

December 2010

Dear employer

CETC Midlands – Tuition Plans: January – June 2011

Please find enclosed the details of the CETC Midlands courses and other study support for the June 2011 CIPFA Professional Qualification (PQ) examinations. Please also accept my apologies for the fact that these dates are being released a little later than we would normally expect.

Learning Materials and Pricing Policy

In order to clarify some significant changes to pricing structures for CIPFA PQ study, and related changes to the provision of CIPFA learning materials, it may be relevant to remind you of recent CIPFA communications. In summary, CIPFA's learning materials (the Student Learning Centre (SLC)) and the Pass Cards, will no longer be available after the end of 2010.

For 2011, CETC has taken on the role of providing updated and fully comprehensive learning materials to all CIPFA students (whether or not enrolling on a CETC course). CETC will therefore be offering the following products to replace the SLC and Pass Cards:

- *Study Materials (Workbooks)* – available for each module, the CETC workbooks comprise learning materials that cover the module's whole syllabus, with an extensive range of exercises and practice questions. For 2 modules, Strategic Business Management and Taxation, it is also necessary to purchase a prescribed textbook to use alongside the workbook, and our prices are lower for these modules to allow for that. Workbooks will be provided in hard copy to students enrolling on a CETC main (day/block release) course, and **are included** in the price of these courses. Students who do not enrol for a CETC main course for a module are urged to purchase the CETC workbook; it can be purchased from CETC and downloaded from the CETC website. Please note that access to the June 2011 workbooks for all modules will be provided to enrolled students following the release of the December 2010 examination results (28 January 2011). Access to the workbooks for Certificate level modules may be requested earlier than this date but students/employers will be liable for the full fees for these materials if the student subsequently needs to withdraw due to adverse examination results received on 28 January 2011.
- *CIPFA Exam Essentials (CEEs)* – the Pass Cards are currently very popular with students, and CETC aims to ensure the availability of a similar product under the new arrangements next year. The CEEs are pocket-sized exam-focused, revision aids. They will be available for each PQ module, except Finance and Management Case Study, and can be ordered from CETC by early January and will be distributed in hard copy form from mid-February. Please note that these do not form part of the price package for either CETC's main or revision courses.

An important implication of the fact that CIPFA will no longer be requiring all students to purchase central learning materials (the SLC, including Pass Cards), is that CETC will be providing to main course attendees significantly more extensive learning materials. This largely explains the apparent increase in the tuition fee being charged for our main courses compared to 2010 levels.



However, this increase is more than offset by the saving in payments previously made to CIPFA for the SLC materials. Overall, while there would be an increase in the payment to CETC when a student enrolls on a CETC main course, the **total** cost, including payments to CIPFA for items such as the student subscriptions and exam entry fee, will be lower next year.

The full price details are towards the end of the dates/fees booklet. It also details the availability of other products and services from CETC, in particular those most suitable to students not attending our main course. It also shows that for each student there is a discount available if our main and revision course are both purchased for any module.

PQ Course Design

We surveyed employers earlier this year about various issues, including our course design, and the issues flowing from the survey were discussed at the employers meeting earlier this semester. Given the scale of change going on with respect to learning materials, we have, at this stage, decided to make no fundamental changes to our course design in the first half of 2011. Work is, however, ongoing to explore our options, including the potential to slightly reduce the volume of face to face contact days in our main courses.

PQ Course Mix

In drawing up this schedule for PQ courses we have sought to take account of likely demand by analysing modules completed to date by CETC Midlands students. Given the volume of students expected at Diploma level next semester, we have decided, as previously indicated, **not to offer** a main course for one of our module pairings, FPR/GPP. There is a main course offered for all other modules next semester. A revision course is scheduled for all modules at CETC Midlands, including FPR and GPP. Alternatively, if travel to a different CETC venue is feasible, it may be of interest to know that courses for these modules are scheduled at CETC South East and CETC North West next semester. Also, one of CETC's partners, Nottingham Business School, is running a GPP day release course.

In addition to the usual range of Certificate, Diploma and Final Test courses, starting in early February we have scheduled the three day FR Introduction course for those students who have not studied the CIPFA FA module. This starts on 24 January 2011.

There is also a course starting on 3 February 2011 covering the FA and MA modules, for students new to CIPFA study.

Initial Professional Development Scheme (IPDS) Course

There will be a half day Introduction to IPDS course at CETC Midlands on 27 January 2011. This popular course is suitable for any CIPFA students, but particularly so for those at the Certificate level seeking guidance on how to approach CIPFA's IPDS, and those who are exam-qualified but somewhat behind with their IPDS portfolio.

Exam Skills Course

This half day course is a new offer from CETC, scheduled in response to indications from students that they would find it useful. The course will be held on the same day as the IPDS course (27 January 2011), the timetables set so that both courses can be attended on the same day. CETC tutors have extensive experience of what skills and behaviours are essential for exam success, and this course will collate all that guidance, and will be of relevance to students taking any of the PQ exams.

Financial and Performance Reporting (FPR) Transition Course

Though the syllabus is unchanged, there will be significant changes to the content of the learning materials for the FPR module for the June 2011 exams. There are a number of changes, most notably the application of International Financial Reporting Standards to the local government sector materials. Students who have studied FPR this year, but who need to take the exam in June 2011 will find that they benefit greatly from this one day course. Currently we are scheduling it at CETC South East on 23 March 2011, but if demand is sufficient we will seek to add it to the CETC Midlands schedule.

Open Afternoon

There will be an open afternoon, aimed primarily at students (and their employers) who are new to CETC and CIPFA. This will be held at CETC Midlands on 13 January 2011, from 4.00-6.00pm, so we would be grateful if you could draw this to the attention of any colleagues who might be interested.

Support for PQ Open Learners

For students who cannot enrol on the main course, CETC can offer a range of support options. In addition to the CETC workbook, which we would consider to be an essential purchase, and the CEEs, both detailed earlier, many open learners find the completion of mock exams and revision course attendance to be vital elements of their exam preparations. We can also provide services such as one to one tutorials, feedback on progress tests, and a personal tutor service. CETC can also schedule, in response to demand, one day Essentials courses for any CIPFA module. Details of all these services are in the dates/fees booklet.

Autumn 2011 Course Plans

It is expected that we will continue to offer a similar range of courses at CETC Midlands in the autumn 2011 semester as have been offered in the current semester. This means that it is likely that we will not offer a full range of main courses at the Diploma level. Our current plan is that we will **not** offer a course for the LM/PF/T combination in the autumn 2011 semester. The key implication is that students wishing to attend main course tuition for any of these modules, who are part way through Diploma, are advised to enrol for these modules in the spring 2011 semester, and to submit their application as soon as possible in order to secure a place. Other CETC Midlands students at Diploma level are advised to enrol on the AA/ADM course for the spring 2011 semester.

We plan to release the course dates by early May 2011, with main courses expected to start from week commencing 8 August 2011, though the course covering the FA and MA modules will start around three weeks later.

Employers Meeting

I would also like to draw to your attention that the next CETC Midlands Employers Meeting will take place at CETC Midlands on 18 March 2011, from 1.30-3.30. This is an opportunity to discuss the operation of, and future plans for, CETC Midlands courses and participate in a review of the current semester's courses (including analysis of the exam results). It is also an opportunity to meet with senior staff from CETC, and network with representatives from other organisations who are supporting students at CETC.

CIPFA Certificate in International Public Sector Financial Reporting (Cert IPSFR)

The Cert IPSFR qualification, designed by CIPFA in conjunction with the ICAEW is going from strength to strength. In addition to the online study option, CETC has designed a 10 day tuition programme to complement the online study. This has been scheduled for a late January start at our South East centre, and, subject to demand, we would be prepared to run it at CETC Midlands too. Please contact us for further information if this course, or other bespoke tuition for the Cert IPSFR is of interest.

General Enrolment Information

Generally we welcome the receipt of enrolments as soon as possible, as this greatly aids our planning.

For 2011 courses and materials, enrolment can now be done using the on-line form available on CETC's website: http://www.cipfa.org.uk/cetc/student_registration_form.cfm. As an employer signature will not be possible to obtain on-line at the point of enrolment, employers will be sent confirmation by email of any courses/materials that students enrol for in order to validate the invoicing/responsibility for payment details given by the student.

For Certificate courses, given many students will be new to CIPFA study, it is especially hard to predict demand, and it is therefore particularly helpful if employers can signal to us, as early as is feasible, likely CIPFA student recruitment levels.

It is quite possible, particularly at Diploma or Final Test that courses can be over-subscribed, so students are strongly encouraged to enrol on their preferred course at the earliest opportunity. This will maximize their chances of securing a place on their first choice course, and give us more opportunity of scheduling extra courses to meet demand should that prove necessary. In particular it is **not** necessary to wait until the examination results are confirmed (28 January 2011) to enrol on the next course. If the upshot of the examination results is that a student needs to change their enrolment plans next semester, they will be able to withdraw from the course that they have enrolled on before it starts and **not** incur a fee. Please note that detailed timetables for the main courses will **not** be available until the week of 24 January 2011.

Please contact Sarah Gibbons (0121 200 0990 or cetc@cipfa.org.uk) for any further information that you need in relation to next semester's course programme.

Yours sincerely



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