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# Recognition of prior learning

guidance for awarding body submissions

[cii.co.uk](http://cii.co.uk)



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## Introduction to the CII recognition of prior learning scheme

The CII operates an extensive recognition of prior learning scheme that recognises certified learning from both academic and professional qualifications.

The principle of recognition of prior learning is to recognise relevant learning by awarding credits in the CII qualification framework; this means in practice the CII awards exemption from the closest matching CII unit, thereby avoiding candidates duplicating learning. If there is not a close match then the CII may, on occasions, consider a discretionary award of 'non unit specific credits' to recognise equivalent technical learning if the learning is specific to insurance or financial planning and the learning and assessment is of an equivalent standard to CII qualifications.

CII recognition of prior learning is an accreditation scheme for individuals and any award made is dependent not only on the match to an individual's prior qualification but on other factors such as the CII credits that the individual already holds prior to their application and the CII qualification completion rules.

There may be differences between awards made to different applicants even where they completed the same qualification at the same time. CII qualifications evolve and awards can change as new units are introduced, units are withdrawn and the learning content and assessment changes. A separate section on the CII website provides comprehensive information for applicants, including frequently asked questions: [cii.co.uk/prior-learning](https://cii.co.uk/prior-learning)

## Benefits of an awarding body liaising directly with the CII

Whilst the scheme is for individuals there are advantages of an awarding body liaising directly with the CII.

### Benefits for the awarding body

- Certainty of the maximum award entitlement for students
- Guidance on wording for potential students in your marketing material
- Reduced administration

### Benefits for the individual applicant

- Faster processing
- Reduced administration

## Eligible qualifications

In order to be eligible for CII recognition of prior learning the non-CII qualification(s) must be 'certified learning' and must match a current CII unit. Certified learning means that there has been a formal examination and the awarding body must be recognised by a national examinations regulator. We recognise that not all awarding bodies will have the UK NARIC recognition and we may recognise qualifications that have recognition from the Ministry of Education and/or Market Regulator.

Recognition of prior learning is not awarded for qualifications, membership or awards that have been achieved through experience.

## How we determine awards

We recognise qualifications from awarding bodies based in the UK and outside the UK and our awards are based on how closely they match current CII qualifications.

We recognise that qualifications for students based outside the UK are likely to contain localised legislation, regulation and market practice and that UK legislation, regulation and market practice, which feature in our qualifications, may not be relevant to non-UK audiences. Our recognition of prior learning awards do not penalise localisation.

### Exemptions

Prior learning awards reflect the match to current CII qualifications. The prior learning standards require a **full match** to the CII learning outcomes and to the **standard, scope** and **rigour** of the assessment process.

Where an awarding body, for example an insurance institute based outside the UK, localises legislation, regulation and market practice and the scope of this localisation is equivalent to the CII learning outcomes we will consider this to represent a full match, for the purposes of awarding either an exemption or non unit specific credits.

### Non unit specific credits

Where there is only a partial match (even a significant partial match) to the closest CII unit we cannot make an award of that unit. At our discretion, we may make an award of non unit specific credits. These count towards completion of CII qualifications in the same way as CII units, subject to the CII qualification completion requirements.

## Criteria we use when identifying how closely qualifications match CII units

In making awards we consider the following areas:

### Learning programme

- Scope of learning
- Technical level of the syllabus
- Match to CII qualifications
- Relevant technical learning
- Localisation of non UK syllabus to meet local market needs

### Assessment process

- Scope of learning outcomes/syllabus tested
- Method(s) of testing
- Weighting of examinations and other methods of testing (minimum 50% must be by examination)
- Scope of assessment
- Duration of assessment
- Pass mark
- Question wording (for example, Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning)
- Alignment of marking scheme model answer to the questions
- Consistency of mark allocation
- Examination conditions
- Competence of assessment setters, invigilators and markers
- Respect of copyright of CII assessment questions and CII materials

### Governance and external recognition of the qualifications, for example, by:

- Market regulator
- Ministry of Education
- Education regulator
- External accreditation
- UK NARIC database of qualifications awarded outside the UK

### Integrity and governance standards

- Operational processes

## How long will it take for the CII to determine the prior learning award?

From the time that we receive a complete submission (details provided within this document) reviews take an average 8-12 weeks to complete. During busy periods or where further information is required this may take longer. We will update the awarding body in the event of the review taking longer than 12 weeks.

## Once the CII determines its award for holders of a qualification how long will it last?

Qualifications evolve over time and as part of our quality assurance programme we review awards every three years (or sooner where there are changes to, for example, the non-CII qualification, CII qualifications and regulatory requirements). Therefore, awards confirmed may, at the CII's sole discretion, be modified or cancelled at any time.

When we receive an application for prior learning and subsequently confirm eligibility to an individual, the applicant will need to claim the credits before they are added to his/her CII learning statement. Once claimed the credits remain on the individual's CII learning record, regardless of any changes to awards for new applicants, subject to the rules of the prior learning scheme.

## Publicising CII prior learning awards

Responsibility for the accuracy and for updating details of CII prior learning awards within an awarding body's publications rests solely with the awarding body. The CII shall not be liable to any awarding body or any individual applicants for out of date or inaccurate information and the CII, at its sole discretion, will determine what awards, if any, may be made to individual applicants.

The CII will not accept liability for any losses (including direct, indirect, or consequential losses) of any kind arising out of the award or withdrawal of credit awards for prior learning.

## Requirement for awarding bodies and individuals to comply with guidance for recognition of prior learning

If an awarding body breaches or fails to comply with this guidance or the criteria for recognition of prior learning, or fails to co-operate promptly with the CII in relation to any reasonable request, the CII reserves its right to withdraw the prior learning scheme from the awarding body on such notice as the CII thinks fit and/or to amend, withdraw or refuse to make an award to any individual applicant in relation to learning gained through that awarding body, even where the individual applicant was unaware of the breach or failure to comply by the relevant awarding body.

If an individual applicant breaches or fails to comply with any relevant aspect of this guidance or fails to co-operate promptly with the CII in relation to any reasonable request, the CII reserves its right to amend, withdraw or refuse to make an award to such individual.

## Requirement to remain in contact with us once an award has been made

It is important that we have up-to-date details of awarding bodies and programme leaders. This allows us to keep awarding bodies up-to-date with changes that may affect prior learning awards to its students and to notify any changes to awards.

## Information for candidates

We ask awarding bodies to encourage their students to consult our website regularly to familiarise themselves with the recognition of prior learning scheme prior to their applications. Full details, including the scheme rules, frequently asked questions and application forms, are available at [cii.co.uk/prior-learning](http://cii.co.uk/prior-learning)

## FAQs for awarding bodies

### How frequently does the CII review prior learning awards?

We review awards at least once every three years or sooner if there are changes that could impact on the prior learning awards. Qualifications evolve and we are required to ensure that the match to the relevant CII units continues to exist in order to continue to make awards. This means that although we have previously confirmed recognition of prior learning awards they may expire.

### Once the CII has awarded recognition of prior learning how long does it last?

The award will normally expire after three years, unless there are changes to the CII qualifications or the non-CII qualification. Changes include the withdrawal or introduction of CII qualification units. For example, where holders of a qualification are eligible for an exemption of a CII unit and we no longer award the CII unit to our students we will no longer be able to award this unit for recognition of prior learning. If we introduce new units we may be able to award these instead if there is sufficient match to the learning outcomes and assessment.

### We plan to make changes to our qualification(s). How will this affect the CII recognition of prior learning award for our students?

Please inform us prior to making the change. We will ask for details of the changes and the effective dates of first and last assessment sittings for each version of the qualification. We may subsequently require a full submission of qualification syllabus and assessments (including marking schemes/model answers) in order to advise on the impact on future students' awards.

### What will happen if we do not supply all the details of our qualifications before the current prior learning award expires?

Holders of your qualifications will be able to apply for CII prior learning in the normal manner. We will ask the applicant to provide details of the qualification. We are happy to receive the qualification details either from the applicant or directly from the awarding body. To ensure a seamless application process for your students please provide the information requested in the submission form for awarding bodies (in appendix).

### Where can I find details of the closest CII units that you use when comparing qualifications?

Details of the CII syllabuses, scope of learning, knowledge ratings, recommended study hours, test specifications, specimen exams and exam guides, are available on the CII website: [cii.co.uk/qualifications](http://cii.co.uk/qualifications)

### What documentation do you require in order to determine prior learning awards?

Please see the CII recognition of prior learning submission form for awarding organisations (in appendix) for a full list.

### Does the CII require us to carry out a matching exercise before submitting qualification details?

Many awarding bodies find it valuable to carry out such an exercise for internal quality purposes. We do not require details of a matching exercise nor will we provide detailed feedback on an awarding body's internal matching exercise.

**We are launching a new qualification and we would like the CII to review the potential for a prior learning award to our future students. The examination papers and marking schemes/model answers cannot be released until they have been sat by our students. Can we still send material for the CII to review?**

We would be happy to carry out an initial review based on specimen papers. We may subsequently require live papers before we can provide definitive confirmation of the award. We may be able provide an indication of the outcome, together with feedback on any prior learning standards not fully met where this assists in the development of a new qualification.

We treat all qualification material submitted for reviews with the utmost confidentiality.

**I am not happy with the CII award for holders of my awarding body's qualification. Can I appeal?**

If you wish to raise any concerns please contact us via email at [PriorLearning@cii.co.uk](mailto:PriorLearning@cii.co.uk). We will review and provide feedback.

## Appendix 1 – Recognition of prior learning standards

Standard	Description
<b>1. Regulator standards</b>	
<b>1.1 Regulatory recognition</b>	<p>If the qualification is not on the UK NARIC database, the qualification should have the recognition of the Ministry of Education and/or Market Regulator, for example, through being listed on the national database of qualifications or as a regulatory qualification requirement.</p> <p>This should include regular inspections by the regulator and formal confirmation that the qualification meets regulator standards.</p>
<b>2. Programme structure</b>	
<b>2.1 Match to CII exam unit</b>	<p>The qualification content should closely match the learning outcomes, scope and content of a current CII examination unit, for example, technical level, breadth of syllabus, the number of learning hours to complete the qualification.</p> <p>The CII will consider relevant technical content which is at an equivalent level to the CII examination units provided that it contributes to the professional development of those working in insurance or financial services. For example, technical learning relating to regulation, legislation and market practice for a specific territory.</p> <p>The CII will also consider technically equivalent content that may be partially covered by the CII exam units, for example, engineering insurance, key man insurance, underwriting and actuarial techniques.</p>
<b>2.2 Learning outcomes and syllabus</b>	<p>The qualification should include clear learning outcomes and a syllabus so that students can judge the relevance and technical level of the qualification.</p>
<b>2.3 Design &amp; development</b>	<p>The responsibility for the design and development should be assigned to a competent, qualified individual or individuals.</p> <p>There should be a process in place to monitor that the qualification meets regulatory standards.</p>
<b>2.4 Technical sign-off and quality assurance</b>	<p>There should be a robust process for ensuring the qualification learning outcomes/syllabus, content and assessments are technically correct and are kept up to date in respect of, for example, legal, regulatory and market practice.</p> <p>The individual responsible for this should be clearly identified.</p>
<b>2.5 Learning programme</b>	<p>The qualification delivery methodology should be clear with a schedule available for students informing them of, for example, the tutor and learning support available, semesters, teaching venues, dates and methods of assessment for the qualification. The learning support should cover all aspects of the learning outcomes/syllabus and if this is not possible it should direct students to relevant sources of information.</p>

## Appendix 1 – Recognition of prior learning standards

Standard	Description
<b>3. Training delivery</b>	
<b>3.1 Quality of teaching and learning support</b>	The qualification learning support should be of a high standard to effectively support the students. Tutors should hold relevant qualifications and undertake CPD. Tutors should have knowledge of training techniques and presentation standards and have a high level of knowledge of their subject area.
<b>3.2 Evaluation of the learning support for students</b>	A thorough evaluation process is required to assess the learning support standards, for example, through observation of teaching and monitoring of tutor performance and behaviour, monitoring of student results and student feedback.
<b>4. Assessments</b>	
<b>4.1 Assessment structure</b>	<p>The assessment must be of a similar standard, scope and rigour to the CII examinations. For example, the pass mark should be at or above the CII pass mark and the testing should have a similar duration and number of questions to the relevant CII exam unit.</p> <p>The qualification must be formally assessed with all of the learning outcomes and/or syllabus tested. A variety of methods can be used for assessing the qualification provided these adequately test the learning.</p> <p>The testing must be robust and should be appropriate for the technical level of the qualification, for example, through the use of invigilated 'closed book' tests.</p>
<b>4.2 Assessment questions</b>	<p>The assessment questions must be clearly worded so that students know what is required of them and how many marks are allocated to each question.</p> <p>The questions must test the learning outcomes.</p> <p>There should be a guide on how each area of the syllabus will be tested and how many assessment questions will relate to each area of the syllabus.</p> <p>The questions should be robust and not contain 'clues' to the answer.</p> <p>They cannot be CII examination questions or questions used in the CII exam guides.</p> <p>The individual responsible for the assessment process should be clearly identified.</p>

## Appendix 1 – Recognition of prior learning standards

Standard	Description
<p><b>4.3 Marking scheme</b></p>	<p>A marking scheme should be in place which sets out how the marks are allocated for each question. It should provide the examiners/assessment markers with the correct and/or model answers and clearly indicate how the marks are awarded.</p> <p>The number of marks allocated should be reflective of the question level, for example, a higher number of marks per question may be awarded for application of the learning as opposed to knowledge recall.</p> <p>The marks should be allocated consistently throughout the question papers.</p> <p>Experience, internships or exemptions awarded for other qualifications that count towards the qualification will not be recognised by the CII for the purposes of prior learning.</p>
<p><b>4.4 Assessment setting</b></p>	<p>The responsibility for setting the qualification assessments and marking should be allocated to a competent, qualified individual or individuals. This should not be the subject teachers. In circumstances where this happens, the assessment process must be checked by an external examiner.</p> <p>The assessments should be checked for technical accuracy, clarity and ‘sense’, relevance and technical level.</p> <p>The question bank should have a ratio of 1:3 and/or new questions written for each test.</p> <p>The question bank should be updated and checked regularly to ensure that the questions remain up-to-date, relevant and technically accurate.</p>
<p><b>4.5 Assessment security</b></p>	<p>Assessments should be securely stored and security measures should be in place to ensure the assessment questions cannot be accessed by unauthorised individuals.</p> <p>Tutors should not have access to the assessment questions.</p> <p>Processes should be in place to maintain student confidentiality, for example, through the use of reference numbers instead of student names.</p>
<p><b>4.6 Assessment conditions</b></p>	<p>Assessments should be taken under similar conditions to CII exams, with the use of invigilators to maintain the integrity of the assessment process.</p> <p>Invigilators who are tutors must not invigilate exams that they train.</p>
<p><b>4.7 Assessment moderation</b></p>	<p>There should be a process in place to check the marking of the assessment is fair and consistent, for example, through use of a second marker and/or a review of assessment results that have high or low marks and exam papers that narrowly fail.</p> <p>The moderation process should also identify questions which have very high or very low pass results so that the standard of the question can be scrutinised and a decision made whether to include that question in the marks.</p> <p>Any adjustments to the pass mark as a consequence of moderation decisions should be recorded.</p>

## Appendix 1 – Recognition of prior learning standards

Standard	Description
<b>4.8 Candidate notification and appeals process</b>	<p>Students should be notified of their assessment result in a timely manner. A documented formal appeals process should be in place and accessible to all students. An individual or individuals who are independent from the training and assessment process should be the decision makers for appeals.</p> <p>Tutors cannot be part of the appeal decision making process.</p>
<b>4.9 Conflict of interest</b>	<p>There should be a clear separation between the teaching and assessment process. Procedures should be in place to avoid the potential for personal conflicts of interest, for example, arising from a relative/friend or manager marking his/her team members' assessment. There should be no link between the delivery and design of training and the assessment process (for example, question writing, marking, moderation).</p>
<b>5. Quality assurance</b>	
<b>5.1 Documentation and guidance</b>	<p>Processes and procedures should ensure that the management and operation of the qualification is to a consistently high standard. Guidance should be provided to invigilators, examiners, question writers, markers and tutors so that they know what their roles and responsibilities are. These should be reviewed annually and updated as required.</p>
<b>5.2 Record keeping</b>	<p>Detailed records must be maintained, including version control, assessment questions and answers, syllabus, student attendance, results, appeals, complaints, moderation results and other relevant procedures.</p>
<b>5.3 Review process</b>	<p>The qualification should be regularly reviewed to ensure that the syllabus and assessment remains relevant and up-to-date. There should be a system for approving changes to the qualification and ensuring any changes meet regulatory requirements. Procedures should be in place to support the integrity of the qualification, for example, monitoring plagiarism and impersonation of students.</p> <p>The delivery of the qualification should be monitored to ensure that consistent standards are maintained regardless of where the qualification is delivered.</p>
<b>5.4 Professional</b>	<p>The qualification should be operated and managed to the highest level of professionalism. Procedures should be in place to ensure that all students are treated fairly.</p> <p>Tutors, invigilators, examiners, question setters should undertake their roles and responsibilities with integrity and follow a code of conduct, for example, the CII Code of Ethics.</p> <p>Senior management should oversee and approve the management of the qualification and act upon any regulator recommendations.</p>

Go to [Appendix 2](#) - CII recognition of prior learning submission form for awarding organisations where you can print off the application form.



# Recognition of prior learning

## Important notes:

All information should be sent together to the following address: Accreditation Services, Chartered Insurance Institute, 21 Lombard Street, London EC3V 9AH

Email: [PriorLearning@cii.co.uk](mailto:PriorLearning@cii.co.uk)

## Section A – Personal details

Please complete the following details

Awarding body name	<input type="text"/>																								
Programme leader name	<input type="text"/>																								
Job title	<input type="text"/>																								
Tel	<input type="text"/>	Ext	<input type="text"/>	Mobile	<input type="text"/>																				
Email	<input type="text"/>																								
Address	<input type="text"/>																								
Postcode	<input type="text"/>						Country	<input type="text"/>																	

## Section B – Qualifications

Qualification(s) submitted for CII to review:	<input type="text"/>																							
	<input type="text"/>																							
CII units against which exemptions are being sought:	<input type="text"/>																							
	<input type="text"/>																							

## Section C – Checklist

Please enclose the following information

Full details of the structure of the qualification including:

- Qualification overview
- Details of the course compulsory modules and electives
- Launch date of qualification and details of the exam sitting period for the current version of the qualification
- Details of previous versions of this qualification

