

COURSE REGULATIONS FOR ALL CIPR QUALIFICATIONS

Effective from March 2026

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Introduction

This document is intended to be used as a guide to candidates and CIPR teaching centres (hereafter ATCs). These Course Regulations should be used in conjunction with the attached Appendices.

1. Principles of CIPR assessment

- 1.1 At the time of publishing these Course Regulations the CIPR is undergoing a syllabus review of all its professional qualifications. Two qualifications (Public Relations and Communication Foundation, and Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate) will be launched on 2nd April 2026. Any reference to these qualifications in this document will be by their name or collectively as 'New Syllabus qualifications', all other qualifications will be referred to as 'Legacy qualifications'.
- 1.2 Candidates should note that the purpose of assessment is to enable them to demonstrate achievement at the standard required for the award they seek and that assessment involves judgement, not simply computation.
- 1.3 Candidates' performance must be in accordance with the assessment requirements provided. CIPR External Examiners (hereafter Examiners) are required to use established methods to assess candidates fairly and consistently.
- 1.4 Guidance regarding word counts
 - 1.4.1 Bibliographies and footnotes are not included in the **total** word count. Footnotes must not contain appendices or be used to include additional text that should have been in the main body of the work. The word count for each component must be entered in the appropriate space on the cover sheet. The total word count must be recorded in the appropriate space provided on the cover sheet and at the end of the text in the main document.
 - 1.4.2 Legacy qualifications

With the exception of the thought leadership article in the Professional PR Diploma Unit 2 assessment, candidates are allowed a +/- 10% leeway on the **total** word count for the assessment and they must ensure they **DO NOT** exceed the +10% tolerance. Anything above this allowance will result in the indicative mark being reduced by **one** grade. No grading reduction will be implemented if they are below the -10% word tolerance but candidates should note that it is very likely that the paper will fail because the tasks will not have been adequately addressed.
 - 1.4.3 New Syllabus qualifications

Candidates are allowed a +/-10% leeway on the total word count for the assessment and must ensure they **DO NOT** exceed the +10% tolerance. Anything above this allowance will have a detrimental effect on the grade awarded. No grading reduction will be implemented if the assessment is below the -10% word tolerance but doing so could result in a fail grade being awarded if tasks have not been adequately addressed. Candidates may provide appendices for context and supplementary material, but should note that they are not included in the word count and will not be marked.
- 1.5 Candidates should refer to their teaching centre for instructions about appropriate referencing styles and where, within the assessment, this information should be placed.
- 1.6 Within the constraints imposed by the assessment objectives and regulations, Examiners exercise professional judgement on the awards to be recommended for individual candidates. They are responsible for interpreting the assessment regulations for the programme in the light of the CIPR Awarding Body (hereafter CIPR AB) requirements and of good educational practice.

- 1.7 Assessments are subject to a robust evaluation process that includes steps to verify the quality and consistency of individual assessment personnel at its Accredited Teaching Centres (hereafter ATCs). This includes particular emphasis on work submitted for assessment that is judged to marginally fail to reach the pass criteria.
- 1.8 The CIPR Awarding Body issues guidelines to ATCs in respect of selecting samples for internal moderation. When completed, a teaching centre's marking and internal moderation is then subject to external moderation by the Examiner for the award/unit in question.

2. The procedures - checking, authorising and releasing results

- 2.1 Examiners are responsible for moderating the assessment process across all ATCs prior to the submission of results for consideration by the CIPR Board of Examiners (hereafter Board).
- 2.2 The Examiner shall report to the Board on the results of all candidates for the particular assessment for which they are responsible.
- 2.3 The CIPR AB simultaneously gathers all statistical data from the marked assessment submissions and ensures that these are presented for the consideration of the Board.
- 2.4 Assessment results are then subjected to the scrutiny and consideration of the Board. This Board meets four times a year and, on each occasion, is responsible for authorising the release of the results of all assessments taken by candidates on CIPR qualifications. The external moderation process and then the scrutiny of the Board exist to ensure fairness to individual candidates and that the standard of the CIPR awards is maintained.
- 2.5 This Board has the authority to accept the recommendations presented by the Examiner and the CIPR AB and to determine that the results of the assessment in question be released accordingly. Alternatively the Board may authorise such amendment to the results as it sees fit prior to its authorisation that they be released. The Board may in some circumstances determine that consideration of individual ATCs' results should be delayed, for example, if a submission was not received by the published deadline; centre assessment had not been carried out in accordance with CIPR Regulations and/or other relevant guidance; or if suspected malpractice has been identified.
- 2.6 Assessment results are released by the CIPR AB only after they have been subject to a careful check to ensure that they are in accordance with the decisions of the Board.

3. Information provided in results notifications and issuing of digital credentials

- 3.1. The results provided to candidates in respect of their assessed work by the CIPR AB shall be:
 - 3.1.1 **Legacy qualifications**
Fail or Pass only.
 - 3.1.2 **New Syllabus qualifications**
 - Public Relations and Communication Foundation
Fail, Pass or Excellent Pass only
 - Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate
Fail, Pass or Excellent Pass only
- 3.2 Results will be emailed to candidates on the date specified in the CIPR AB Assessment Schedule.

- 3.3 Candidates who successfully complete the qualification will be issued with digital credentials two weeks after the results notification email has been issued.

4. Candidates who fail an assessment

Candidates are allowed three attempts at each assessment. If a candidate fails they **MUST** ensure that they leave themselves sufficient time to submit the assessment again within the qualification completion timeframe. If they require additional time they can request an extension as detailed in Section 10 of these Course Regulations.

- 4.1 If a candidate fails after three attempts the following will apply:

4.1.1 Legacy Foundation, Legacy Specialist Qualifications, and the new Public Relations and Communication Foundation

If, after three attempts, the candidate fails to achieve a pass in the assessment they shall be deemed to have failed the qualification. Such candidates who wish to attain the qualification will have to make a fresh application to start the course again. This will involve submission of a new assessment and a full set of fees (tuition, Awarding Body and Membership) will apply.

4.1.2 Legacy Professional PR Certificate and Professional PR Diploma and the new Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate

If, after three attempts, the candidate fails to achieve a pass in any of the assessments they shall be deemed to have failed the qualification. Such candidates who wish to attain the qualification will have to make a fresh application to start the course again. This will involve submission of **ALL** units/components of the qualification, irrespective of whether they previously achieved a pass in any unit/component. A full set of fees (tuition, Awarding Body and Membership) will apply.

If candidates do not wish to undertake the qualification again the CIPR AB can, on request, provide candidates with a letter detailing the units that they have passed.

5. How are results sent out

The initial notice of an assessment result shall be sent by email (by the CIPR AB) by the third Thursday **after** the meeting of the Board that authorises their release.

- 5.1 Candidates who have achieved the qualification will receive an additional email approximately two weeks later from the CIPR AB introducing a third party digital credential provider who will contact them separately with details of how to access their digital credentials and, if required, a downloadable PDF of their certificate.
- 5.2 Candidates who fail the unit/component/qualification will be advised to contact their ATC and discuss a suitable date to submit their re-worked assessment (if applicable).

6. Complaints and appeals procedures

- 6.1 Grounds for candidates to seek a re-mark

- 6.1.1 Candidates may request that their work is re-marked on the basis of failure on the part of CIPR AB or its Examiners to apply the marking criteria accurately or to follow processes correctly. This applies irrespective of whether the script in question has already been externally moderated. It

should be noted, however, that it is very unlikely that marks will be adjusted if the script was externally moderated and that the moderation process confirmed the original mark awarded.

6.2 Procedure for obtaining re-marks

- 6.2.1 Candidates should approach the CIPR AB Manager directly. Any such application must be submitted by email to arrive no later than **three weeks** after the assessment result has been released. The application letter must clearly state the Candidate Number and set out which parts of the Examiner's judgement is disputed. A copy of the script in question and the corresponding assessment feedback document should also be submitted with the application. The CIPR AB Manager will acknowledge receipt of the application within **one** week and will arrange to take payment of the non-refundable fee of £175 at this point. It should be noted that the re-marking process will only begin once payment of the fee has been received.
- 6.2.2 The candidate's work will be re-marked by one of the CIPR's Examiners who was not involved in the external assessment of this particular cohort. This Examiner will assess the work on the basis of the original assessment criteria with reference to the candidate's detailed argument for disagreement, the assessment of the initial marker, as well as (if applicable) the internal moderator and/or Examiner.
- 6.2.3 The result of the re-mark will be despatched to the candidate and the ATC no later than **six weeks** after the CIPR AB's receipt of the application. Candidates are advised that such a re-mark may result in an increase or a decrease of their final indicative grade and that this will over-ride the original indicative grade.

In the case of a re-mark that shows the initial application of the marking criteria to have been inaccurate the CIPR AB shall ensure that the Examiner responsible for the re-marked submission shall also reconsider the submissions of other candidates from the same cohort. The Examiner will bring this matter to the attention of the next meeting of the Board, or – if waiting until that meeting takes place will unduly and unreasonably delay providing candidates with revised results – the matter will be referred to the Chair of Examiners (hereafter Chair) who will act with the Board's delegated powers.

Revised results – as appropriate – will be despatched to the candidates in question, and the ATC, within **one week** of the decision being reached by the Board or Chair.

The CIPR AB shall ensure that in such circumstances, candidates involved are kept fully informed until such time as the reviewed results are despatched.

- 6.2.4 Candidates shall have a right of appeal against the outcome of a re-mark. Any such application must be made within **three weeks** of the candidate's receipt of the result of the re-mark, and it must be made with full details supporting the candidate's grounds of appeal. A review on appeal will be granted only if the candidate can show reasonable evidence that supports their view that the re-mark does not reasonably reflect either the quality of the assessment submission in issue, or fails to take account of other factors previously disclosed to the CIPR AB. Any such appeal must be submitted to the CIPR Head of Membership & Qualifications (hereafter Head) for a decision/course of action. The decision of the Head is final and the candidate will have no further recourse for appeal.

6.3 Complaints

This can be either against:

- a teaching centre;
- the CIPR AB; or
- as a result of a suspected malpractice investigation (see Section 7 below).

- 6.3.1 Where a candidate wishes to submit that any action of its ATC or the CIPR AB has had an inappropriate or prejudicial influence upon his/her pursuit of a CIPR AB qualification, the following procedure shall apply:
- 6.3.1.1 The candidate must lodge full details of their complaint/appeal with the Head within **two weeks** of the occasion of the subject of complaint. The complaint will be assessed within **two weeks** and recorded by the CIPR AB.
 - 6.3.1.2 Where such a complaint relates to the services provided by the candidate's ATC the candidate will be asked if they are content that the CIPR AB discloses the identity of the complainant in raising the matter with the ATC. The wishes of candidates preferring that their identity is not disclosed will be respected, although candidates should be aware that ATCs will often infer their identities.
 - 6.3.1.3 A response shall be expected from the ATC within **two weeks** and will be considered by the Head. The Head will, as they deem appropriate, dismiss the complaint as unwarranted; require the ATC to take immediate and appropriate action; or refer the matter directly to the Board.
 - 6.3.1.4 Where a complaint relates to some act or omission committed by the CIPR AB itself, the Head will undertake to provide a response, detailing any action to be taken, for the candidate within **two weeks** of the receipt of the original complaint.
- 6.3.2 The decision of the Director in relation to 6.3.1 above will be final and the candidate will have no further recourse to appeal.

7. Procedures - dealing with malpractice

7.1 Malpractice can arise in different ways. Examples of malpractice can include:

- Plagiarism or deliberate copying of another's work, passing it off as one's own.
- Recycling one's own work in its entirety or reusing portions of a previously written text while authoring new work.
- Falsification – knowingly presenting fictitious or distorted data and/or information as genuine.
- Using the services of somebody else to produce work submitted for assessment.
- Failing to appropriately reference the use of AI tools*
- Bringing undue pressure and influence to bear on assessors thereby compromising their impartiality.

*Candidates should seek guidance from their ATCs regarding appropriate referencing of AI tools. The following documents (provided as appendices at the end of these Course Regulations) should also be referred to:

- Appendix 1 – Guidance on the use of AI in Assessment Submissions
- Appendix 2 - CIPR Malpractice Policy
- Appendix 3 - CIPR Malpractice Procedure

7.2 Candidates

- 7.2.1 It is often the CIPR's ATCs that will discover such malpractices during the marking process. It is the clear duty of ATCs to investigate all such cases and report their conclusions to the CIPR AB in writing no later than **one week** after the matter has come to the ATC's attention. The CIPR AB will acknowledge all such notifications within **one week**. The ATC must bring the matter in question to the attention of the candidates involved and seek their response and then submit a report to the CIPR AB.

- 7.2.2 The CIPR AB will inform the respective Examiner that this particular script will need to be included in the external moderation process and will send it together with the anti-plagiarism software report (if applicable) and the report from the teaching centre.
- 7.2.3 The Examiner will provide a report to the Board. The Board shall have the prerogative to:
- dismiss the allegation as unsubstantiated;
 - withhold the release of the result pending further investigation, or
 - declare the assessment submission(s) to be null and void.
- 7.2.4 Candidates are advised that they will have a right of appeal against a decision to declare their scripts null and void. The appropriate appeal process is that as described in 6.3.1 above.
- 7.2.5 Should the judgement of malpractice against a candidate be upheld by the Board, the Chair will provide a report to the Head with recommendations to either:
- i. exclude the candidate from presenting further assessments (for any qualification) for a period of no less than three years; or
 - ii. allow the candidate **one** more chance at the unit/component/qualification in question with no further exclusion from other CIPR qualifications. Candidates **MUST** ensure that they submit the unit/component/qualification in question **before** their qualification completion timeframe expires. If there isn't enough time for the candidate to submit within their qualification completion timeframe they will need to apply for an extension as stated in Section 10 of these Course Regulations.

The Head will then inform the candidate of their decision in writing.

- 7.2.6 If the severity of the malpractice is considered sufficient to be treated as in 7.2.5 (i) above, and the candidate in question is also a member of the CIPR, the following will apply:
- The Board is duty bound to provide a full report to the CIPR Consultant (hereafter Consultant).
 - The Consultant will refer the matter to the Professional Practices Committee (hereafter PPC) at its next meeting with a recommendation to terminate the candidate's membership of the CIPR for a period of 3 years.
 - The candidate will be contacted directly by the Chair of the PPC and will be given **14 days** in which to respond to the decision.
 - Where the Code of Conduct is found to have been breached, decisions of the PPC are normally made public.
 - If the candidate in question is on a Legacy CIPR qualification and is NOT a member of the CIPR they will be excluded from becoming a member for a period of not less than three years.

7.3 Judgement against a teaching centre

- 7.3.1 Should it come to the attention of the CIPR AB that an ATC's staff is alleged guilty of an act of malpractice, an extreme example being its production of work to be assessed in the name of its candidate(s), the CIPR AB shall inform the ATC of its concerns to this effect and require its full response within **one week**. The CIPR AB will usually be made aware of concerns either by a member of staff, a candidate or the Examiner during the moderation process.
- 7.3.2 Should the judgement of malpractice against an ATC be upheld the Head shall have in their discretion the power to:
- admonish an ATC and require it to set out to the CIPR the steps it has taken to ensure that there shall be no recurrence of the malpractice;
 - withhold the issuing of results from the affected candidate(s) until such time as alternative marking arrangements can be implemented;

- prohibit the member of staff from being involved in the delivery of CIPR qualifications for a period of up to three years;
- admonish and exclude the ATC from providing courses for CIPR AB awards for a period of up to three years; or
- admonish and exclude the ATC from providing courses for CIPR AB awards indefinitely.

8. CIPR requirements of teaching centres in respect of implementation of marking standards, including sanctions for non-compliance

- 8.1 Teaching centres are responsible for the assessment of all candidates' work, subject to CIPR external moderation. ATCs are provided with guidance on the level of standards to be applied to the marking of candidates' submissions; with guidance on how to carry out the assessment and complete the marking and moderation stages as well as the assessment and feedback form to enable its consistent operation.
- 8.2 ATCs are required to submit, by the dates specified in the CIPR AB Assessment Schedule, full information on the marks that the ATC has awarded to its candidates, so that the Examiner may select a sample of the ATC's assessed candidate submissions, in accordance with CIPR sampling rules. The Examiner shall scrutinise the submitted samples, reporting on their findings to both the Board and the ATC. The ATC is required to implement any adjustment to its approach to assessing, and in consequence the grades it has awarded, if so instructed by the Examiner.
- 8.3 It is the duty and responsibility of each ATC's Course Leader to ensure that the assessment of candidates' submissions by the ATC, and the ATC's compliance with instructions from the Examiners, are carried out in full, in accordance with CIPR instructions and rules, and according to the agreed timetable. The ATC's Internal Moderator (usually the Course Leader) must ensure that their markers are marking consistently. They must investigate any substantial variance between the marks being given by the markers, discuss the matter with them and ensure that corrective action is taken immediately, and prior to the submission of a full sets of marks to the Examiner, who will make a selection to sample from that full set of marks.
- 8.4 An ATC that fails to follow the instructions, guidance and timetable for the assessment of candidates' submissions, or which negligently allows its assessors to mark at variance from each other (where no reasonable explanation may be adduced, and where the variance derives from the uncoordinated individual approaches of the assessors) will be reported by the Examiner to the Board. The ATC will subsequently be made aware of any marking discrepancies in the Examiner's report and will be required to take immediate corrective action as identified by the Examiner, prior to the submission of the results to candidates.
- 8.5 If the ATC fails to take action the Board shall take such action as it considers necessary to ensure the final results reflect parity of assessment and the application of the stated standard. This may include either a partial or total re-marking of candidate submissions before final results may be issued.
- 8.6 An ATC that is the subject of action in 8.4 above will be required to give a firm undertaking that it will take steps to preclude a recurrence of the negligent action. An explanation of the action to be taken will be required from the ATC, and evidence submitted within a period of **one month** that such action has been carried out. An ATC which fails to do this shall be reported to the Board. That Board shall have the power to recommend to the Head the withdrawal of CIPR AB accreditation from the ATC for a period of up to three years, or indefinitely as it sees fit. In taking any such action, the Board shall ensure that it protects the interests of the ATC's existing candidates. It will, however, have the prerogative to delay the issue of final results to candidates if this is necessary to ensure their fairness.

9. Reasonable adjustments and special consideration

9.1 Reasonable Adjustments

9.1.1 Policy

The CIPR AB is committed to ensuring equal access to qualifications and assessment for those candidates that fall under any of the eight protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership). Due consideration of these groups is made at every stage of the assessment process so that discrimination is actively avoided.

9.1.2 What are Reasonable Adjustments for?

The CIPR AB recognises that some candidates may find that standard arrangements for assessment can cause problems, and so prove to be unnecessary barriers. These can often be overcome without compromising the validity of the assessment. Such barriers can arise where candidates have:

- known and permanent or long term disabilities or learning difficulties;
- temporary disabilities or illnesses; or
- temporary illness, injury, indisposition or comparable adverse circumstance at the time of assessment, that could influence performance to the candidates' detriment.

9.1.3 What are reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are arrangements that are approved before an assessment so that a candidate can take part and perform to the best of their ability. Adjustments can be provided for reasons mentioned in 9.1.2 above.

9.1.4 Examples of reasonable adjustments:-

Reasonable adjustment arrangements are made with the objective of enabling candidates to take the assessment with neither advantage, nor disadvantage, in comparison with other candidates on the course.

9.1.5 When should a candidate make an application?

Candidates should contact their ATC to request reasonable adjustments as early as possible **before** the assessment submission deadline to enable them to make appropriate arrangements. Evidence may not always be necessary and candidates should discuss their requirements with their ATC.

10. Qualification completion timeframe

The following qualification completion timeframes are correct at the time of publishing these Course Regulations and do not include any revisions to completion timeframes for the remaining qualifications which are still under review. Addendums to this document will be provided when the review of the remaining Legacy qualifications has been completed.

10.1 Qualification completion timeframes are either:

- One year from start of course – For candidates on the Legacy CIPR Foundation, Legacy Specialist Qualifications and the new Public Relations and Communication Foundation; or
- Two years from start of course – For candidates on the Legacy CIPR Professional PR Certificate and Professional PR Diploma and the new Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate.

10.2 If a candidate fails to complete their qualification within the timeframe as stated in 10.1 above, and no extension has been granted, they will need to make a fresh application and start the course again. This will include a new set of teaching centre tuition, CIPR AB and membership fees. Grades previously awarded for units on the Legacy Professional PR Certificate and PR Diploma and components on the new Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate will not be counted.

10.3 Submitting assessments:

10.3.1 There are four assessment submission points per year as set out in the CIPR AB Assessment Schedule and candidates can decide when to submit their assessments without the need to inform the CIPR AB. Appropriate assessment submission dates should be agreed between the candidate and their tutor/course leader.

10.3.2 Candidates should note that it is their responsibility to ensure they give themselves sufficient time to successfully complete the qualification within the specified timeframe.

10.4 Submission deadline extension requests:

10.4.1 Candidates can request a short extension to the assessment submission deadline of between one and five days. Requests should be made directly with the ATC and how long an extension the ATC can offer within this timeframe is at their discretion. There is no fee payable for short extensions.

10.4.2 Candidates can request an extension to their qualification completion deadline of either six months (for all qualifications) or twelve months (for the Legacy Professional PR Certificate, Legacy Professional PR Diploma and the new Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate only). Applications should be made directly with the candidate's ATC and fees may apply. Please see the Extension Request Policy at Appendix 4 for further details.

In 10.4.1 and 10.4.2 above, candidates **MUST** apply for an extension, in writing, to their ATC **2 - 4 weeks before** the original date of their qualification completion deadline. If mitigating circumstances apply ATCs are empowered to deal with these on a case-by-case basis.

11. CIPR membership

11.1 Since June 2025 it is a requirement that candidates on all CIPR qualifications become Professional Student members of the CIPR and the cost for this will be included in the CIPR AB fees. Details of candidates' Professional Student Member numbers will be provided in the welcome email from the CIPR Membership Team.

11.2 Candidates should note that if they are requesting an extension to their qualification completion deadline (as in 10.4.2 above) it is their responsibility to ensure that their membership is maintained for the duration of their studies. Candidates will be charged £40 to extend their Professional Student membership by 6 months, or £80 to extend by 12 months.

12. Retention of candidates' work

12.1 All candidates' work assessed for a CIPR qualification will be kept for six months from the date of the Board at which the overall results were ratified*. ATCs are responsible for retaining candidates' work accordingly. Appeals involving any piece of candidate work will be considered at the next meeting of the Board. Where an appeal against the decision of the Board is referred to the Head and this appeal

extends beyond six months the CIPR AB or the Head will keep the piece of work in question for as long as necessary (to facilitate the appeal process to its final conclusion point).

12.2 At the end of a six month period the CIPR AB and its ATCs will dispose of the assessment material in their possession. It will not be made available or be recognisable for future use in any way, unless by the prior consent of its author.

* In the case of the Legacy CIPR Professional PR Certificate and Professional PR Diploma, and the Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate, this will be after the final unit has been submitted.

13. Digital badges and certificates

13.1 Candidates will be awarded a digital badge on successful completion of the award for use in email signatures or on social media. They will also be given access to a downloadable PDF version of their certificate.

13.2 Candidates who graduated before the introduction of digital badging (in September 2023) and whose original certificate has been lost or destroyed, may be able to obtain a PDF version of their original certificate. Applications must be made in writing to the CIPR AB (qualifications@cipr.co.uk), explaining that the original certificate has been lost or destroyed. Hard copy replacement certificates are no longer available.

14. Monitoring and reporting

The CIPR AB is committed to analysing its own performance through reporting on all aspects of its work to the Director. Prominent activities include detailed reviews of the syllabi and the types and appropriateness of assessment exercises, and their administration.

CIPR Awarding Body

March 2026

Use of AI in assessment submissions

A guide for candidates on CIPR qualifications

(March 2026)

The CIPR acknowledges the importance of AI for future PR practice and recognises that AI can support professional communication when used ethically and transparently. However, AI tools may have limitations to their use, such as producing inaccurate or inappropriate content, or producing seemingly convincing answers which may contain incorrect or biased information, and CIPR candidates should not rely on their use when working on their assessments.

Candidates on CIPR qualifications should familiarise themselves with the guidance on the ethical use of AI by referring to the following documents before beginning work on their assessments:

- The CIPR Malpractice Policy
- The Student Handbook

When using AI candidates are expected to:

- Use AI tools to support their work, not replace their own analysis, writing or judgement
- Verify all AI-generated outputs using credible sources
- Ensure fabricated data, case details or stakeholder insights are excluded
- Protect organisational confidentiality at all times
- Submit an AI Reflective Summary statement (page 2 of the cover sheet) with their assessment submission that clearly explains how (or whether) AI assisted in the process

Improper or undisclosed use of AI undermines assessment integrity and may result in a fail result being awarded and/or an investigation under the CIPR Academic Malpractice Policy.

What is AI misuse?

While AI may become an established tool in the workplace, candidates need to demonstrate the knowledge, understanding and skills required to gain their CIPR qualification and any use of AI, which means they have not independently demonstrated their own attainment, is likely to be considered malpractice unless it has been appropriately referenced.

Examples of AI misuse include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Copying or paraphrasing sections of AI-generated content so that the work is no longer the candidate's own.
- Copying or paraphrasing whole responses of AI-generated content.

- Using AI to complete parts of the assessment so that the work does not reflect the candidate's own work, analysis, evaluation, or thoughts.
- Failing to acknowledge use of AI tools when they have been used as a source of information.
- Incomplete or poor acknowledgement of AI tools.
- Submitting work with intentionally incomplete or misleading reference or bibliographies.

Acknowledging AI use

Where AI tools have been used as a source of information, a candidate's acknowledgement must show the name of the AI source used and should show the date the content was generated.

For example: ChatGPT 3.5 (<https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt/>) 25/01/2023.

The candidate must retain a copy of the prompts used and computer-generated content for reference and authentication purposes in a non-editable format (such as a screenshot) and provide a brief explanation of how it has been used.

Candidates must use the appropriate methods of acknowledging the use of AI tools and references should be made. It would be unacceptable to simply reference 'AI' or ChatGPT', for example, just as it would be unacceptable to state 'Google' rather than the specific website and webpages which have been consulted.

Action that will be taken by the CIPR if the misuse of AI is suspected

The CIPR takes any form of malpractice very seriously. If a candidate is suspected of using AI while producing their assessment, and hasn't properly referenced its use, then action will be taken against them as set out in Section 6 of the CIPR Course Regulations.

Assessment cover sheets

Candidates MUST complete a cover sheet for inclusion with their assessment submission. The cover sheet comprises two pages:

- **Page 1** deals with the naming of candidate assessments as well as providing an introduction to the Candidate AI Reflective Statement on page 2. Candidates must complete all sections on this page.
- **Page 2** is the Candidate AI Reflective Statement which must be completed by all candidates in accordance with the instructions provided.

**Please note that the rules regarding the appropriate use of AI are continually changing and, if necessary, updates to this guide will be required.*

CIPR Awarding Body

March 2026

CIPR Malpractice Policy

A guide for teaching centres and candidates

Malpractice can be the result of any of the following actions:

- Plagiarism or deliberate copying of another's work, passing it off as one's own.
- Recycling one's own work in its entirety or reusing portions of a previously written text while authoring new work.
- Falsification – knowingly presenting fictitious or distorted data and/or information as genuine.
- Using the services of somebody else to produce work submitted for assessment.
- Failing to appropriately reference the use of AI tools
- Bringing undue pressure and influence to bear on assessors thereby compromising their impartiality.

CIPR assessments may require candidates to demonstrate understanding of relevant theory and practice which might involve reference to academic and other publications. Any such work that is used in this way, whether by direct quotation or paraphrasing, should be indicated by proper referencing and supported by a full bibliography. (Teaching centres will provide instructions on appropriate referencing systems; i.e. Harvard).

If malpractice is suspected, the tutor must first inform the Course Leader, who will in turn call a meeting with the candidate as soon as possible to investigate the matter. If the Course Leader feels that malpractice has indeed occurred, the work will be marked as ungraded and the CIPR Awarding Body (CIPR AB) informed. The teaching centre will be expected to run this script through recognised anti-plagiarism software to confirm their findings before informing the CIPR AB. The CIPR AB will refer the matter to the Board of Examiners who have the power to take the action more fully as set out in Section 7 of the Course Regulations. If the investigation that has been carried out by the teaching centre indicates, without doubt, that a genuine oversight has occurred on the candidate's part regarding correct referencing, the teaching centre will recommend to the Board of Examiners that the candidate be allowed to resubmit that assessment **ONE** more time only.

If the Board of Examiners determines that malpractice has, indeed, taken place the Chair of the Board of Examiners will submit a report to the Head of Membership & Qualifications with recommendations as set out in 7.2.5 of the Course Regulations.

The Course Leader/course tutor must provide appropriate guidance regarding malpractice before the candidate attempts the assessment again.

Teaching centres should be aware that they may have candidates who work closely together for the same employer and that they may want to pursue topics for their individual assessments that are largely similar. When negotiating these topics, and later, when assessing candidates' submissions, teaching centres need to pay particular attention to a natural tendency to collaborate over such work, and that this must not be allowed to lead to the unfair advantage of one or more candidates in

relation to the objectives of the assessment exercise. Teaching centres are therefore encouraged to negotiate topics with individual candidates that obviate, so far as may be, such an eventuality.

Teaching centres must discuss the use of AI in assessments and the appropriate referencing of this, if used, with candidates before work on assessments begins. Candidates should also be made aware of the following documents which provide guidance on the use of AI in assessments:

- The Guide to use of AI in candidate assessment submissions
- The student handbook
- The cover sheet which includes a separate 'Candidate AI Reflective Statement' that must be completed by **ALL** candidates

Candidates should be aware that AI tools are constantly being developed and there are often limitations to their use, such as producing inaccurate or inappropriate content, or producing answers which, however convincing they may seem, may contain incorrect or biased information. Candidates should also be aware of the importance of submitting their own independent work and that if any sections of assessment submissions are reproduced directly from AI-generated responses the candidate will probably not have met the marking criteria and, therefore, their work may not meet the required standards to attain a Pass.

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CIPR Malpractice Procedure

The following sets out the processes for investigation in suspected cases of malpractice by the CIPR Awarding Body (CIPR AB). This should be read in conjunction with the CIPR Malpractice Policy which lays out the processes in more detail.

1. The teaching centre markers will be the first to identify that suspected malpractice has taken place and must inform the Course Leader immediately.
2. The Course Leader will carry out an investigation and submit their findings together with the relevant script and the anti-plagiarism software report (if appropriate) to the CIPR Awarding Body (CIPR AB). This can be sent in as soon as it is available but **MUST** be submitted by the deadline for submitting completed marksheets and Internal Moderator Reports to the CIPR AB.
3. The CIPR AB will inform the relevant External Examiner and forward the script, anti-plagiarism software report (if applicable), and findings from the Course Leader to them.
4. The External Examiner will consider the evidence and advise in its External Examiner's report whether malpractice has taken place or not.
5. All cases of suspected malpractice will be discussed individually at the Board of Examiners' meeting and decisions taken as to whether malpractice has taken place or not.
6. Where malpractice is deemed **NOT** to have taken place the paper will be awarded a grade by the Board of Examiners in the usual way. The candidate will be informed of this decision by the CIPR AB and no further action will be taken against them. They will then receive their result three weeks after the Board of Examiners has taken place on the same day as other candidates.
7. Where malpractice has been proven the Chair of the Board of Examiners will provide a written report with suggested penalty recommendations to be considered by the Head of Membership & Qualifications. The CIPR AB will inform the candidate (copying in the Course Leader) that malpractice has been identified and that a recommendation regarding the severity of the penalty, by the Board of Examiners, will be put before the Head of Membership & Qualifications.
8. The Head of Membership & Qualifications will consider such recommendations, and a decision will be taken whether these are approved or not.
9. The CIPR AB will inform the candidate of the decision of the Head of Membership & Qualifications.
10. The candidate will either:
 - be allowed **ONE** more chance to submit the assessment (see Section 7 of the Course Regulations), or

- will be disqualified from completing the qualification, and undertaking any other CIPR qualification, for a period of not less than three years. They may either be disqualified from CIPR membership or excluded from becoming a member for a period of not less than three years and a note to this effect will be placed on their record on the CIPR database.
11. The decision taken against the candidate will be recorded on the CIPR database.
 12. If the candidate is a member of the CIPR and the severity of the malpractice is sufficient to be treated as in 7.2.5 (i) of the course regulations, the report by the Chair of the Board of Examiners will be provided to the CIPR Professional Practice and Ethics Consultant who will refer the matter to the Professional Practices Committee (PPC).
 13. Candidates have the right to appeal against any decision of the Board of Examiners and appeals for independent review shall be referred to the CIPR Head of Membership & Qualifications.

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SUBMISSION DEADLINE EXTENSION REQUEST PROCEDURES FOR CANDIDATES

Candidates are free to choose which submission deadline they wish to work towards and don't need to inform the CIPR AB when this will be.

However, it is the individual candidate's responsibility to ensure that they leave themselves sufficient time to complete their qualification within the qualification completion timeframe, as specified in Section 10 of the CIPR Course Regulations.

If a candidate feels they are going to miss a submission deadline, they have two 'extension' options available to them:

- short extension (up to 5 working days); or
- long extension (more than 5 working days)

Short extension requests

These can be anything from 1 to 5 days *after* the published submission deadline and the decision to grant these is entirely at the discretion of individual ATCs. If the ATC can still complete their marking and internal moderation by the marking deadline, then the CIPR don't need to be involved in this process and no additional fees will be incurred by the candidate.

Long extension requests (extension to qualification completion timeframes)

Candidates will be able to request and pay for an extension to their qualification completion timeframes of either:

- up to 6 months (all qualifications); or
- up to 12 months (the Legacy Professional PR Certificate, the Legacy Professional PR Diploma or the new Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate only)

Legacy PR Certificate, Legacy PR Diploma and Public Relations and Communication Management Certificate candidates can choose to request either a 6 month or 12 month extension if, for example, they only have one assessment to submit in order to complete their qualification. These candidates should be advised, however, to carefully consider how much time they need. If they request a 6 month extension and then decide they need additional time, this will not be allowed.

Candidates should refer to the current CIPR AB Assessment Schedule when considering which extension option best meets their needs.

Course Leaders will be empowered to make the decision to authorise these requests themselves and, provided they are satisfied that the request is genuine, they can grant the extension and should inform the CIPR AB of the new qualification completion deadline that they have agreed with the candidate.

The following fees for long extension requests will apply:

- Extension requests up to 6 months = £60
- Extension requests up to 12 months = £120

In addition to the above fees, candidates who enrolled from 1st June 2025 must maintain their CIPR Professional Student membership and, as such the following additional fees will also be payable:

- Extension requests up to 6 months = £40
- Extension requests up to 12 months = £80

Payment of the extension fee and additional membership fee (if applicable) must be made by the candidate directly to their ATC before the extension can be confirmed as 'authorised'.

Application process:

Candidates must apply for an extension, in writing, to their teaching centre between two and four weeks **before** their original qualification completion date.

If the request has been granted, candidates (and the CIPR AB) should be informed of their new qualification completion deadline which will be the closest available submission date either 6 or 12 months **after** their request has been received (depending on the length of extension requested).

Mitigating Circumstances:

The CIPR understands that candidates may need to request additional time to complete their qualification due to unforeseen events or circumstances that are beyond their control. In these instances, it is possible that extension fees will be waived. Please refer to the Table of Mitigating Circumstances at Appendix I for additional guidance.

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Table of mitigating circumstances

The following reasons would be considered acceptable and extension fees may, at the discretion of the CIPR, be waived:

	Accepted mitigating circumstances	Evidence required
Medical	Serious physical injury close to an assessment submission deadline.	Written evidence from a medical practitioner.
	Acute short-term illness (i.e. Covid, influenza, Norovirus) close to an assessment submission deadline.	Written evidence from a medical practitioner.
	Onset of severe physical or mental health condition.	Written evidence from a medical practitioner.
	Pregnancy or imminent birth (partners of pregnant women may also apply)	MATB1 form and/or written evidence from a medical practitioner.
Bereavement	Loss of a close family member (spouse or partner, children [including stillbirth and stepchildren], parents [including stepparents], siblings)	Death Certificate
Personal commitments	Family/care emergency	Written evidence from a medical practitioner, social worker, relevant professional or solicitor.
Accommodation problems	Eviction/being made homeless.	Eviction notice.
Victim of crime or traumatic personal event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victim of serious crime or domestic abuse • Serious fire at residence • Family breakdown (e.g. divorce/separation) • Political upheaval or conflict 	Written corroboration of the incident from the Police or Fire Service or, in the case of a family breakdown, written evidence from a medical practitioner, social worker, relevant professional or solicitor. In the case of political upheaval or conflict that is covered in the media, no additional evidence will be required.

A heavy workload would not usually be considered reason enough to be considered as mitigating circumstances unless this is backed up by the employer together with evidence of the increased workload.

If an extension request is received from a candidate and their circumstances suggest that the fee should be waived, then the Course Leader should contact qualifications@cipr.co.uk and a decision will be made regarding fee waiving on a case-by-case basis.

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