

Understanding Masters-Level and Assessing Equivalents



CEnv

CSci

Outline

Award of Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and Chartered Scientist (CSci) status requires the applicant to “have a relevant Masters level degree or equivalent level of knowledge.” This document explains what this statement means and outlines how the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES) assesses against this standard.

M-Level is not necessarily about holding a Masters-level qualification. Candidates who do not have a Masters-level qualification can prove that experiential learning in the workplace has sufficiently up-skilled them so that they are working at Masters level.

Background

To achieve Full Membership of the IES, an applicant must have achieved a certain level of academic and/or work experience. For those with HE academic experience this is normally:

1. a Bachelors Degree (Honours) in an ES-related subject + 6 years' work experience
2. a Masters Degree in an ES-related subject + 5 years' work experience
3. a PhD in an ES-related subject + 4 years' work experience

Only Members or Fellows can apply for Chartership. Given the entry requirements to these grades, it is likely that most Members are working at Masters level.

How we judge M-Level

The criteria for judging Masters level equivalence the application review panel (ARP) refers to the Qualifications and Credit Framework. The descriptors used in this framework may help Chartership candidates who do not have a Masters level qualification to map their own experiential learning against outcomes. Candidates' experience should show some of the following:

Knowledge and Understanding

- Reformulate and use practical, conceptual or technological understanding to create ways forward in contexts where there are many interacting factors
- Critically analyse, interpret and evaluate complex information, concepts and theories to produce modified conceptions
- Understand the wider contexts in which the area of study or work is located
- Understand current development in the area of study or work
- Understand different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the study or work

Autonomy and accountability

- Take responsibility for planning and developing courses of action that initiate or underpin substantial changes or developments
- Exercise broad autonomy and judgment across a significant area of work or study
- Initiate and lead complex tasks and processes, taking responsibility, where relevant, for the work and roles of others
- Understand current development in the area of study or work
- Understand different theoretical and methodological perspectives and how they affect the study or work

Application and Action

- Conceptualise and address problematic situations that involve many interacting factors
- Determine and use appropriate methodologies and approaches
- Design and undertake research, development or strategic activities to inform the area of work or study, or produce organisational or professional change
- Critically evaluate actions methods and results and their short and long-term implications

It is important to note that the QCF framework is not intended to be used as a 'tick box' assessment form but for guidance only.

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Some words/phrases that summarise 'Masters-levelness' are 'currency of knowledge', 'critical analysis', 'problem solving', 'working with complexity and uncertainty', 'autonomy,' 'initiate' and 'leading'.

Applications for Charterships will be judged by at least two individuals who hold the Chartership themselves. The majority of our assessors are practising or retired academics so possess an in-depth knowledge of judging the requirements for Master-level competence.

If there is any doubt in the panel's view that the candidate is working at Masters-level, they will request a Masters Equivalence Report. An example of this may be a candidate who does not hold a Masters-level formal qualifications and whose work experience is in non-senior roles.

Those candidates with no formal academic qualifications are always required to submit a satisfactory additional Master Equivalence Report of around 1,000 words.

The Masters Equivalence Report

This report needs to indicate clearly that the applicant has undertaken work at a technical environmental science level similar to or exceeding that of an MSc dissertation. The criteria for judging this work will be Masters Level Framework for Higher Education Qualification.

The report should highlight a project that exemplifies Masters Level or above work experience. Typical examples of these sorts of projects may be:

1. A piece of academic research
2. A piece of consultancy work, e.g. an environmental impact assessment
3. An internal technical report
4. Design and analysis of a survey
5. A modelling based investigation.

The report should contain: the aims of the project; a description of how the project was carried out; the results; and comment on what the applicant has learnt from the project, professional development and evaluation.

For further information about structuring this report please contact the IES office.