

QUALIFICATIONS & MEMBERSHIP FRAMEWORK (QMF)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Qualifications & Membership Framework (QMF)?

The QMF is STEP's system for assigning credit values to qualifications. It harmonises entry requirements around the world and allows STEP applicants to have their prior qualifications and experience formally recognised.

Gaining credits from STEP qualifications, prior qualifications and from experience enables you to progress up STEP's membership categories to become a STEP Affiliate, STEP Technician and then a Full member; a TEP.

60 EL

Entry Level

You need **60 Entry Level (EL) credits** to become a STEP Affiliate member, which can be demonstrated or achieved through a combination of:

- one or more STEP Certificates (worth 30 credits each);
- accreditation of a relevant prior qualification in the field of accounting, finance, law or field related to trusts and estates, (to a maximum of 30 credits at entry level);
- accreditation of your previous learning from work experience (minimum one year's experience at junior/ mid-level, to a maximum of 30 credits).

Once you have 60 Entry Level credits, you can become a STEP Affiliate and proceed to Diploma Level.

60 EL
60 DL

Diploma Level: Affiliate

A **STEP Affiliate** member has **60 Entry Level (EL) credits and up to 60 Diploma Level (DL) credits**. They can use "STEP Affiliate" on their CV, business cards, and email signature. There are no post-nominals or letters for this category of membership.

60 EL
120 DL

Diploma Level: Technician

A **STEP Technician** member has **60 Entry Level (EL) credits and between 60 and 120 Diploma Level (DL) credits**. They can use "STEP Technician" on their CV, business cards and email signature. There are no post-nominals or letters for this category of membership.

60 EL
120 DL
60 PL

Practice Level

To upgrade to **Full membership**, members need a minimum of two years of experience, in a mid-level or senior position. **That equates to 60 Practice Level (PL) credits**.



Professional Standards Awareness

Completing a **Professional Standards Awareness (PSA)** case study is the final part of applying to upgrade to full membership. Members only need to complete one case study, but must confirm that they have read and understood STEP's Code of Professional Conduct in order to progress to full membership. You can complete a PSA case study at any time before upgrading, or as a CPD activity at any level of membership.

60 EL
120 DL
60 PL &
PSA

Full Membership

In addition to being able to advertise themselves as full members on CVs, business cards and email signatures, full members can use the post-nominal "TEP". Full members are able to use the STEP logo and should refer to the logo guidelines.

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Is it possible to get exemptions against any of the Diploma papers?

You can gain exemptions for prior qualifications if they are broadly equivalent to the level, volume of study and an approximate 80% content match to a STEP paper.

Where exemptions are possible, an exemption application form can be found on the CLTI website. Please contact the CLTI office for more details on exemptions.

There are currently no exemptions available against the specialist papers (Will Preparation, UK Tax for International Clients and Advising Vulnerable Clients).

Can I use a STEP Advanced Certificate I undertook in the past for CPD purposes for credit towards a specialist STEP Diploma?

Advanced Certificates in Will Preparation and UK Tax for International Clients can be claimed for credit going back to 2010 for entry to the specialist diplomas. Papers from E&W and Scotland standard diplomas going back to 2010 are also valid if you would like to complete a specialist diploma.

What is a Professional Standards Awareness case study?

It is an ethical dilemma based on the Code of Professional Conduct. All members are bound by STEP's Code of Professional Conduct and the case studies are based on principles outlined in the Code. A case study should take less than an hour to complete and there is no examination. A certificate of completion can be downloaded or printed and attached to an upgrade application or CPD record. It carries no credits.

All applications for Full membership from April 2015 onwards will need to include a Certificate of Completion for the PSA programme.

If I am taking the Qualified Practitioner (QP) route to membership, do I earn credits?

The QP route to membership requires the successful completion of 3 essay papers in order to obtain full membership. See www.step.org/qp The QP route currently sits outside the QMF and there will be no credits awarded for essays. QP students who wish to upgrade to Full membership must still complete a Professional Standards Awareness case study.

I am a TEP and was grandfathered in but I'd like to gain a STEP Diploma. Can I claim any exemptions?

Yes, you can claim two exemptions against the 4 Advanced Certificates which form a STEP Diploma on the basis of your TEP from the Specialist Diploma routes. These are only available in England & Wales and Scotland in 2015. So, if you wanted to specialise in E&W you will be exempt from the Administration of Trusts and Administration of Estates papers and could add further Advanced Certificates to obtain a general or specialist Diploma stream.

Where and when are the new specialist Diploma streams available?

They are available now, in the England & Wales and Scotland jurisdictions. Credits for Advanced Certificates already taken can be claimed retrospectively, going back to 2010. For more details see the specialist streams diagrams below.

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England & Wales Diploma Options:

Core papers:			
	Advanced Certificate in Administration of Estates (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Administration of Trusts (30 DL credits)	
STEP Diploma for England & Wales (Trusts & Estates)	STEP Diploma in Advising Vulnerable Clients - England & Wales	STEP Diploma in Tax and Estate Planning - England & Wales	STEP Diploma in Will Preparation - England & Wales
Advanced Certificate in Taxation of Trusts and Estates (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Advising Vulnerable Clients (Part 1) (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Taxation of Trusts and Estates (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate Taxation of Trusts and Estates (30 DL credits)
Advanced Certificate in Trust and Estate Accounting (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Advising Vulnerable Clients (Part 2) (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in UK Tax for International Clients (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Will Preparation (30 DL credits)

Scotland Diploma Options:

Core papers:	
Advanced Certificate in Wills and Executries - Law and Practice (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Trusts - Law and Practice (30 DL credits)
STEP Diploma in Trusts and Estates - Scotland	STEP Diploma in Tax and Estate Planning - Scotland
Advanced Certificate in Taxation of Trusts and Estates (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in Taxation of Trusts and Estates (30 DL credits)
Advanced Certificate in Trust and Executry Accounting (30 DL credits)	Advanced Certificate in UK Tax for International Clients (30 DL credits)