



ICAEW Pathways FAQs

FOR CIPFA MEMBERS WITH MORE THAN 5 YEARS' EXPERIENCE

Applicant eligibility

Q: I became a CIPFA member using exemptions. Can I apply for Pathways?

A: Yes. As long as you sat and passed the final exams with CIPFA, you can apply for Pathways.

Q: Do the five years of membership have to be consecutive?

A: Applicants need to have a minimum of five years' full membership (completed in full by the relevant submission deadline date) but this does not necessarily have to be consecutive. This means that if you are a current fully qualified member but have taken a recent career break, you are still able to apply for Pathways as long as you meet the required criteria.

Q: I am a CIPFA Affiliate member. Can I apply?

A: No. Pathways is only available to fully qualified members from certain bodies who have at least five years of full membership. If you are a student or part-qualified member (often called 'affiliate') of one of those bodies, you are not eligible to apply as you are not a fully qualified member.

Practising Certificate and Audit Rights

Q: Does Pathways membership give me audit rights?

A: ICAEW membership does not automatically grant you audit rights in the UK, so if you intend to work in audit during your career, we recommend that you re-qualify with ICAEW. Please see our [Audit Qualification \(AQ\)](#) page for further information.

Q: Once I become a member of the ICAEW via Pathways, can I apply for a [Practising Certificate](#) straight away, or do I have to be a member for a certain period of time?

A: If you join ICAEW through the Pathways route, you can apply for a Practising Certificate as soon as you apply to become a member.

Letter of Good Standing

Q: In what format should my Letter of Good Standing be uploaded when I submit?

A: When submitting your application online, instead of a Letter of Good Standing, please upload a statement with your signature confirming you are happy for CIPFA to share confirmation of your good standing directly with ICAEW. The same will apply for sponsors who are CIPFA members.

Sponsor criteria

Q: Can a friend or family member be my sponsor?

A: A friend or family member can serve as your sponsor – as long as they meet all of the [required criteria](#).

Q: Can two Pathways applicants sponsor each other?

A: Yes. a Pathways applicant can sponsor another applicant as long as they know each other professionally.

Q: Can an ICAEW member joined via Pathways serve as a sponsor?

A: Yes.

Q: My sponsor is a CIPFA member. Do they need to provide a Letter of Good Standing?

A: If your sponsor is a CIPFA member, you can upload a statement from your sponsor confirming they are happy for CIPFA to share confirmation of their good standing directly with ICAEW. If your sponsor is NOT a CIPFA member, then the usual Letter of Good Standing is required. If they are an ICAEW member then a Letter of Good Standing is not required.

Examination of Experience

Q: I work in the public sector. Will I be able to answer the questions?

A: Yes. The [Examination of Experience](#) requires you to demonstrate your professional skills and experience over the last five years. Your experience in the public sector, such as budgeting, financial planning, compliance, strategic management and ethical awareness are highly relevant and can be used to answer the questions.

Q: What is the maximum and minimum word count of the Pathways Examination of Experience?

A: The expected length of your answers at the Examination of Experience Part 1 is between 3,000-6,000 words – with approximately 500 words per question. If you go too far either side of this guide, the examiners may reject your answers.

Q: Do I have to use a company name in my work example?

A: All answers are treated as confidential. However, if you prefer not to name (or are limited by a non-disclosure agreement or similar) a particular company or client in your work example, then you can simply refer to them as client XX or company YY.

However, if you intend to do this, you should add some context to assist the examiner. As an example, you could say: 'Client XXX, a market-leader in the international automotive trade' or Company YY, a local family-run business in the retail sector' or similar example.

Attempts and resubmission

Q: If I fail my Examination of Experience, can I make another attempt?

A: You are entitled to a maximum of four attempts to pass the Pathways Examination of Experience as long as Pathways remains open.

Exam results

Q: Can I get my exam paper remarked?

A: No. Each Pathways examination paper has undergone a comprehensive marking process by experienced Pathways examiners, which includes that your Examination will have been assessed by at least two examiners.

Invitation to ICAEW membership

Q: Can I delay my membership entry by a few months?

A: Yes, you can delay your membership entry for up to 12 months without incurring any penalties or extra costs. However, if you delay your entry into membership by 12 months or more (taken from the date your Pathways exam results were released), then you will need to pay an extra £100 (+ VAT where applicable) and submit a series of additional documents which include at least one reference from an ICAEW member who has worked with you for at least two years, as well as other required documents.

You cannot use the ACA designation or refer to yourself as an ICAEW member at any point until you have joined ICAEW (i.e., paid the required admission and membership fees). ICAEW takes misuse of these terms as a serious offence.