time periods, however we do expect applicants to be able to demonstrate 'live' competency in each of the areas and that the evidence they provide will be sufficient to show that their competencies are still current.

Initial applicants

Do I need to complete the Practice Module prior to submitting my initial application?

Yes, all members applying for a PC are required to complete the Practice Module relevant to the PC you are applying for. This should be completed within the two years prior to members submitting their initial application and you can find further information relating to this [here](#).

Renewal applicants

When do I need to submit my PC renewal application?

All renewal applications should be submitted at least 21 days before your current certificate is due to expire if you would like your certificate to run concurrently. Any applications received after this date run the risk of not being renewed on time, which may affect your ability to act as a reserved role holder until your certificate is issued to you. We would therefore recommend submitting your application as soon as you are able to, to ensure this is processed in plenty of time ahead of your renewal date.

I've submitted my application online, what happens next?

Your application will now be reviewed by the PC team who will be in touch if it is felt that any further information is required. Once your application has been initially reviewed by the PC team, it can then take a further 21 days (or 30 days for initial applications) to complete the process. If further information is required at any stage during the review process, the PC team will contact you regarding this as soon as possible. This may result in a delay to the processing of your application and therefore, if you will be unavailable for an extended period after submitting your application, please let the PC team know.

What is required as part of the annual renewal process?

You will be asked to confirm that you still meet the criteria and that you wish to continue to hold a PC.

You should also provide any relevant information about changes to your circumstances over the last year.

If there is a change in your circumstances during the year that might affect your ability to meet the criteria, we would ask that you contact us as soon as reasonably practical to discuss rather than wait for the annual renewal process.

Can I provide information for a three-year period for the full renewal process?

As part of the full renewal process, you are required to explain how you continue to meet the competencies. This can include examples of experience over the three years since the last full renewal to demonstrate how you continue to meet the competency framework. More detail on this process is set out in the [PC Handbook](#). We have also produced an example application to assist those applying for a full renewal and will continue to review and update our guidance as required.

I previously held a PC, but did not renew due to a period of parental leave/ill health, do I have to complete an initial application?

No, you can apply through the full renewal process, rather than the initial application process. If a Member did not renew for other reasons and wishes to obtain a PC again in the future, they will have to complete an initial application.

Contact Details

If you have any further queries, please contact us at: practising.certs@actuaries.org.uk