



Qualifications and Exams

Terms of Standards and
Mandatory Compliance Requirements



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Department: Professional Standards

Date: 01 June 2026

These standards define the minimum requirements for all Institute of Directors (IoD) credit rated qualifications. They ensure the IoD's professional standards and brand integrity are maintained, and that Qualifications Scotland's regulatory responsibilities are met. Compliance with these standards is mandatory.

Qualification stages and Chartered Director pathway

There is a three-stage process to achieving Chartered Director (CDir) status. Candidates must fully complete and pass each stage before progressing to the next stage. There are no exceptions or partial routes to Chartered Director status, or exemptions from progressing to the next stage without successfully completing all the learning and passing the exam contained in the previous stage.

- **Stage 1 – Certificate in Company Direction or Global Certificate in Company Direction**
Candidates must complete and pass all four Certificate modules and associated exams.
- **Stage 2 – Diploma in Company Direction**
Candidates must have fully completed Stage 1, the Certificate in Company Direction. Candidates must then complete and pass the Developing Board Performance module and associated exam to achieve Stage 2.
- **Stage 3 – Chartered Director Assessment**
Candidates must have achieved the Diploma in Company Direction before progressing to the final stage of the programme. Candidates must meet IoD eligibility criteria and successfully complete the interview assessment before Chartered Director status is awarded, and the CDir post-nominals used.

Any partner offering or advertising an alternative or accelerated pathway is in direct breach of IoD qualification protocols.

Qualification framework and English proficiency

The following IoD qualifications are credit-rated by Qualifications Scotland:

- **Certificate in Company Direction**
This qualification has been credit rated by Qualifications Scotland at SCQF level 9 with 18 SCQF credit points (comparable to RQF level 6).
- **Global Certificate in Company Direction**
This qualification has been credit rated by Qualifications Scotland at SCQF level 9 with 18 SCQF credit points (comparable to RQF level 6).
- **Diploma in Company Direction**
This qualification has been credit rated by Qualifications Scotland at SCQF level 11 with 4 SCQF credit points (comparable to RQF level 7).

* SCQF *Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework*. RQF *Regulated Qualifications Framework*.

All teaching and examinations are conducted in English. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to study in English and be assessed at a degree or master's level. These qualifications are comparable with degree and masters requirements, although they do not equate to a full degree or master's degree.

Programme structure and delivery hours

Standard modules

Each module must meet the minimum delivery hours. These hours refer exclusively to formal teaching.

- **Role of the Director and the Board (RDB)**
14 hours (2 days) OR
- **Role of the Director and the Board - International (IRDB)**
14 hours (2 days)
- **Finance for Non-Finance Directors (FFD)**
21 hours (3 days)
- **Leadership for Directors (LFD)**
14 hours (2 days)
- **Strategy for Directors (SFD)**
21 hours (3 days)
- **Diploma in Company Direction**
21 hours (3 days)

All IoD qualifications and modules must be presented exactly as approved by the IoD and Qualifications Scotland. This includes all internal, client-facing, and public materials - marketing collateral, websites, learning platforms, contracts, and communications.

Any alteration, abbreviation, or variation in the title is strictly prohibited and constitutes a breach of IoD qualification governance and brand integrity.

Accelerated (ALC) product

The ALC programme includes intensive learning, with additional hours for independent reading.

- **Role of the Director and the Board (RDB)**
11 hours OR
- **Role of the Director and the Board - International (IRDB)**
11 hours
- **Finance for Non-Finance Directors (FFD)**
19 hours 30 minutes
- **Leadership for Directors (LFD)**
11 hours
- **Strategy for Directors (SFD)**
16 hours 15 minutes

Global Certificate in Company Direction

The Global Certificate in Company Direction comprises 6.5 days of residential delivery, followed by 3 days of virtual online delivery. Learners complete the same four modules and examinations as those undertaking the Certificate in Company Direction. Successful learners will be awarded the Global Certificate in Company Direction.

Approved programme titles

Certificate in Company Direction

- Role of the Director and the Board/International Role of the Director and the Board
- Leadership for Directors
- Strategy for Directors
- Finance for Non-Finance Directors

Global Certificate in Company Direction

- International Role of the Director and the Board
- Leadership for Directors
- Strategy for Directors
- Finance for Non-Finance Directors

Diploma in Company Direction

- Developing Board Performance

The above wording must be replicated verbatim. No substitutions, additions, or alternative descriptions will be accepted.

Quality assurance and compliance

All teaching must cover the full IoD learning outcomes. Learners must comply with all assessment regulations. Any form of plagiarism, cheating, or examination malpractice will trigger immediate investigation and possible disqualification. The IoD reserves the right to audit, observe, and verify all deliveries in line with its regulatory obligations.

Absence and course attendance

All learners are required to attend 100% of the scheduled course sessions. Full course attendance is required for them to sit the exam and achieve the qualification.

Failure to attend the course in its entirety may result in learners being deemed ineligible to sit or complete the associated examinations and may prevent successful completion of the qualification.

If a participant is absent for one or more scheduled days of a course, we reserve the right to refuse the participant entry to the remainder of the course (including, where applicable, any associated examination modules).

In such circumstances, participants can only transfer to an alternative course to make up missed sessions if they have our prior written consent.

Where consent is granted and a transfer is agreed:

- all missed learning must be completed in full at a later date, before the participant sits any examinations
- we reserve the right to apply administrative and course transfer charges, including additional fees for accelerated or customised delivery, as applicable.

Participants must notify the Professional Standards team as early as possible if they anticipate being absent from any scheduled session. Notification should be sent to: professionalstandards@iod.com

Failure to provide timely notice may affect the ability to reschedule missed learning.

Use of the IoD Digital Academy

The IoD Digital Academy (DA) is the required platform for all learning and assessment materials. Alternative systems or client-hosted platforms cannot be used.

All partner organisations and learners will be onboarded to the IoD DA through a controlled-access model to ensure:

- a single, authoritative source for all course content
- version control and compliance with governance requirements
- secure data management and record keeping for professional standards audits
- a consistent learner experience aligned with IoD pedagogy.

Access to the DA does not constitute IoD membership or denote marketing opportunities unless explicitly approved. Co-branded DA environments may be developed only with prior IoD authorisation and agreed cost recovery.

Examinations and reasonable adjustments

Certificate modules

Learners are automatically enrolled on a monthly cycle. Exams are offered flexibly on multiple dates throughout the year. Learners must sit their exam within 12 months of completing the course. After 12 months, the full exam fee will apply.

Diploma exam

Learners are automatically enrolled on the next available scheduled exam session. Diploma exams are scheduled four times a year. Learners must sit their exam within 12 months of completing the course. After 12 months, the full exam fee will apply.

All exams are delivered through computer-based testing and are remotely invigilated.

- **Exam registration**

The Professional Standards team must receive the programme attendance register at least 10 working days before the exam to confirm that the minimum delivery hours have been met. Registration for the exam must match the records in the system. Any discrepancies, including typos or the use of different names, will incur a £100 +VAT admin charge per learner for each amendment. Any errors or amendments to the list made after the cutoff date will incur an admin cost of £100 +VAT per amendment, per learner. Alternatively, learners will have to wait until the next available exam slot.

- **PO number and payment**

All lists of learners registering for exams must have a PO number and invoices must be paid within 30 days of receipt

- **Exam prep sessions**

From the 1st April 2026, all certificate exam revision materials will be available on the Digital Academy.

All Diploma practice materials will be available on the Digital Academy, located under exam resources.

- **Exam platform access**

Learners must share camera, screen, and audio access during exams. Functionality and tool tests should be conducted before exam day. Exams must be taken in a controlled environment with no other personnel in the room. To ensure compatibility, the exam must be taken on a desktop or laptop. Learners must present photo ID to confirm their identity.

- **Verification**

Acceptable forms of photo ID include a current and valid passport, photo ID cards, and national photo ID. They must all be in English. Names must match with exam registrations*. Selfies are not acceptable as a form of identification.

*failure to comply: the IoD reserves the right to withhold exam results or certificate achievement.

- **Certificate exams**

The certificate exam consists of 16 multiple-choice questions, to be completed in 45 minutes.

- **Diploma exam**

The diploma exam is a 3 hours and 15 minutes written case-based assessment

- **Reasonable adjustments**

Requests for reasonable adjustments must be made in advance, at least 10 working days before the exam and must include supporting evidence. Requests should be sent to professionalstandards@iod.com. It is a regulatory requirement that all supporting evidence must be in English, including any qualified consultant or doctors' notes.

- **Exemptions**

Exemptions are limited to Finance for Non-Finance Directors (delivery exemption only; exam completion is still required). Requests for finance exemptions and reasonable adjustments must be received at least 10 working days before the exam.

- **Results**

Learners will receive results within four weeks.

- **Digital certificates**

Learners will receive a digital certificate within four to six weeks after the final result(s) have been released. If the name on the certificate is incorrect and requires changing post-registration, it will incur a charge.

- **Communications with staff**

Communications must occur on weekdays, Monday to Friday, between office hours of 9 am–5 pm. Exam staff members do not work on weekends.

Brand and intellectual property protection

All IoD content, materials, and assessments are the intellectual property of the IoD. Reproduction, distribution, or adaptation without written IoD approval is prohibited. Clients must not use IoD branding, imagery, or credentials without express authorisation. Any breach will result in the withdrawal of delivery rights and potential legal enforcement.

