Chartered Governance Institute UK & Ireland

CGIUKI: The Chartered Governance Institute – Accredited Employer Scheme

Our Accredited Employer Scheme is a badge of excellence, designed to recognise employers' commitment to high standards of staff training and development for governance professionals including financial services.

Our programme recognises and rewards employers who uphold the highest level of employee support in their learning and development as governance professionals.

As an Accredited Employer, you will be able to use your status as a tool to recruit and retain the best people in the industry.

The following best practice guide has been designed to help you through the application process and highlight the types of information you need to provide as part of your application.

In this guidance we will cover the following:

- A. **Eligibility requirements**
- B. **Application Form:**
    - **Criteria for accreditation**
    - **Supporting documentation**
- C. **How is my application assessed?**
- D. **How long will my application take to process?**

A. Eligibility Requirements and Benefits of the scheme

Our Accredited Employers work with a range of governance professionals and support them through their professional development.

In order to be eligible to apply to become one of our accredited employers you must:

- Support the learning and development of your employees.
- Support your employees through the study process for our Qualifying Programme.
- Provide financial and study time support.
- Provide additional learning resources and access to a learning network.
- Support professional and staff development.
- Provide and support staff to undertake CPD, especially for those who are qualified members of the CGIUKI.

Each area of the criteria is evidenced by submitting supporting documentation and completing an application form. If you have any queries regarding the criteria, please do get in touch with the membership team at accreditation@cgi.org.uk or call us on 0207 580 4741.

B. Application Form

In this section we will run through the application form and guide you through how to evidence against the criteria. We will run through each section and provide you with support that will enable you to fully complete the application form.

Criteria for accreditation

Learning & development policy

In this section we want you to tell us and evidence how you are supporting your employees to undertake our qualifications. This includes outlining who is eligible, what processes you have in place internally for those wanting to apply to study any of our qualifications. We'd also like to see how you are supporting your employees financially with their qualifications and their membership of the CGI. It is good practice that employers either pay in full or partly for the qualification and fully for the membership fees. If you don't support your employees financially then please explain your reasoning for this as part of the application.

Generally, it is also best practice to allow your employees time to study as part of their working day for the Qualifying Programme or any of our short courses. So, we'd like to see how you allow or build this time into the day-to-day responsibilities of your employees.

A lot of the questions in this section can be answered by providing supporting documentation, for instance if it is written in any training manuals or your Employee handbooks. Your HR department may be able to help you with this.

One of the questions in this section asks if you provide any incentives to your employees if they complete the Qualifying Programme, so do you offer any of the following:

- Pay rises
- Promotion
- Bonuses
- Company recognition

Often these types of incentives can really motivate employees and if you don't currently offer any incentives then it may be something to consider.

Support for employee through the study process

This section asks you to go into more detail on how you are supporting your employees through the study process. This includes:

- Supporting them through the process of completing their CGIUKI student application
- Do you provide a mentor or senior member of staff to help with student's learning and monitor their progress through the qualification?
- Do you check to see if they have access to CGIUKI online support materials?

A great time to do all of this is during any professional development meetings or one-to-one meetings you have with the employees. A great source of evidence for this are professional development plans or objectives that have been set, specifically relating to the completion of our Qualifying Programme or short course. Use the application form to explain how you support the employee but support that by submitting any development plans that have been set. **Please do ensure that any development plans or objectives have been completely anonymised before submitting them.**

Financial and study time support

Studying the Qualifying Programme takes time and typically will take a student a minimum of 2 years to complete. However, if proper time and support is not provided it could take a student up to 6 years to complete, in which time earlier knowledge gained from study could become out of date. Therefore, we expect our accredited employers to fully support their employees to complete the Qualifying Programme over 2 years. In this section we're looking for you to let us know how you support your employees both financially and with study time support. On the application form we set the below standard; these are based on good practice examples:

- a minimum of 75% of study-related costs are paid for by the employer.
- paid time off to sit the examinations.

- paid time off for study leave or to attend tuition classes.
- at least one extra study leave day per paper funded in addition to attending tuition classes.
- funding to attend CGIUKI events where the subject matter is relevant to the role.
- annual subscription fees to be paid by employer.

If for any reason you do not offer any of the above or meet that above standard, you need to fully explain for each statement in this section what you do offer and the reasons for the decision.

Additional learning resources and network

In this section we are looking to see how you make additional learning resources available to your employees this includes:
- intranet access to-up-to date articles
- ability to be able to study in the workplace outside of normal working hours
- access to CGIUKI's suggested wider reading
- access to online research database
- Actively encourage CGIUKI members, students and affiliates to attend CGIUKI branch events and other relevant external events. They are given time off work and funding to attend
- Opportunities to learn and network within and outside the organisation
- Attending client meetings
- Peer networking and support groups
- Use of social media to build contacts, gain new information and share knowledge
- Strong culture of openness and accessibility

We're looking at how you advertise the above to your employees and support them in accessing this information. Try and show how you inform your employees of what resources are available to them and how they can access it. What processes do you have in place if an employee is having trouble accessing resources, is there anyone specific they can go to or department? What other opportunities do your employees have to learn the knowledge and skills they need in order to complete the Qualifying Programme.

Evidence of professional and staff development

This section relates to how your support your employees with their professional development. We want to see how it is built into your development reviews and objective setting. Becoming qualified is just the first step in an individual's professional development journey and it's important to support all employees at all stages of their journey. This can be from encouraging them to undertake the Qualifying Programme to becoming a mentor once they become chartered and helping those at the beginning of their journey. We look at the following in this section:

- annual review process to plan career development with regular reviews of how they are progressing.
- regular one-to-one meetings to demonstrate how progress against objectives is reviewed.
- personal development plan in place
- opportunities exist for those studying to progress up and/or across the whole business.
- clear and measurable objectives are set as part of the performance review process.
- the individual clearly understands the overall objectives of the business and how their personal objectives contribute to the organisation's success.
- access to the CGIUKI Competencies Framework to monitor progress on proficiency levels.

The CGIUKI Competency Framework, is a really useful tool for you and your employees to use in order to identify any skills gaps or gaps in their knowledge and would be beneficial for you to use as part of any development review.

CPD Provision for Qualified members of CGIUKI

As well as supporting your employees through the Qualifying Programme or any of our short courses. It's important that you are supporting your employees once they are qualified. As a Member of the CGIUKI, it is important to continue to keep your knowledge up to date, this is particularly important for those members who hold Chartered Secretary or Chartered Governance Professional status. Qualified members are expected to conduct 20 hours of CPD a year which must be submitted every September. As an Accredited Employer you have a responsibility to support your employees to meet this, so as part of the accreditation process, we are looking to see how you support your employees to meet this requirement. Use this section to explain how you support your employees and provide examples this can include:

- allowing employees time to conduct CPD activities.
- supporting employees by identifying CPD opportunities for them
- pinpointing CGIUKI CPD events that will help your employees meet the CPD requirement.

This list isn't exhaustive, and you may have many different examples you can use. In this section you can either write a response or provide any policies you have in place which showcases and demonstrates how you meet this standard

Supporting Documentation

In order to support your answers to the standards in the criteria, we ask that you provide supporting documentation. This can be anything that outlines any procedures or policies you have in place for supporting your employee either through the Qualifying Programme or through their membership with the CGIUKI. Below is a list of items that could be submitted in support of your application. This list isn't exhaustive, and we ask that you provide anything

that you feel would help support your application and demonstrate how you meet the standards set out in the criteria:

- Annual report and accounts.
- Staff handbook.
- Professional Development plans and policies.
- Financial support policies.
- Remuneration policies- specifically highlighting areas relating to incentives if employees complete our Qualifying Programme and become chartered.
- Documentation or policies on mentoring and support provided to employees on the Qualifying Programme as well as once qualified.

If you have any queries regarding supporting documentation please contact the membership team at accreditation@cgi.org.uk or on 0207 580 4741 where one of the team will be able to answer your queries

C. How is my application assessed?

Each application is individually assessed by the membership team against the criteria to become an Accredited Employer. The team will make sure all the required supporting documentation has been provided in order to make a full assessment. If any documentation is missing or the team require any additional information, then they will reach out to you and request it.

If you need any support or advice on your application, please do get in touch with the membership team at accreditation@cgi.org.uk or call us on 0207 580 4741.

D. How long will my application take to process?

Your application will normally take up to four weeks to process. After this time, you will be notified of the outcome by the membership team.

If any documentation is missing, this will delay the assessment of your application, so please ensure you have double checked your application before submitting it to the membership team.

What happens next?

If your application is successful, you will be sent a bespoke logo for you to use on your website and marketing materials. You will also be asked to send over a jpeg colour version of your company logo, alongside a small bio of your company and the contact details you would like to be used on the Accredited Employer Directory.