Minimum Qualification Level (standard) for the UK Cyber Security Council's
Professional Registration titles including Chartered

The Royal Charter of the UK Cyber Security Council empowers the Council to award the individual professional designation of "Chartered Cyber Security Professional", provided that a minimum qualification standard for registration as a Chartered Cyber Security Professional shall be specified in the Standards, which must be approved by Privy Council.

To provide further clarity and re-assurance to the market and profession the minimum qualification standard, explanatory notes and the wider assessment/eligibility criteria will be displayed on the Council's Website in due course and be included in candidate packs, to be provided within the pilot.

A key focus of the Council in consideration of the minimum qualification standard is to promote inclusivity and remove barriers of entry to the profession by giving professionals recognition for their knowledge, skills and expertise. This is regardless of their role within Cyber Security, or the journey via which they have attained their role. The only barrier to entry is a lack of skills and/or experience, not how an individual attained them. Further notes are provided to assist understanding of the Minimum Qualification Standard in context of the wider process for an individual to be granted registration as a Chartered Cyber Security Professional.

What is the role of this minimum level?

The minimum qualifications are there to indicate the level of knowledge required and are not meant to imply that only those with the qualifications have the requisite knowledge to meet a particular professional title, nor are they intended as a bypass for the formal assessment process. They are simply a tool to articulate the level of knowledge needed to underpin competency at a particular title. Candidates will be able to prove they meet the minimum standard either by holding a relevant masters degree or by demonstrating a portfolio of equivalent learning. Anyone who meets the minimum qualification standard must also undertake a formal assessment process.

It is the case that the initial application phase for Chartered Cyber Security Professional will likely be more straightforward in the future for those registrants with the qualifications identified in the Minimum Qualifications Standard

How have we come to this minimum level?

In granting the Charter, the Privy Council is looking to the UK Cyber Security Council to raise the bar regarding professional standards in cyber security. This is a key element of the National Cyber strategy and the National Government agenda to promote a knowledge and skills-based economy.

The 21st century has seen moves towards increasing professionalism in this area. A Chartered Physicist, for example, has, since 2001, required a master's degree to fulfil the academic preparation. Similarly Chartered Engineers in the UK have needed a master's degree since 2012, and in Ireland since 2013. The Chartered Scientist title, introduced in 2004, requires a master's degree.

Although a bachelors degree (RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) Level 6) is the level for Chartered professions such as Accountancy or Surveyors, for Technology and Engineering professions, as above, it is increasingly at masters degree level and it is with these professions that the Council seeks to align.

The Council proposes that its Chartered Professional Registration title be aligned with Master's degree (RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) Level 7), this position has been subject to Community Challenge as part of the formation project and aligns to SFIA (Skills for the Information Age) Level 6, itself a fundamental tenet of our desire to ensure stakeholders across Government, industry and the UK have absolute confidence and assurance in a professional standard that ensures that people with the right skills are identified as competent to manage the UK's existing and future cyber risk.

The Council will undertake further work to determine which subjects at masters level are relevant. Examples could include a masters degree in engineering, science or computing. The Council will seek to accredit degrees where relevant and will review what other bodies such as the BCS (British Computer Society) stipulate.

The council will initially consider degrees that have been certified by the NCSC.

Taking into consideration the sizeable proportion of the profession for whom masters degrees did not exist we will also recognise accredited Bachelors degrees with honours in relevant subjects which started before September 1999.

What is the wider process?

The Council is undertaking a pilot of the end-to-end assessment process for candidates. This pilot covers two areas of specialism in cyber security:

- Cyber Security Governance and Risk Management
- Secure System Architecture and Design

The Council is writing assessment criteria and training specific assessors for the pilot to allow as many routes as possible for candidates to demonstrate competency. Examples include supporting documentation, a structured interview and a case study evaluation (during which the applicant must satisfy the assessors that they have competence at a sufficient level to meet the standard). These are the methods that are in discussion with potential pilot participants. These methods will provide opportunities for individuals to clearly demonstrate that they have achieved the minimum standard through building a 'portfolio' of equivalent learning.

The Council does not expect many registrants within the pilot to have an academic background in cyber security, this is based on the experience in previous pilots of cyber security certifications.

International Equivalence

The Council will reference the use of the UNESCO ISCED Framework and others for comparing programmes of study between countries.

Table 1:

	The Chartered Cyber Security Professional (ChCSP) Standard
Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)[1] and International Equivalency[2]	Level 7
Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW)[3]	Level 7
Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)[4]	Level 11

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29 July 2022