



**Transport Planning Society**

# **Professional Development and Qualifications for Transport Planners**

## **Some Frequently Asked Questions and Answers**

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The Transport Planning Society provides a Professional Development Scheme, the TPS PDS, for transport planners and, together with the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation, CIHT, a professional qualification, the Transport Planning Professional, TPP.

The response since both were launched in 2008 has demonstrated that they meet a long appreciated need for professional recognition for transport planners. However, many questions are asked about both the TPP qualification and the TPS PDS, and their inter-relationship, and here we seek to answer those most frequently raised.

**What is the TPP qualification?**

The TPP is a qualification for transport planners, designed to give them professional recognition, in the same way that membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute recognises professional town planners and being a Chartered Engineer identifies professional engineers.

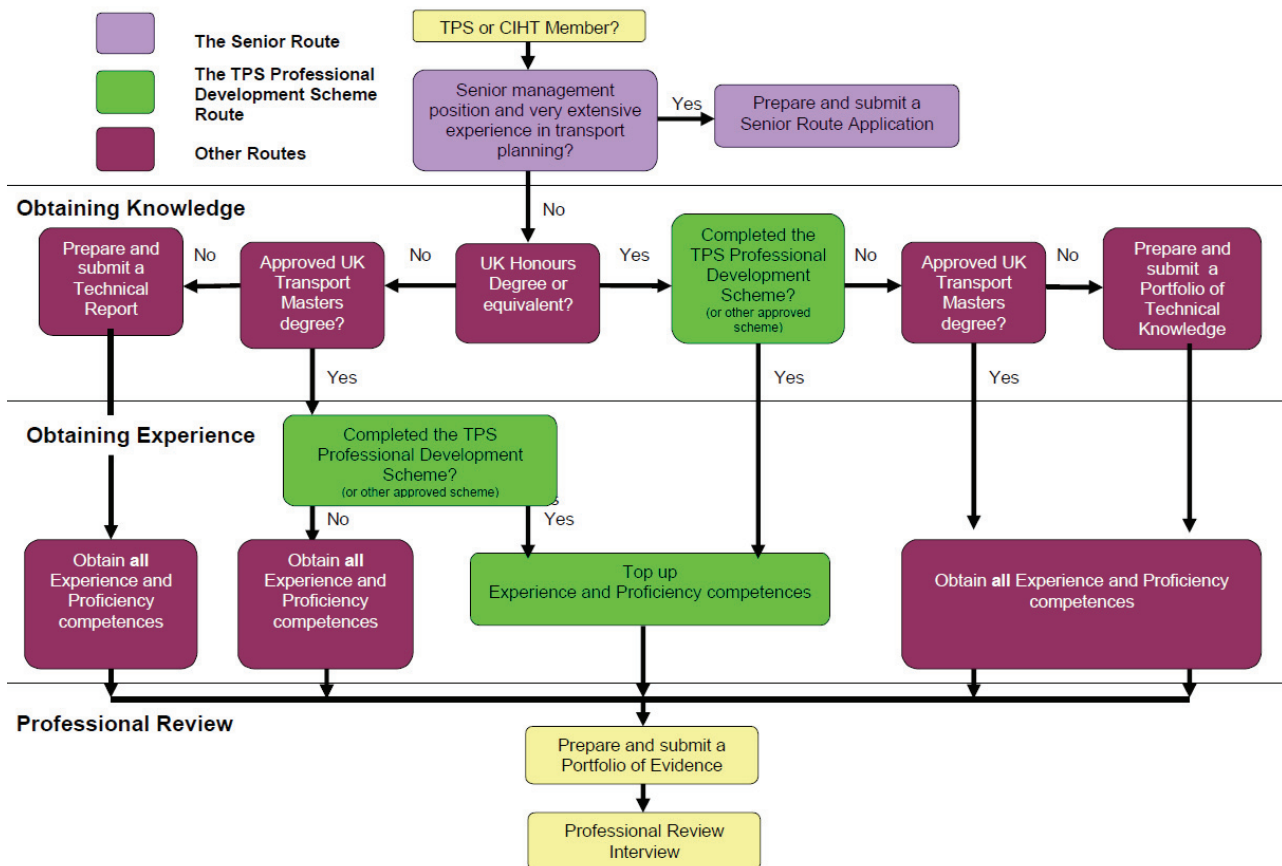
**What is the TPS Professional Development Scheme?**

The TPS Professional Development Scheme, the TPS PDS provides a structure to help transport planners, whether recent graduates, career changers or those with an established career, develop (and keep a record of) the competences they need to become a truly professional transport planner. It has been developed by the Transport Planning Society working closely with employers and is based on the National Occupational Standards for Transport Planning.

**How do I get the TPP qualification?**

There are three key stages. The first is learning, obtaining the technical knowledge that underpins a professional career. The second is obtaining the experience required to work as a professional transport planner and supervise other transport planners. The third is demonstrating you have the professional competence through a professional review interview.

Transport planners come from a wide range of educational backgrounds and can follow a variety of career paths. To reflect this, there are several routes to the TPP, illustrated below. The Senior Route is for transport planners in a senior management position within transport planning and with very extensive experience. All the other routes follow the three key steps of knowledge, experience and professional review.



***Do I need a degree to get the TPP qualification?***

No. If you do not have a degree you can follow the Technical Report route, shown on the left of the diagram. If you have a degree, but not from a UK university, it is likely to count if it is equivalent to a UK Honours degree. You can e-mail [education@ciht.org.uk](mailto:education@ciht.org.uk) to find out.

***How much experience do I need to get the TPP qualification?***

It depends very much on the time it takes you to obtain the breadth and depth of experience required. A small proportion of transport planners may be ready for professional review within five years of starting work in transport planning, but most will take a bit longer.

***Who recognises the TPP qualification?***

The TPP qualification is becoming increasingly widely recognised both by employers, through career opportunities and, in some cases, bonus awards; and by government agencies when awarding commissions to consultants. Transport Scotland, for example, does both.

***What are the benefits of having the TPP qualification?***

Award of the TPP defines you as a true professional, with a wide range of technical and management competences. As the number of those with the TPP qualification grows, so employers and organisations commissioning transport planning work are increasingly likely to show a preference for those with the TPP qualification, particularly for those planners giving evidence in public on transport planning policies and plans.

***Will the TPP qualification become a Chartered qualification?***

Chartered is just one of the ways in which professionals are identified, and although engineers and surveyors can be “Chartered”, it is a description that is not applied to many others, including lawyers, and doctors. What matters is that they have satisfied their professional bodies that they have the knowledge and the experience, the competence, to be recognised as true professionals. That’s what the TPP qualification does for transport planners. Further, the use of “Chartered” is controlled by the Privy Council, which limits its use. So, although the Institution of Highways and Transportation has been awarded Chartered status, its members cannot describe themselves as Chartered Highways and Transportation Engineers. Before the Privy Council will grant a qualification Chartered status, it requires a relatively large number to hold it, and obtaining Chartered status is expensive.

***Do I have to be a member of TPS to apply for the TPP qualification?***

To be able to apply for the TPP qualification, you must be a member of either TPS or CIHT.

***How does the TPS PDS help me get the TPP qualification?***

The TPS PDS provides a structure for your professional development, helping you and your employer ensure that you obtain the breadth and depth of experience required for the TPP qualification. If you do not have a UK transport Masters degree, it also provides a structure for obtaining the underpinning knowledge. Without such a structure, it is likely to take you longer, possibly quite a lot longer, to obtain all the knowledge and experience required.

***As I have a UK transport Masters, do I need to do the TPS PDS as well?***

If you have a UK transport Masters approved for the TPP qualification, you will have satisfied most, if not all, of the TPS PDS and TPP knowledge requirements and your TPS PDS Mentor will be able to sign them off. But you still need to obtain all the practical experience required for the TPP qualification, and to become a competent professional transport planner. The TPS PDS provides a structure for doing this, which helps ensure you have both the breadth and depth of experience award of the TPP qualification requires.

***Is it not easier just to do a TPP Portfolio of Technical Knowledge than complete the TPS PDS?***

The TPP Portfolio of Technical Knowledge only establishes that you have obtained the knowledge required for the TPP qualification. You still need to obtain, and demonstrate that you have, the necessary experience, as well as the competence to supervise other transport planners. Although you do not need to follow a structured development scheme to obtain all the experience required, it is likely to take you longer if you don’t. The TPS PDS also provides a clear structure for recording your experience as you obtain it, which will make completion of your TPP Portfolio of Evidence easier.

### ***Why are some TPP qualification and TPS PDS Units Mandatory?***

When both were being developed, employers made it clear that competence in each of the Mandatory Units was essential for someone identified as a Transport Planning Professional. That requires Experience for all the Mandatory Units except Data, for which Proficiency is required. For example, for modelling you need to demonstrate that you can use transport models and, in particular, understand how to interpret model results, and their potential weaknesses.

### ***How long will it take me to complete the TPS PDS?***

It depends very much on the opportunities you have to move between projects, and thus obtain the breadth and depth of experience required, but it is likely to be between three and five years.

### ***Can I submit an application for the TPP qualification as soon as I have completed the TPS PDS?***

That might be possible, but it is unlikely. For the TPP qualification you need a higher level of professional competence than is required to complete the TPS PDS. This is quite common with professional development schemes and professional qualifications. So you will probably need another year or two of experience after completing the TPS PDS.

### ***Does the TPS PDS help me get any other qualifications?***

Yes. CILT(UK) will recognise completion of the TPS PDS as demonstrating you have the experience required for Chartered membership and, if your higher education satisfies the Engineering Council's requirements, completing the TPS PDS will provide many of the CEng competence requirements. But you will need to supplement your experience with other, specific to CEng, including work relating to engineering principles as well as further health and safety work.

### ***How do I get on the TPS Professional Development Scheme?***

You have to work for one of the many employers that have a TPS PDS licence. A list of these is at [www.tps.org.uk/main/professionaldevelopment/](http://www.tps.org.uk/main/professionaldevelopment/) If your employer is not on the list, but you show interest in the TPS PDS, they might consider contacting [info@tps.org.uk](mailto:info@tps.org.uk) for more information.

### ***What does it cost to join the TPS PDS?***

There is no charge for you, as an individual, to join the TPS PDS, but your employer must be a Stakeholder member of TPS, or a Corporate member if you work for a local authority or a small company employing a total of no more than 20 staff.

### ***What happens if I change jobs before I have completed the TPS PDS?***

If you join another employer that operates the TPS PDS, you simply take your partially completed TPD PDS record with you, and continue where you left off with your previous employer. If your new employer does not operate the TPS PDS, you will have to work with them in trying to manage your work to fill the remaining gaps in your knowledge and experience.

### ***Do I have to be a member of TPS to be on the TPS PDS?***

No. A fundamental principle of the TPS PDS is that it should be open to all transport planners, whether they have ambitions to obtain a professional qualification such as the TPP, CEng or membership of a professional institute, or are just seeking structured professional development. However, the Society hopes that anyone on the TPS PDS would become a member of the Society and, ideally, be active in it.

### ***How do I get further information?***

For information on the TPS PDS go to [www.tps.org.uk/main/professionaldevelopment/](http://www.tps.org.uk/main/professionaldevelopment/) where some documents, including a TPS PDS overview, can be downloaded, or it can be obtained by e-mailing [info@tps.org.uk](mailto:info@tps.org.uk). You can get further information on the TPP qualification from [www.tpprofessional.org](http://www.tpprofessional.org) or by e-mailing [education@ciht.org.uk](mailto:education@ciht.org.uk).

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One Great George Street London SW1 3AA   [info@tps.org.uk](mailto:info@tps.org.uk)   [www.tps.org.uk](http://www.tps.org.uk)