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Financial Planning and Advice

Learning
resources
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About Financial Planning and Advice

Working in the area of financial planning and advice requires specialist technical knowledge and skills defined in the Professional Map. The scope of the work covered in your role will be determined by the organisation in which you work and the area of personal finance in which you operate.

This section outlines the Financial Planning and Advice competency standards for each of the four professional bands, together with links to relevant CPD learning, qualification units and other learning to help you prioritise and access your skills development.

The bands

The Professional Map is structured into 4 bands of experience, each describing the different level of impact professionals have in the work they do.

	Band 1	Band 2	Band 3	Band 4
Typical job roles	Front line staff, administrative and entry level roles	First line managers, team leaders, regulated and specialist roles	Middle managers, and senior technical roles	Senior leaders and business owners
Nature of work	Tactical, focusing on the day to day	Operational, with some complexity	Complex, with challenging requirements	Strategic, with a significant level of complexity and challenge
Sphere of influence	Line manager, immediate colleagues and customers/clients	Managers, colleagues, customers/clients and external professionals	Wider range of stakeholders, both internal and external	Senior stakeholders from across the profession, customers, suppliers and regulators
Focus of activity	Deliver immediate and short-term outcomes	Directly create short-term value, contribute to longer-term value	Create medium to long-term value	Create long-term value
Focus of thinking	Gather and use information	Contribute to the thinking and analysis of information	Critically question information and evaluate it to make informed judgements and decisions	Develop evidence-based thinking, using qualitative and quantitative data to shape the future activity
Focus of knowledge	Knowledge of the principles of personal finance	Broad understanding of personal finance practice	Deeper understanding of the concepts of personal finance, with specialism in a functional area	Deep technical knowledge in an area, or an excellent understanding of the broader environment
Where time is spent	Customer/client services, providing information, handling data, following procedures	Issue identification, analysis and evaluation, proposal and delivery of solutions to agreed standards, and within agreed limits	Understanding the wider business context and risk, bringing strands of activity together, innovating	Developing strategies and plans, making complex judgements, considering the organisation and sector position
Breadth of focus	Team	Department	Area or responsibility/Organisation	Organisation/Profession/Wider society

Band 1

Competency standards

- I understand the role, duties and responsibilities of someone offering financial planning and advice and the services they provide in meeting clients' needs and suitability
- I can explain the difference between different types of financial service, including regulated financial advice versus guidance
- I can explain the difference between the different types of regulated financial advice: independent, restricted, and execution-only
- I collect and collate information in order to fully understand the client's existing financial position
- I follow the organisational policies and procedures for the issue of documentation
- I onboard new clients ensuring regulatory and compliance requirements
- I understand the concept of client risk appetite and the client's preparedness to accept risk

Band 1 learning resources

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning*	Training and courses	Qualification units
2025: The year of IHT Planning	Planning	For more details on CII Training, please visit our website: www.cii.co.uk/learning/training/	UK Financial services, regulation and ethics (CF1)
4 Stunning Leadership Qualities	Regulation and ethics		Financial services, regulation and ethics (R01)
10 steps to a special needs financial plan			Financial planning practice (R06)
10 Ways You Can Serve Clients Deeply From The First Moment			
Abridged Advice – Striking the balance between triage and full advice			
AI and Financial Planning			
Asian & EM equity: the key consideration for 2025			
Automate the Tedious, Focus on What Matters			
Be yourself: how to attract and engage with high-value clients			
Building retirement income strategies for a changing world			
Business Relief as a financial planning tool – with a focus on smaller company investing			
Can Low Cost Multi Asset ever be 'responsible'?			
Carving Out a Career in Financial Planning			
Conversations that Connect			
Creating sustainable income during uncertain times			

*Content held on the Assess platform is available to those with a corporate licence. Click on the links to find out more about the features and benefits of a corporate Assess licence or request a free trial.

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Cyber Security – Protect both Firm and Client</u>			
<u>Demystifying the Appointed Representative, Directly Authorised and RI routes for advisers and regulated firms</u>			
<u>Economic Outlook by the Bank of England</u>			
<u>Finding Opportunities in Fixed Income in 2023... and beyond!</u>			
<u>Financial Planning and Protection</u>			
<u>Financial Planning in 2024: Captivating Fresh Audiences</u>			
<u>Financial planning on divorce and separation</u>			
<u>Focusing on Lifestyle Financial Planning and YouTube</u>			
<u>Financial Planning in 2024: Evolving Fees and Income Streams</u>			
<u>Get it Write</u>			
<u>Getting Your Remuneration Strategy Right</u>			
<u>Going on your own part one</u>			
<u>Good Business Management</u>			
<u>Goodbye Greenwashing. Hello Greenproving</u>			
<u>Grow The Pie</u>			

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Growing Advice Businesses in 2025 and beyond – Insights from the SPP-LEK FP Growth Index Report</u>			
<u>Guaranteed Income – Personalisation and Options</u>			
<u>How to Avoid Financial Advice Going Wrong</u>			
<u>How to Develop Fruitful Partnerships with Other Professionals</u>			
<u>How To Get Your Business In Flow</u>			
<u>Incremental gains not stamp collecting – Fixed Income investing in 2023 and beyond</u>			
<u>Insourcing (Tailored models): a CIP that benefits your clients AND your business</u>			
<u>Labour's first budget – changes and opportunities</u>			
<u>Malicious Emails: How to identify and protect yourself + Protecting your financial firm in 2024</u>			
<u>Making First Meetings Memorable Through Trust Based Selling</u>			
<u>Maximising Introducer Relationships</u>			
<u>Navigating Volatility – Behavioural Finance in Multi Asset Investing</u>			
<u>Planning considerations following the Autumn 24 budget</u>			
<u>Plotting a Steady Course in Turbulent Economic Conditions – the case for real asset investing</u>			

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Retirement Portfolio Challenges</u>			
<u>Retirement reviews and the value of advice</u>			
<u>Rules, rule! The benefits of a rules-based investment process</u>			
<u>Social Infrastructure: A Perfect Storm</u>			
<u>Starting your journey with automation and AI</u>			
<u>State benefits</u>			
<u>State Care reforms deferred – What does this mean for consumers and advice?</u>			
<u>Succession v Sale</u>			
<u>Sustainability: A discussion worth having</u>			
<u>Sustainable Investments: Opportunities for attractive returns and a positive impact</u>			
<u>Ten powerful ways to capture and keep your client's attention</u>			
<u>The 8 Keys to Doing a Brilliant Financial Planning Fact Find Recording</u>			
<u>The Planning Conundrum – redefining suitability with Consumer Duty and SDR</u>			
<u>The survivors guide to the thematic review of retirement advice</u>			
<u>The Top 10 First Meeting Mistakes (and how to fix them)</u>			
<u>Thriving in a changing landscape</u>			

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
Understanding Behavioural Bias For Better Client Engagement			
Understanding Regional Differences			
What I've Learned In 10 Years of Teaching Owner Advisers			
Where next for retirement income advice?			
Why Not to Interrupt			
Working With Imposter Syndrome			
Your Business Won't Grow Faster Than You Do			

Band 2

Competency standards

- I use skilful questions and active listening with clients to gather information on their motivations and needs and undertake thorough client fact finding
- I understand the range of available products and how they apply to different client circumstances
- I process and evaluate information provided by the client, using accepted methodologies, to identify potential solutions that best meet their needs and suitability
- I research and identify financial solutions to support clients' demands and needs and suitability
- I use my knowledge of lenders, products, product providers and market requirements and suitability to identify optimal solutions
- I draft reports and prepare presentations, ensuring information is collated, recommendations are researched and generated in line with my organisation's compliance standards
- I make structured, straightforward recommendations using a combination of new and existing personal finance solutions appropriate to the client
- I present financial solutions to clients, explaining complex ideas in a way that they understand
- I source solutions from product providers to meet the clients' requirements
- I take into account relevant protocols, agency agreements and regulatory requirements that impact the way planning and advice are managed
- I ascertain the client's risk appetite, understand the impact of different types of risk and I act accordingly
- I ensure clients understand the different fees and charges they will pay for and how these add value to them

Band 2 learning resources

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning*	Training and courses	Qualification units
Business Relief as a financial planning tool – with a focus on smaller company investing	Investment	CII Training For more details on CII Training, please visit our website: www.cii.co.uk/learning/training/	UK Financial services, regulation and ethics (CF1)
Building retirement income strategies for a changing world	Planning		Personal taxation (R03)
Can Low Cost Multi Asset ever be 'responsible'?	Regulation and ethics	CII Accredited third party training AIC Investment Company Accreditation	Financial planning practice (R06)
Creating sustainable income during uncertain times	Tax		
Digging Deeper with Cashflow			
Financial planning in the aftermath of the mini budget			
Finding Opportunities in Fixed Income in 2023... and beyond!			
Focus On What The Money Is For			
Guaranteed Income – Personalisation and Options			
How to Make Recommendations Clients Will Follow			
Inheritance tax - are you accumulating assets for HMRC?			
Jam today or jam tomorrow: ensuring clients live comfortably today and pass on wealth generously in the future			
Keeping cash flow simple			
Investment planning: Boom in holiday lets and more			

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Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Life planning couples: two visions, one financial plan</u>			
<u>Plotting a Steady Course in Turbulent Economic Conditions – the case for real asset investing</u>			
<u>Putting Guidance in to Practice – A PTS Interpretation of the FCA Guidance Consultation</u>			
<u>Proficiency+ Consumer Duty: mitigating conduct risk. Maximising people potential</u>			
<u>Opening the door to business protection</u>			
<u>Retirement Income – time for a new approach?</u>			
<u>Retirement Portfolio Challenges</u>			
<u>State benefits</u>			
<u>State Care reforms deferred – What does this mean for consumers and advice?</u>			
<u>Tax Planning Virtual Case Study</u>			
<u>The future of Tax</u>			
<u>The Need for Business Protection and the Solutions</u>			
<u>The Trust Registration Service – the clock is ticking</u>			
<u>Understanding Regional Differences</u>			
<u>Whats in your CRP?</u>			

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Workplace pensions – Facts and opportunities</u>			

Band 3

Competency standards

- I use my extensive knowledge of questioning, active listening and coaching skills to engage with clients in order to discover their underlying motivations and needs
- I use my knowledge and experience to work out which options to consider in order to create different financial planning scenarios
- I illustrate options for the client using financial and cash flow models
- I understand the client's risk appetite, the reasons for it and the impact that this has on their choice of options
- I work with and support the client to identify the possibilities and to make choices that meet their wants and needs
- I use my knowledge of clients' needs to identify optimal solutions
- I take into account the relevant issues when selecting and deselecting product providers for clients with complex requirements
- I recommend financial solutions that meet the clients' motivations taking into account the client's stage of life
- I use my advanced technical and market knowledge to inform client solutions
- I present accurate and comprehensive information to clients with complex requirements regarding proposed solutions, identifying the potential advantages and disadvantages
- I negotiate with product providers to source solutions to meet client interests
- I evaluate and review the performance of my clients' financial affairs and build long term relationships
- I apply fair, clear and transparent fees for the services provided by my firm and any associated charges, ensuring clients understand how these breakdown and add value to them

Band 3 learning resources

Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning*	Training and courses	Qualification units
A world thrown into disequilibrium	Investment	For more details on CII Training, please visit our website: www.cii.co.uk/learning/training/	Investment principles and risk (R02)
“All change please, all change”. Why many current financial planning strategies regarding tax have reached the end of the line	Planning		Personal taxation (R03)
Business Relief: The SIX Golden Rules	Tax		Financial planning practice (R06)
Catching the Sustainable Wave			
Cryptocurrencies. They're mint, aren't they?			
Does Higher Inflation Pose A Threat To Client Outcomes?			
Earners & Owners: Tax efficient wealth accumulation			
Financial Planning Trends You Simply Can't Ignore in 2022			
Future-proofing your client's legacy – IHT planning with protection			
Helping clients understand the real shape of their retirement			
Lifetime Allowance – To 75 and Beyond!			
Lifetime Mortgages – Strategies for Managing Wealth			
Maximising the tax benefits from trusts – a detailed analysis			
Is Multi-Asset still fit for purpose?			
Is the 60/40 portfolio still fit for purpose			

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Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Pension contributions and end of year bonuses</u>			
<u>Pension hot topics</u>			
<u>Pensions Tax Planning</u>			
<u>Retirement Income – time for a new approach?</u>			
<u>Retirement income planning – Risk management for both client and adviser</u>			
<u>Retirement – New Era, New thinking</u>			
<u>Size Matters</u>			
<u>Social Infrastructure: A Perfect Storm</u>			
<u>Taxation and trusts: New proposals to tackle promoters and enablers of tax avoidance schemes</u>			
<u>The DB Advice Market: Have your questions answered</u>			
<u>“The Insiders’ guide to the Value of Advice” – how to help your clients appreciate the benefits of your offering</u>			
<u>The UK Savings Market</u>			
<u>The Winning Financial Planning Formula</u>			
<u>Tomorrow’s World: the future investment landscape looks very different – be prepared</u>			
<u>Using trusts to provide more effective financial advice</u>			
<u>Understanding Behavioural Bias For Better Client Engagement</u>			

Band 4

Competency standards

- I have developed a specialist area of financial planning and advice
- I engage with clients who have complex financial circumstances and make use of relevant specialists where needed
- I develop bespoke comprehensive financial options and solutions for clients with complex requirements
- I hold the organisation's strategic relationships, with clients, product providers or other experts
- I organise comprehensive administration guidance for clients who have complex requirements
- I review internal and external performance and ratings and utilise this to the best advantage for clients
- I make recommendations for the organisation's approach to client engagement
- I identify and anticipate internal and external current and emerging risks and put in place mitigation strategies to ensure the financial and operational resilience of my firm
- I design fair, clear and transparent fees for services provided by my firm, taking into account product, platform and fund management charges, and ensuring they are consistent with delivering good client outcomes

Band 4 learning resources

Band 4			
Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning *	Training and courses	Qualification units
Stress testing the cashflow model	Case studies	CII Training	Financial planning practice (R06)
Advanced Cashflow Planning: Pull your planning up by the bootstraps	Investment	For more details on CII Training, please visit our website: www.cii.co.uk/learning/training/	Investment planning (AF4)
Why Financial Planning is Good for Your Business	Pensions and Retirement	CII Accredited third party training	Senior management and supervision (AF6)
Pension Death Benefit Nominations - The Importance in Financial Planning	Planning	AIC Investment Company Accreditation	
Transfers in Drawdown	Regulation and ethics		
Later Life Lending - Raising the Standard	Tax		
Protect, Repair and Recover – de-risking Defined Benefit transfer advice			
Pension transfers – Look before you leap			
DB or not DB – that is the question...			
Holistic Care Advice - a helping hand			
Unregulated Care Advice – the critical start of the journey			
The DBAAT Debate			
Exploring transfer to a WPS – Opening the can of worms			
The Most Important Meeting: Building Lasting Client Relationships with Regular Reviews			
Regulation and Reality – Turning principles into practise			

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Band 4			
Member CPD	Assess corporate e-learning	Training and courses	Qualification units
<u>Putting Guidance in to Practice – A PTS</u> <u>Interpretation of the FCA Guidance</u> <u>Consultation</u>			

Member CPD

Here you will find links to Member CPD available related to this competency.

Webinar: [10 steps to a special needs financial plan](#)

Webinar: [10 Ways You Can Serve Clients Deeply From The First Moment](#)

Webinar: [2025: The year of IHT Planning](#)

Webinar: [4 Stunning Leadership Qualities](#)

Webinar: [A world thrown into disequilibrium](#)

Webinar: [Abridged Advice – Striking the balance between triage and full advice](#)

Webinar: [Advanced Cashflow Planning: Pull your planning up by the bootstraps](#)

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Webinar: [Keeping cash flow simple](#)

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Webinar: [Pension hot topics](#)

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Assess is the Corporate Learning Management System from CII, including hundreds of digital learning units on technical insurance, regulatory and compliance content, together with a wide range of wider business skills.

If you already have an Assess licence through your employer, you should be able to access the following modules relevant to this competency.

If your organisation does not have an Assess licence and would be interested in acquiring one, you can sign up for a free trial here:
ciigroup.wufoo.com/forms/k17wqe99089pcpi/

Here you will find Assess corporate e-learning listed under the Learning by bands section in one place.

Governance, Risk and Compliance

[Case studies](#)

Investment

[Investment](#)

Pensions and Retirement

[Pensions and Retirement](#)

Planning

[Planning](#)

Regulation and Ethics

[Regulation and ethics](#)

Tax

[Tax](#)

Training and courses

The diversity of our course programme and breadth of corporate services makes us a one stop-shop training provider. We work in partnership with employers to develop relevant and cost-effective training solutions that are driven by business needs and deliver lasting results.

CII Training

For more details on CII Training, please visit our website:

www.cii.co.uk/learning/training/

CII Accredited third party training

[AIC Investment Company Accreditation](#)

Here you will find all Qualification units listed under the Learning by bands section in one place.

If you are a current member you can also view non-printable PDFs of each study text here:

www.cii.co.uk/learning/support/cii-study-texts (PIN required to login).

Advanced Diploma in Financial Planning

Investment planning (AF4): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-af4/>

Senior management and supervision (AF6): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-af6/>

Diploma in Financial Planning

Financial services, regulation and ethics (R01): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-r01/>

Investment principles and risk (R02): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-r02/>

Personal taxation (R03): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-r03/>

Financial planning practice (R06): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-r06/>

Certificate in Financial Planning

UK Financial services, regulation and ethics (CF1): <https://www.cii.co.uk/learning/qualifications/unit-cf1/>