Chartered Physicist (CPhys) is the professional qualification awarded by the Institute of Physics to practicing physicists. Being a Chartered Physicist proves that you have a level of knowledge and experience that can be relied on by employers and the wider community. Chartered Physicists agree to be bound by a code of conduct that reflects best practice. The code requires that our members not only show a high level of professionalism, but also advance their competence through continuous professional development.

To be eligible for CPhys you will need to be a full member of the Institute of Physics (MInstP or FInstP) – you can submit your membership and chartership applications at the same time if necessary. Member guidelines can be found at [www.iop.org/membership](http://www.iop.org/membership). The online application form can be found at [http://applications.iop.org/](http://applications.iop.org/)

**Requirements**
The benchmark for CPhys is an accredited, integrated Master’s degree (MPhys/MSci) coupled with sufficient work experience to enable you to demonstrate the CPhys competences AND sustained experience at a responsible level. If you do not hold an accredited integrated Master’s degree then we ask that you demonstrate the missing parts of your degree through an MPhys equivalence report – this includes the Core of Physics topics that make up the criteria for the accreditation of a Bachelor’s degree and also an appropriate project, like that undertaken in the fourth year of an integrated Master’s degree.

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**Chartered Physicist – CPhys**
Any candidate for Chartered Physicist may be invited for interview to confirm academic MPhys equivalence and/or to confirm professional experience.

**Guidance notes:**
1. How do I apply
2. Physics knowledge
3. Professional experience
4. Choosing your supporters
5. How are applications assessed?
6. How long will my application take to process?
7. Interviews
1. How do I apply
All candidates must submit through the online application system:

- an application form, including supporter details;
- a current CV;
- degree certificates;
- organisational chart;
- professional review report (see relevant key section of these guidelines);
- application fee.

Some candidates will need to include:
- the Core of Physics;
- Master’s project equivalence report;
- a covering letter explaining the choice of supporters (see below for details);

Applications can be made by visiting http://applications.iop.org/

If you have any questions, or would like a paper copy of the application form, please telephone +44 (0)20 7470 4800 or e-mail cphys@iop.org.

2. Physics knowledge
All candidates are required to demonstrate that they have the breadth and depth of physics knowledge that is required of a Chartered Physicist. There are two ways to do this:

2.1 Accredited educational route
You provide evidence that you hold an integrated Master’s degree accredited by the Institute of Physics. All UK/Irish physics degrees awarded before 1 January 1998 are treated as accredited.

2.2 General route
You demonstrate that you have knowledge equivalent to an integrated Master’s degree accredited by the Institute of Physics. To do this you must complete the Master’s equivalence report. This consists of two parts – the Core of Physics topics (not required for those with a Bachelor’s degree accredited by the Institute of Physics) and the project equivalence section (a thesis or dissertation abstract may be provided in place of this section for those with a relevant PhD or Master’s with project element).

Whichever route you follow you may be asked to attend an interview (see section 7) to discuss your knowledge in greater depth.

3. Professional experience

3.1 How many years work experience do I need?
There is no “time served” requirement. However, you will need to have been working for a long enough period to allow you to demonstrate all of the CPhys competences and provide evidence of sustained work at a responsible level. Generally, we find this takes most candidates at least four to five years.

3.2 Professional competence for Chartered Physicist
All candidates are required to demonstrate that they have the professional competences and appropriate responsible experience required of a Chartered Physicist; this is done via the Professional Review Report. The competences are as follows:

A. Application of general and specialist knowledge
You should demonstrate your ability to:
  a) evaluate data critically, drawing logical conclusions;

b) apply a logical approach to problem solving;

c) apply a creative problem-solving approach to physics-related projects.

In addition you are asked to demonstrate your ability in two of the following areas:
  d) exploit and/or develop emerging technologies to enhance current practices;
  e) ensure continuing fitness for purpose of products and services;
  f) publish in peer-reviewed scientific journals to further the understanding of the physics community;
  g) promote innovation and technology transfer;
  h) supervise undergraduate or post-16 physics project work;
  i) design and deliver undergraduate programmes;
  j) contribute to the profession outside your immediate working environment;
  k) contribute to the public understanding of physics.

B. Applying physics to the analysis and solution of problems
You should demonstrate your ability to:
  a) identify potential projects and opportunities using your physics knowledge;
  b) conduct and document appropriate research and design possible solutions;
  c) plan and implement solutions;
  d) evaluate solutions and make improvements.

C. Technical and managerial skills
You should demonstrate your ability to:
  a) plan for effective project implementation;
  b) make effective use of all resources (such as people, time, finance, physics knowledge) and demonstrate leadership in carrying out tasks;
  c) develop the capabilities of people for whom you are responsible, e.g. students, team members, to meet the demands of changing technical and managerial requirements;
  d) bring about continuous improvement through quality management.

D. Communication and interpersonal skills
You should demonstrate your ability to:
  a) communicate clearly and effectively with others at all levels, by both oral and written methods;
  b) present and discuss concepts, ideas and plans convincingly and objectively with your superiors and others;
  c) participate effectively within a team;
  d) exert appropriate influence and effective leadership qualities.

E. Professional conduct
You should demonstrate how you will perform these behaviours as a responsible Chartered Physicist:
  a) comply with the Institute of Physics’ code of conduct – the code of conduct can be found on our website at www.iop.org/about/royal_charter/page_38389.html – please read it before completing your application;
  b) observe rules and regulations relating to your professional practice as a physicist;
  c) be aware of and sensitive to health, safety and environmental issues;
  d) carry out the continuing professional development necessary to ensure competence in your future career. Note that anyone awarded CPhys after 31/12/11 will be required to submit evidence of their continuing professional development (CPD) every three years to retain the designation.

We expect you to interpret these statements in the context of your job. While everyone has to satisfy each of the major headings A–E, we realise that within each heading you are likely to be stronger in some areas than others.
3.3 Your professional review report

We ask every applicant to send us a professional review report. This report, explained below, summarises and links your experiences to the competences for CPhys. It also highlights how you have gained experience at a responsible level and provides us with a snapshot of your career at the time of application.

The report should be structured as follows:
• introduction – outlining your current role and career to date;
• initial professional development (IPD) – specifying the experience you have gained in the competence areas (not required with Accredited Company Training Schemes [ACTS]); Instead, there should be contact details for the scheme leader, or a certificate of completion, so we can verify this;
• responsible experience – giving at least three examples of how you have been using your physics knowledge and skills to work at a sustained professional level. This must show progression from your initial professional development;
• continuing professional development (CPD) – outlining future career, training and development plans.

3.4 Responsible experience

We ask that you demonstrate competence in a range of work that has required the exercise of your independent technical judgement, and some direct responsibility for resources, taking account of financial, commercial, safety, statutory and national considerations. Responsible experience will usually include an element of responsibility for risk.

Your knowledge and experience must reflect a broad view of your employer and working environment. The main facets for which you will need to show evidence are:
• CPD aimed at developing a deep specialism and/or broad knowledge across a physics-related area;
• ability to carry out complex tasks in a flexible and adaptable manner;
• beginning to gain greater skills in dealing with customers/colleagues/students;
• identifying new opportunities for both your own development and that of the organisation;
• working to support the aims of your organisation and to promote it within your sector;
• starting to demonstrate leadership qualities and to take on team-leader responsibilities;
• aspects of people development.

For more details, please see the helpsheet “Guidance on Responsible Experience” that is provided later in this document.

4. Choosing your supporters

Applications for CPhys need two supporters who can verify the information in the application and comment on your suitability for CPhys.

Please consider the following when choosing your supporters:
• Between them, your supporters should know your IPD and responsible experience entirely.
• Both supporters should be Chartered Physicists.
• Normally one supporter should be outside your workplace. The panel request this to ensure independence of opinion. There are circumstances where the applicant’s role and experience are particularly confidential and this might not be possible. In these cases a supporter from within your company, but outside your department, is acceptable.
• We know that it may be difficult for some applicants to find supporters who fulfil all of the criteria, and know their work well. In these cases, occasionally the panel will accept applications from people who have only one Chartered Physicist supporting them, or where a third supporter is provided. In these cases, non Chartered Physicist supporters should be of similar professional standing and be entirely familiar with your work (e.g. your line manager). You will need to include a covering letter explaining your choice.
• Both supporters should have known you for at least one year.
• Remember that you must not be related to either of your supporters.

You should make sure that between them the supporters are willing and able to verify your information. They should be contactable by email in the months following your application. The most common cause of delay in processing applications is unavailability of supporters.

In the event of inconclusive comment from supporters we may contact them for further information or ask you to nominate a third.

5. How are applications assessed?

A panel of five Chartered Physicists sees each application. The panel assesses the information in the application, and the comments of the supporters, and compares these to the requirements for Chartered Physicist. The panel will choose to accept, reject, or defer the application. Occasionally applications are deferred to allow the candidate an opportunity to supply additional information. Other deferrals are generally due to insufficient responsible experience. Where an application is deferred or rejected the applicant will always receive a letter explaining the reason for this and suggesting a future course of action.

6. How long will my application take to process?

You will normally receive a decision on your application within six weeks of your supporters returning their forms. You can log back in to the online application form to check on your application’s progress.

Complicated cases will inevitably take longer so it is in your best interest to ensure that the information supplied is as accurate and complete as possible.

7. Interviews

Occasionally applicants are asked to attend for interview. The aim of the interview is to confirm the information supplied within the application and to verify that you meet the standards required of a Chartered Physicist. Further guidance will be supplied if the need for an interview is confirmed.
The following document has been written to help candidates applying for chartered status to know what is expected of them. The examples listed below are by no means exhaustive and the Institute has a flexible attitude towards the different ways in which responsibility may be exercised.

**No candidate is expected to show evidence of all of these criteria.**

If you have any questions not answered by the advice here then contact the professional development team at [cpd@iop.org](mailto:cpd@iop.org).

**Summary**

Your knowledge and experience must reflect a broad view of your employer and working environment. The main facets you will need to show evidence of are:

- CPD aimed at developing a deep specialism and/or broad knowledge across a physics-related area;
- ability to carry out complex tasks in a fully flexible and adaptable manner;
- beginning to gain greater skills in dealing with customers/colleagues/students;
- identifying new opportunities for both your own development and that of the organisation;
- working to support the aims of your organisation and to promote it within your sector;
- starting to demonstrate leadership qualities and to take on team-leader responsibilities;
- aspects of people development;
- management of risk.

The following are ways in which the above criteria might be shown. **As before, this list is not exhaustive and no candidate is expected to be able to provide evidence in all these areas.** All candidates are expected to exhibit skills from the “general” examples.

**General**

- leads or manages a small study, research or project team;
- works independently;
- identifies new opportunities and is consulted on technical, research or business plans;
- can make appropriate use of financial/budgetary information;
- responds to the needs of customers/colleagues/students;
- proactive in making changes, allowing for needs for quality standards and continuous improvement;
- encourages flexibility from others;
- proactive in encouraging others to seek out, record and share new knowledge;
- manages and applies safe systems of work;
- awareness of intellectual property issues.

**Functional**

- applies knowledge in a broad range of contexts within accepted practice and procedure;
- offers professional advice in complex situations, maintaining professional integrity;
- applies project management principles, identifying milestones and juggling resources;
- works using delegation without abdicating responsibility;
- makes reliable and consistent judgements, where there are few guidelines or precedents;
- carries out risk assessment on projects;
- promotes team spirit and keeps others focused on tasks ahead.

**Technical**

- applies knowledge creatively in a broad range of complex and non-routine contexts, including design and development, although still within a framework of accepted practice and procedure;
- has a growing ability to bridge between technical areas;
- demonstrates technical integrity in approach and ability to meet technical scrutiny;
- oversees the technical aspects of projects, both programs and standards of work;
- shares technical information and ensures the passing on of lessons learned.

**Academic**

- lecturing at an undergraduate level in pure and applied physics;
- contributing to the design of post or undergraduate courses;
- collaborating with industry and the wider physics community;
- lecturing to peers at academic events;
- publishing in peer-reviewed journals.