



Certificate in Partnering Practice

The Certificate in Partnering Practice is for participants of The Partnering Initiative's (TPI) 'Essential Skills for Effective Partnering' training course, who wish to extend their training through self-reflective learning. The certificate also demonstrates externally that the holder has achieved a certain level of knowledge of partnering standards and competence in cross-sector partnering.

To gain certification, each participant is asked to submit a reflective essay (2000–2500 words) to demonstrate partnering knowledge and, most importantly, contextualisation of the learning from the course within their own situation. The essay will be assessed by TPI and a Certificate in Partnering Practice awarded if the appropriate standard is reached.

Certification process and timing

Timeframe	Process
	Attendance at TPI training course/Registration
Within 2 months	Submission of essay outline to TPI
Within 6 months	Submission of final essay to TPI for assessment

Participants are required to submit a short essay outline and plan within 2 months of attending the training course or registering. This outline should briefly describe the subject matter of the essay and expected structure. Feedback on the outline will be given, and then the final essay should be submitted within 6 months.

If the TPI assessor feels the essay is close but does not quite demonstrate sufficient understanding to achieve the Certification, it will be returned with comments, and the applicant may adjust and resubmit the essay for consideration a second time with no further fee. Where it is felt the essay is too far from demonstrating the necessary understanding, this option will not be available to the applicant, although the applicant may restart the whole certification process at a later stage with payment of the appropriate fee.

Please submit your essay outline and final essay to CPP@thepartneringinitiative.org.

Late submissions

Although TPI will be flexible when there are good reasons for late submissions, this may result in significant delays in the process.

Cases of non-award

In all cases where an assessor decides not to award Certification, the decision will be reviewed by the Director of The Partnering Initiative and another senior colleague not previously involved in the assessment. Their decision will be final and there is no further appeal process.

Registering for the Certificate

If you registered for the Certificate at the same time as the training course, you will already have been invoiced for the fees and will be contacted at the end of the course with a reminder to submit your essay outline by the deadline.

If you would like to register, please contact us info@thepartneringinitiative.org. The fee for submission is £200 (GB) / \$300 (US).

Aims of the Certification Process

The process of certification:

- Extends the partnering course through an additional element of self-reflective learning;
- Demonstrates that the holder has achieved a certain level of knowledge of partnering standards and competence in cross-sector partnering.

To successfully gain certification, the reflective essay must:

- Contextualise the learning from the course
- Apply the concepts from the course to a real partnership
- Use the course concepts and frameworks to analyse your own partnership situation
- Demonstrate an understanding of good partnering practice

Essay overview

Participants in the course will have different levels of involvement in partnerships, and the partnerships may be at different stages of the partnering cycle. This means that the exact content of the essay will necessarily be quite specific to the participant.

The overarching aim of the essay in all cases is to **demonstrate the application of learning to a participant's own situation**. The participant must take the key concepts, skills and tools and demonstrate how these apply to their own context. This will in most cases take the form of examining the current situation and possible next steps for further developing the partnership, based on good practice learned in the course.

Depending on the participant's situation, some example themes for the essay might be:

Participant's situation	Possible themes to be incorporated in the essay
The participant's organisation is not yet actively involved in partnerships but is keen to be	Mapping of potential partners including their drivers for involvement, what they might bring to the table etc.; Examination of the potential challenges for the organisation to engage in partnership; Plans for engaging partners and / or making necessary changes within the organisation.
The participant is currently developing a partnership	Understanding of the drivers (actual / potential depending on status) of all the partners; Review of where the partnership currently stands against the ideal elements that should be in place; Plans for further developing the partnership based on good practice learned in the course.
The participant is currently engaged in a partnership	Review of how the partnership is currently performing – how it is set up, the degree to which partnering principles are currently being applied, the relationship among the partners, where the potential trouble spots might be etc. Plans for further developing the partnership based on good practice learned in the course.

Any assessments or reviews of the current situation should include substantiation of your views, and future plans should not only include what actions you have decided to take, but should also be discursive, giving a clear indication of why you chose those actions and where relevant, include the other possibilities you considered and rejected.

Guidelines for writing your essay

Essay Outline

Your essay outline should be set out on one A4 sheet, preferably as a Word document or similar. It should include a brief context to your planned assignment, and a plan showing the main focus points of your essay. You will not be assessed on this document; it is purely for your own benefit to get feedback on your essay plans before you start writing the full paper.

Writing Your Essay

The satisfactory completion of the assigned essay is essential for the award of the certificate. You need to ensure that you complete the work in accordance with the date of submission and length agreed.

It is important that you take note of the length of your assignment. If your essay is substantially shorter than the set limit, you will probably not have addressed all the points needed. If it is longer, then you may be asked to revise it. Bibliographies and short footnotes can be excluded from the word count. If the work includes graphs, charts, tables or maps, these may take the place of words, so the written section may be shorter.

Marking Criteria

When assessing your essay, the marker will be looking you to demonstrate the following:

- Self-reflective learning
- Knowledge of partnering standards
- An understanding of good partnering practice
- Competence in cross-sector partnering
- Contextualisation of the learnings of the course for a 'real -life' collaborative situation
- Applying the key concepts from the course to a real partnership

In particular, they will be looking for you to demonstrate an understanding of the following:

- The rationale for and risks of partnering
- When partnering is or is not appropriate
- Key features of each sector (eg drivers, challenges etc)
- The difference between a 'transactional collaboration', and a 'genuine partnership' and where each may be appropriate
- Partnership key principles
- Partnership challenges and success factors
- What it takes to be a good partner
- Creating agreements, managing and reviewing partnerships
- The Partnering Cycle

References

The preferred system for referencing is the Harvard System also known as the Author Date Method. Harvard referencing uses the author (surname only) and the date (year only) of the work in the main body of the text, and then has a reference list at the end of the essay which contains the references cited in alphabetical order by author. The reference list contains the full details of the book or journal cited. Because you only refer to a shortened form of works in the main essay (author, date) your essay doesn't get filled with too much reference material. The use of the author/date shorthand does make it easy to locate works in the reference list.

Reference lists

All references used in the main body of assignment need to be included in the reference list. This is arranged in alphabetical order by author surname. Books, journals and other media are all included in the same list.

Plagiarism

- Plagiarism means taking other people's work and passing it off as your own.
- Plagiarism is the intellectual equivalent of theft, and is not acceptable when submitting an essay.

If you make a direct (word for word) quotation from another text, however small, it will need acknowledging clearly. First you will need to signal, with quotation marks or indents, that the words are not your own, and second you will need to provide a reference to the original source.

Collaboration

If you and a colleague are both undertaking the Certificate in Partnering Practice, it may be tempting to work together on your analysis of a partnership. However, candidates working in collaboration cannot fully demonstrate their own understanding of the learnings from the course, and how they are applying these in the "real world" context of a partnership. We therefore strongly recommend that if at all possible you and your colleague choose different partnerships to analyse and take different approaches to doing so. If this is not possible, at least try to focus on different aspects of the partnership.

Sharing your work with a wider audience

From time to time, TPI selects interesting essays to share as brief "case studies" on our website or in our journal. We will, of course, contact you if your essay is selected. We may also invite you to make some revisions for publication. However, it would be helpful to know whether you would, in principle, be happy to share your work. Please tick one of the boxes below.

I am happy for TPI to publish my essay in full

I am happy to TPI to publish my essay after adapting it so that people and organisations cannot be identified

I do not want my essay to be published

If you have any questions, either after reading these guidelines or while preparing your essay, please get in touch with us on CPP@thepartneringinitiative.org.