



REGISTER OF
CHARTERED
DESIGNERS

GUIDANCE FOR THE PATHWAY TO:

CHARTERED DESIGNER

What is the Pathway to Chartered Designer?

The Pathway to Chartered Designer is a structured process established by the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD) to confer the title of Chartered Designer to professional designers who meet specific criteria and standards set by the society. This pathway was established after CSD was granted express powers by Queen Elizabeth II to set up and maintain The Register of Chartered Designers.

Achieving the status of Chartered Designer is significant, as it signifies to the public, clients, and fellow professionals that a designer practices to the highest standards recognised by the international professional body for design.

The Pathway to Chartered Designer is designed to be fair, rigorous and robust, ensuring that those who achieve this status have demonstrated the highest level of competence and professionalism in their field. It adopts criteria that are aligned with the Chartered Society of Designers CPSK™ framework for professional design best practice, with additional 'Requirements' considered essential for chartership and referred to as CPSK+R.

The criteria for both the Pathway and annual compliance are based on this framework and are regularly reviewed to ensure they reflect current industry standards and best practices. The Pathway involves a process of self-analysis and maintaining chartered status annually requires ongoing personal development to meet the evolving requirements of the profession and society.

Who can apply to become a Chartered Designer?

The Pathway to Chartered Designer is open to anyone practicing in any field of design, regardless of whether they are a member of the Chartered Society of Designers. However, members (MCSD and FCSD) of the society or of a professional body licenced by the Register, are eligible for a discount on the pathway fee and are exempt from certain stages.

To apply for the Pathway, applicants must have been practicing in the field of design for at least five years full time. Additionally, applicants can reside and practice anywhere in the world, but it's important to note that the Pathway must be completed in English.

This inclusivity allows designers from diverse backgrounds and locations to pursue Chartered Designer status, provided they meet the necessary qualifications and standards set by the Chartered Society of Designers.

What are the benefits of becoming a Chartered Designer?

Achieving Chartered Designer status offers numerous benefits and opportunities.

Recognition: The title "Chartered Designer" signifies the highest level of competence in professional design practice.

Registration: Being entered into The Register of Chartered Designers, an international register unique to the design profession, enhances professional credibility and visibility.

Credibility: Chartered status indicates that a designer has attained the highest level of practice, comparable to professionals in fields such as engineering, architecture, accountancy, and science.

Distinction: Employers and clients can identify Chartered Designers as practitioners operating at the highest level, influencing decisions regarding contracts and employment opportunities.

Affinity: Chartered Designers join a global community of professionals recognized for practicing design at the highest standard.

Responsibility: Holding Chartered Designer status implies upholding the highest standards of professional design practice, serving as an ambassador for the profession and carrying significant responsibility.

Certificate: Chartered Designers receive a personal framed signed certificate bearing the seal of The Register of Chartered Designers.

Taxation: Subject to applicable tax regimes and individual circumstances, Chartered Designers may be eligible to offset professional fees against tax.

CPD Resource: Access to a unique online resource simplifies recording, auditing, planning, and submitting the Annual Compliance Statement necessary for maintaining Chartered Designer status.

Online Portfolio: Chartered Designers receive their own personal online portfolio, where they can showcase their work, provide contact details, link to their website and social media, detail professional practice, maintain CPD records, and present case studies.

Find-a-Designer: Inclusion in the CSD website's 'Find-a-Designer' directory enhances visibility and accessibility to potential clients and employers, identifying the individual as a Chartered Designer.

Professional Indemnity: Chartered Designers may benefit from preferential rates with most professional indemnity underwriters, ensuring adequate protection for their professional practice. A dedicated PI insurance service provider approved by CSD is available.

Membership: Chartered Designer status includes Full Membership (MCSD) of The Chartered Society of Designers, offering access to a comprehensive range of benefits outlined on the Society's website.

What does the Pathway to Chartered Designer entail?

The Pathway to Chartered Designer is a comprehensive process that requires applicants to demonstrate their professional competence and commitment to the highest standards of design practice. There are four initial stages of the Pathway:

Stage 1 – Chartered Registration: This stage involves registering for the pathway and creating a user account on the Chartered Society of Designers' website. Applicants will need to provide basic information and pay the Pathway fee. It is essential to carefully read all guidance provided before proceeding.

Stage 2 – Professional Portfolio: Applicants are required to compile a professional portfolio showcasing their work, including case studies with explanations. This portfolio will be reviewed by specialist panels comprising professionals in relevant fields. It is submitted online and is a critical component of the Pathway.

Stage 3 – Professional Review: This stage may take the form of a physical or online interview, where applicants will discuss their practice, competence, CPD activity, and future development with an appropriate panel. This stage is conducted in person and allows for a more comprehensive assessment of the applicant's qualifications and capabilities. Members of CSD (MCSD and FCSD) are exempt from this stage however the Society maintains the right to require members to attend a review should it so determine.

Stage 4 – Chartered Ratification: This stage requires the applicant to commit to a series of undertakings, demonstrating their commitment to upholding professional standards.

It is important to note that successful completion of all four stages is necessary to be awarded the title of Chartered Designer and have your name entered on The Register of Chartered Designers. Additionally, there is an annual compliance requirement to maintain Chartered Designer status.

Throughout the Pathway, applicants are provided with on screen ToolTips to assist them in completing each section. It's crucial to save progress regularly and follow on screen instructions carefully to ensure all inputs are saved.

Overall, the Pathway to Chartered Designer is designed to be fair, rigorous and thorough, ensuring that those who achieve Chartered Designer status have demonstrated excellence in professional design practice.

STAGE 1 – CHARTERED REGISTRATION

The Chartered Registration stage of the Pathway to Chartered Designer is the first step in the process and involves completing six sections:

- **Personal Profile:** Provide contact details and upload proof of ID and a current passport-style photograph.
- **Professional Profile:** Enter details about other professional bodies or organizations you belong to, any specific roles you undertake, and provide links to your website and social media platforms. You can also list any honours, awards, or prizes you've received individually or as part of a team. You will need to declare if you've ever been expelled from a professional body or subject to any complaints.

- **Qualifications:** List any academic or other qualifications that support your application for Chartered Designer status.
- **Business Practice:** Describe how you practice, including whether you are self-employed, own a consultancy, work for a consultancy, or work within an in-house design department. Provide details about your practice, such as location, turnover (if applicable), staff numbers, and whether you carry Professional Indemnity insurance.
- **Professional Practice:** Answer questions about your professional experience, including how long you've been practicing and in which disciplines. Upload an up-to-date curriculum vitae.
- **Register:** Agree to the terms and conditions of The Register of Chartered Designers and pay the registration fee via the online payment portal.

After completing the Chartered Registration, your application will be reviewed, and you'll receive an email acknowledging your payment and registration. Possible outcomes of the review include:

- Access to Stage 2 to compile your Professional Portfolio.
- Request for further information or details.
- Advice to apply for another membership category.
- Decline of your registration for the Pathway.

If you are given access to the next stage, you'll be notified by email, and you can commence "Stage 2 – Professional Portfolio". It's important to follow the on-screen instructions carefully and provide accurate information to ensure a smooth progression through the Pathway.

STAGE 2 – PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO

The Professional Portfolio stage is the most demanding phase in the Pathway to Chartered Designer. It requires careful consideration and attention to detail to ensure that all specific requirements are addressed. Here's a breakdown of the sections involved in this stage:

- **Design Submission:** If you're not a full member (MCSD or FCSD) of the Chartered Society of Designers, you'll need to upload 6 to 10 case studies showcasing your work. These case studies should demonstrate your competence as a professional designer and illustrate the range and scope of your abilities. The reviewing panel will assess these case studies to determine if you possess the required competencies outlined in CPSK.
- **Submission of two specific case studies:** Each case study requires you to provide a working title and describe your involvement in the project, whether sole contributor or as part of a larger team and if so your role and responsibilities. You will also need to describe any elements of the project commissioned from others.
For each case study, you will need to address four key criteria: Creativity, Professionalism, Skills, and Knowledge. This involves describing how each case study demonstrates your competence in these areas and providing supporting evidence such as documentation, images, and project progression. The Society has produced a 'Guide to demonstrating CPSK' to assist.

- **Qualifications:** Upload evidence of any academic qualifications or training relevant to your application.
- **CPSK:** Complete a self-analysis of your competencies mapped against CPSK. Be honest and realistic in your self-assessment, indicating your level of competence in each area. There is no right or wrong answer to this analysis however, it should allow you to determine any future development to inform your ongoing CPD, a requirement of maintaining your chartered status.
- **Continuing Professional Development (CPD):** Provide details of any CPD activities undertaken in the past 24 months and outline your CPD plan for the next 12 months. The quality of CPD is emphasized over quantity, and activities should be relevant to your practice and contribute to your professional development.
- **Professional Practice:** Upload policy documents related to intellectual property, terms and conditions, code of conduct, and insurance. These documents demonstrate your commitment to practicing professionally and ethically.
- **References:** Provide contact details for 3 clients and 3 suppliers/contractors who can vouch for your professionalism and competence. For applicants who are employed other than in their own consultancy a current employer confirmation and reference will be required.

After completing all the above, you should review and submit your Professional Portfolio. You'll receive an email acknowledgment of your submission.

After submitting your Professional Portfolio, it will be reviewed to ensure all required items are included. You may be asked to provide additional information or clarification if needed. The content of your portfolio will be evaluated by relevant panels, and references will be sought from nominated contacts.

Possible outcomes of this stage include:

- Award of Chartered Designer status;
- Possible invitation to a Professional Review (Stage 3);
- Request for further information or content;
- Request of additional case studies which may or may not be specified;
- Deferral of your application with determined additional requirements;
- Declining of your chartered application, with the offer of an alternative membership category.
- Declining of your application, in which case a further application will not be considered for a period not less than 3 years.

The Society is not obliged to provide feedback on failed applications but may choose to do so to assist any future application.

The decision of the Society is final. If an applicant considers they have been discriminated against on any grounds they should write to the Chief Executive of the Society within 14 days specifying their concerns.

STAGE 3 – PROFESSIONAL REVIEW

Any applicant may at the discretion of the Society be invited to attend a Professional Review which entails:

- **Preparation for the Professional Review:** Upon receiving an invitation to attend a Professional Review, you will be provided with information and a checklist of items to bring, including original photo ID, academic qualifications (if applicable), submitted and/or additional case studies as required.
- **Location and Timing:** All Professional Reviews will be conducted in London, but special arrangements can be made for applicants from overseas. Alternatively, the review may be conducted via web conferencing. You must attend the Professional Review at the stipulated date and time. Failure to attend without valid reasons may result in your application being declined, with the option to re-commence the Pathway after a specified period.
- **Professional Review Process:** The Professional Review will be conducted by a panel of two senior practitioners, additional panel members may be present for auditing and monitoring purposes. The review will last approximately one hour, during which the panel will seek to clarify elements of your Professional Portfolio. Timekeeping will be strictly adhered to, and you should prepare your presentation in advance especially if the review is to be conducted online.
- **Outcome Notification:** You will be informed of the outcome of the Professional Review within 5 working days with one of the following outcomes:
 - Award of Chartered Designer status and inclusion of your name on the Register of Chartered Designers.
 - Award of Chartered Designer status subject to specified conditions, with details provided on how and when these conditions are to be met.
 - Rejection of your application for chartered status.
 - In some instances, The Register may defer your application to allow you to submit additional material to your Professional Portfolio and possibly attend another Professional Review.

Upon successful completion of Stage 3, or if you have been exempted from Stage 3, you will be given access to your Pathway account to complete Stage 4 – Chartered Ratification, the final stage of the process.

STAGE 4 – CHARTERED RATIFICATION

Stage 4 requires you to agree and commit to a set of requirements to maintain your Chartered Designer Status as follows:

- Abide by the Code of Professional Conduct set by The Register.
- Complete an annual Compliance Statement demonstrating adherence to the requirements of a Chartered Designer.
- Provide design services only within your demonstrated level of competence.
- Undertake substantial CPD regularly and maintain a record of your CPD activities.
- Maintain awareness of relevant Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- Stay informed about relevant standards applicable to your field(s) of design practice.
- Maintain awareness of materials, resources, and their environmental impacts.
- Maintain adequate professional insurance unless employed, in which case it's assumed to be provided by your employer.
- Contribute to the design profession and engage with other chartered professionals.
- Immediately disclose any matter affecting your status as a Chartered Designer.
- Respect the Intellectual Property of The Register.
- Promptly pay the annual registration fee.
- Abide by the Terms and Conditions of The Register of Chartered Designers.

Upon completion and ratification of Stage 4:

- You will receive a confirmation email of your ratification, payment, and status.
- A letter will confirm your registration on The Register of Chartered Designers.
- Within a few weeks, you'll receive a framed certificate showing your listing as a Chartered Designer.
- You'll be listed in the Chartered Society of Designers directory as a Chartered Designer.

If you're not already a member of the Chartered Society of Designers:

- You'll receive a letter confirming your inclusive membership.
- You'll be given a personal online profile and portfolio on the Chartered Society of Designers website.
- Access to the online CPD audit and planning toolkit will be provided.
- You'll receive a framed certificate showing your membership of the Society, entitling you to use the post-nominal letters MCSD.
- Access to benefits and services offered by the Society in support of your Chartered Designer status will be granted.

Completing Stage 4 marks the culmination of your journey to becoming a Chartered Designer, entitling you to the privileges and recognition associated with this prestigious designation.

What is the cost of being a Chartered Designer?

Stage 1 - Chartered Registration:

- Pathway fee non-members (MCSD and FCSD) £245
- £80 for Members (MCSD) of the Chartered Society of Designers
- £60 for Fellows (FCSD) of the Chartered Society of Designers

All application fees are non-refundable.

Stage 4 - Chartered Ratification:

- One-off Register fee: £100
- First annual Registration fee: £305

This fee includes full membership of the Chartered Society of Designers (MCSD).

- First annual Registration fee for existing Fellows (FCSD) £395

Annual Registration Fee:

The annual Registration fee of £305 (or £395 for Fellows) will be payable on the anniversary of your chartership, set as the first day of the month following your Chartered Ratification.

Pro-rata Refund for Members or Fellows:

Members or Fellows of the Chartered Society of Designers who are partway into their subscription year will receive a pro-rata refund calculated to the first day of the month following their Chartered Ratification.

How long can I maintain my Chartered Designer status?

Whilst you remain in professional design practice, complete an Annual Compliance Statement showing that you are maintaining the Requirements of a Chartered Designer, adhere to the Terms and Conditions of the Register of Chartered Designers and pay your annual Registration fee, you can maintain your chartership.