



GDPR Training Paths

Part 2 – How to Choose a GDPR Certification

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT GDPR CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME AND TRAINING PROVIDER

In our previous article, *GDPR Training Paths - Prioritising Privacy*, we discussed the advantages of implementing a long-term, organisation-wide, data protection learning and development programme. In particular, we considered how GDPR certifications benefit both employees and employers alike, including how you can use professional qualifications to demonstrate that your processing of personal information complies with data protection requirements, in line with the accountability principle provided by Article 5(2) of the UK GDPR.

Having decided to invest in data protection training, the natural question to ask next is which GDPR certification programmes should you choose, and who can deliver the GDPR training?

After all, no company or individual has an unlimited training budget. Therefore, it is imperative to choose wisely when selecting a professional qualification and training provider who can deliver the course and support you through the examination and beyond.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A GDPR CERTIFICATION PROGRAMME

Always choose a certification from a recognised independent examination provider. Most well-respected professional industry qualifications are developed by organisations that go to great lengths to ensure their independence. That is to say, the method of certification is separate from the education and training process. They do this to avoid the appearance of any conflict of interest, which would seriously undermine the certificate programme's reputation and could bring the exam's integrity into question. A separation of these processes is also required by any organisation seeking to comply with **ISO/IEC 17024:2012**, the international standard for bodies operating certification of persons.

The advantages of selecting a separate training provider to the certification body are:

- It increases the independence of the overall training programme. The examination provider's primary role is to maintain the certification's quality, relevance, and robustness. They also oversee the examination process via a separate external methodology. In some cases, they take on a leadership role, which further enhances the certification's credibility and value.
- Specialist training providers have the capabilities to provide a personalised and dedicated service to both the company and delegates throughout the learning process - from booking to completion, which in most cases involves passing an examination. The leading training providers have access to the best trainers, with a combination of expert subject matter knowledge and experience of working with the particular examination provider.



BEST-IN-CLASS GDPR TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FROM FREEVACY

Established in 2015, Freevacancy delivers professional training in GDPR and data protection (information rights). Founder Joyce Allen believes that although data protection and privacy law is a complex subject, it can still be taught in an enjoyable and interactive way.

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I would highly recommend data protection training through Freevacancy. The trainers are extremely knowledgeable and really know how to engage with the group. They managed to bring the training to life by referring to real-life events to support the theory and ensured the training was interactive. Absolutely brilliant!

Our clients include central and local government, law enforcement, military, and health and social care services. In the commercial sectors, we work with corporate customers and SMEs in finance, insurance, technology, energy, private healthcare, and retail.

The people who attend our courses matter to us. Our aim is not solely to deliver training and get people through an exam, but rather to ensure our candidates possess the knowledge and confidence to use their new skills in the future, beginning with passing their exam at the desired level. The distinction is subtle but noteworthy.

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I had real doubts at first. But having completed the BCS Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection and the GDPR Update, I'm impressed. The staff are friendly, and nothing is too much trouble. Before the exam, I drove them crazy with questions. They never complained and always made themselves available. I highly recommend Freevacancy.

Choosing the right qualification is essential. At Freevacancy, we only deliver certified training courses from established, industry recognised data protection examination providers. When it comes to privacy certifications, the International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP) and BCS, the Chartered Institute of IT are the gold standards. Both the IAPP and BCS take considerable pride in developing highly respected, independent GDPR certifications that offer all the reassurance employers need in their privacy professionals.

Certification from either examination provider will add weight to individual CVs or the qualifications of teams. The latter being an advantage for building trust with service users and clients by demonstrating accountability. As well as certified training, Freevacancy also delivers bespoke information rights training covering both GDPRs (EU & UK), DPA18, PECR (ePrivacy), FOIA, and EIRs.

HOW FREEVACY'S TRAINING IS DELIVERED

Our reputation for delivering value means that we attract customers looking for more than training courses designed to ensure regulatory compliance boxes are checked. As such, we often support clients in implementing a top-down privacy culture. Our expertise in delivering privacy and data protection training programmes can save valuable time and budget while ensuring an appropriate education level is achieved across the organisation. Working directly with our clients' teams and departments also means that we can offer an outside perspective on potential privacy champions or technologist candidates.

While delivering GDPR training, we prefer to examine the practical implications surrounding compliance rather than focussing solely on developing a legal understanding. In teaching this way, we ensure attendees learn about ethical data use and not just the laws surrounding privacy and data protection.

Our focus when delivering certified training courses is always with the delegate. We actively encourage participants to stay in touch with one another when attending one of our courses. We see this as a natural part of the learning process, and it helps delegates prepare for the exam. It's also an essential part of developing professional networks, which builds confidence, and can be useful throughout an entire career.

Once the training aspect of a certified course is complete, our expert trainers make themselves available to students throughout the self-study period leading up to the exam. We achieve this through one-to-one coaching sessions and, depending on the level of the exam, group study days. We hold an exam preparation day for our BCS students studying practitioner-level exams, while those preparing to sit an IAPP exam can participate in interactive Q&A and study sessions. These are typically scheduled 4 to 6 weeks after the accredited course has ended. Delegates are also free to attend more than one event if they choose to study for longer than the recommended time.

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A very good time on the course, covered a lot of content in a short space of time but plenty of material to utilise. Trainer very friendly, offering lots of time and expertise to make use of.

Unlike many training providers, once the exam is over, we stay in touch, providing ongoing free advice and support for attendees dealing with issues back in a workplace setting.

Our teaching ethos and the fact we deliver training from the IAPP and BCS means we present attendees with a certified training package not available from any other training provider. With both the IAPP and BCS, you can be confident that your qualification will be recognised in the UK and internationally. The information is always completely accurate and up-to-date.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PRIVACY PROFESSIONALS (IAPP)

The IAPP is the largest international community for privacy professionals with over 68,000 members worldwide. Founded in 2000, the IAPP is a not-for-profit organisation that helps define, support, and improve the privacy profession globally. It brings people together, providing them with the tools and information management practices required to thrive in today's rapidly evolving data economy. A board of **six executives leads the IAPP**, four of whom are IAPP certified themselves, indicating how the principles that apply to membership are adhered to throughout the organisation. Policy and direction are influenced by an advisory board that includes representation from each geographical region. Members of the advisory board are made up of solicitors, consultants, and senior privacy practitioners from all industry sectors, along with the academic and research communities.

IAPP certification key facts:

- IAPP certifications are accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) under the ISO 17024:2012 international standard.
- The IAPP maintains the currency and relevance of its certifications through consultation with its global community of information privacy practitioners and lawyers.
- Training is available through a select network of Official Training Partners.
- Computer-based exams are available in over 6,000 testing centres worldwide.
- The IAPP has issued over 26,000 privacy and data protection certifications to professionals in 90 countries.

Alongside certification, the IAPP provides a host of benefits to its active community of members and certified practitioners.

These include:

- Opportunities to network with colleagues and like-minded professionals who want to advance their careers.
- Access to exclusive privacy-related content, news, expert analysis such as annual governance reports and salary surveys, plus a host of videos, and web conferences to keep up to date.
- Annual 2-Day Intensive Conferences in the UK, and across Europe (currently online due to the COVID-19 pandemic).
- A resource centre full of templates, forms, charts, checklists, guides, surveys, and reports including a DPO Toolkit to make your job easier.

Membership is available to corporates as well as individuals. Current **corporate members** include well-known international brands such as Accenture, Adobe, AWS (Amazon), AT&T, Capital One, Cisco, Facebook, Google, Hewlett Packard Enterprise, HSBC, Intel, and Microsoft.

IAPP training courses, certifications, and conferences help privacy professionals stay up to date on legal and regulatory developments.

CERTIFIED IAPP COURSES DELIVERED BY FREEVACY

Freevacy is approved to deliver the following IAPP certifications.

IAPP Certified Information Privacy Professional Europe (CIPP/E)

The Certified Information Privacy Professional Europe (CIPP/E) is the European version of the IAPP CIPP credential, covering laws and regulations. There are four concentrations in total, with Asia, Canada, and the US making up the other three regional variations.

Launched in 2004, the CIPP/E is a practitioner-level certification that ensures attendees, upon completion, can demonstrate their understanding of European privacy laws and regulations such as the EU GDPR. The course examines the EU GDPR from a broader international perspective, looking at key privacy terminology and practical concepts concerning the protection of personal data and cross-border data flow. Award holders will be able to understand how the EU GDPR applies alongside laws applicable to the US and other countries.

In practical terms, the information provided on the CIPP/E is invaluable when dealing with overseas software vendors, suppliers, and partners that play a pivotal role in delivering IT and back-office functions. It also applies to companies operating out of the UK that are subsidiaries of multinationals.

IAPP Certified Information Privacy Manager (CIPM)

The Certified Information Privacy Manager or CIPM is the IAPP's credential covering operations.

Launched in 2013, the CIPM targets senior practitioners responsible for managing privacy operations. The CIPM addresses how to translate knowledge of data protection law into policies and procedures that organisations can adopt to create workable everyday practices. The certificate includes topics covering how to create an organisational vision for privacy and data protection, building and structuring a privacy team, developing and implementing a privacy programme framework, communicating with stakeholders, measuring performance, and understanding the operational life cycle of privacy programmes.

The CIPM is a unique certification and essential for anyone required to demonstrate accountability.

IAPP Certified Information Privacy Technologist (CIPT)

The Certified Information Privacy Technologist or CIPT is the IAPP's credential covering IT and technology.

First launched in 2014, the IAPP refreshed the programme in 2020. The CIPT is an operational level certification aimed at IT systems and software engineers who protect personal data by implementing the privacy programme's technical controls.

The CIPT addresses data privacy at every stage of IT product and services lifecycle management from design and development, through to deployment, maintenance, and eventual retirement or replacement. Attendees will learn about privacy concepts and practices that relate to IT operations, such as privacy-by-design, data minimisation, encryption, and pseudonymisation. The CIPT also approaches how to set privacy controls for secure data collection and transfer, how to audit infrastructure, and finally, how to communicate privacy issues to an organisation's management, marketing, legal, and operational functions.

ABOUT BCS, THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR IT



BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT, is a professional body representing the needs of people across the globe who work in and around the field of IT. Initially formed in 1957 as the British Computer Society, the BCS has more than 68,000 members in over 150 countries. As a registered charity with a royal charter, the BCS endeavours to raise professional education standards and overcome ethical challenges to make IT a force for good in society.

As an independent examination provider, the BCS supports career development across a diverse portfolio of industry qualifications. **BCS professional certifications** (formerly ISEB) are awarded in recognition of an ability to demonstrate the application of newly acquired skills and knowledge. All BCS certifications are aligned to **SFIAPlus**, a globally recognised standard produced by industry experts and backed by the UK Government as best practice for identifying and expanding capabilities. BCS uses **SFIAPlus to map common skills** and identify gaps within detailed training and development programmes. Qualifications from the BCS are renowned for their independence, integrity, and impartiality.

BCS professional certification key facts:

- Over 60 certifications across 11 core subject areas.
- Available in over 200 countries.
- Independent network of 76 Accredited Training Providers (ATPs).
- Exams are administered separately via Questionmark through remote proctoring.
- Over 700,000 exams taken in the last 10-years.

ACCREDITED BCS COURSES DELIVERED BY FREEVACY

Freevacy is accredited to deliver the following BCS Certificates.

GDPR and Data Protection

The BCS data protection certificates are the only recognised industry qualifications to cover the General Data Protection Regulation (2016), the Data Protection Act 2018, and the Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003. The programme is available in two levels aimed at foundation and practitioner audiences. Emphasis is placed on satisfying organisational obligations and responsibilities to achieve business goals. Furthermore, there is now a clearer distinction between the two levels.

BCS Foundation Certificate in Data Protection

BCS launched the Foundation Certificate in Data Protection in 2014 to accompany the already established Practitioner Certificate. The programme went through a refresh for syllabus version 3.0, launched in July 2020, and is now refocused to provide an entry-level awareness for individuals with little or no subject matter experience. The changes make the Foundation better suited for adoption by privacy champions, key personnel, heads of departments, and new compliance team members who require a fundamental understanding of data protection concepts and principles.

The BCS Foundation Certificate aligns with SFIAPlus levels K1 and K2. Award holders will be able to remember, understand and explain data protection core concepts in order to carry out a broad range of tasks, use initiative, and schedule workloads. The grounding that the BCS Foundation offers will accelerate attendees' ability to develop skills and take on additional responsibilities before advancing to the Practitioner level.



ACCREDITED BCS COURSES DELIVERED BY FREEVACY CONT.

BCS Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection

First launched in 1999, the BCS Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection is the longest-running practitioner-level certificated training programme available in the UK. The latest update, syllabus version 9.0, was published in August 2020. No other recognised industry qualifications covering data protection come close to matching its consistency or longevity. It remains the most popular professional development course for people with privacy or data protection responsibilities and is often included in lists of required qualifications for new job vacancies.

The BCS Practitioner Certificate aligns with SFIAPlus levels K3 and K4. Award holders understand how to use appropriate methods, tools, and applications and exhibit an analytical and systematic approach to problem-solving. These include taking the initiative and demonstrating effective communication skills, planning, scheduling, and monitoring. Due to its focus on UK legislation, the Practitioner Certificate is the most suitable certified GDPR training course for appointed Data Protection Officer (DPO), or those looking to become a DPO, along with any other privacy professionals with senior GDPR compliance responsibilities within their organisation, department, or group. Delegates will develop a deep understanding of both EU and UK data protection laws and how to apply them in a workplace environment.

BCS Syllabus updates and courseware development

The syllabi for both Foundation and Practitioner levels are reviewed and updated every six months by BCS to ensure their relevance. The most recent syllabi updates consider data protection legislation following the end of the Brexit transition period on the 31st December 2020. The next update is planned for Jan 2022.

Note, Freevacy updates all BCS courseware before every course to cover legislative changes, case law, and other developments in data protection not yet reflected within the current BCS Syllabus.

The BCS offers pre-prepared courseware for training providers who have not developed their own course manual, presentations, documents, and guides. This is a relatively new process for the BCS. In the past, ATPs submitted courseware developed in-house for evaluation as part of the accreditation process. Freevacy continues to develop its own BCS training materials, which are more comprehensive and remain more up to date than those provided by the BCS to certain other accredited training partners.

Freevacy develops BCS courseware with several purposes in mind. First and foremost, our manuals are designed to be used as an exercise book throughout the course and then a revision guide to help delegates prepare for their exam. We also put considerable effort into ensuring that our manuals can be a useful ongoing reference tool long after the course has ended. For this reason, customers receive free lifetime updates of our BCS course materials (electronic version), which means they'll never go out of date.

FINAL WORDS

The digital economy has transformed **personal data into one of the world's most valuable commodities**. The balance between using personal data for public and economic good (for example, COVID-19 contact tracing apps) and protecting individual privacy is ongoing, with no end in sight. As we leave the pandemic behind us, **2021 will be a year of transition**. Forrester predicts that businesses of all sizes will increase the amount of personal data they collect. At the same time, privacy-conscious consumers will actively seek out ethical companies to engage and entrust their data. Meanwhile, privacy and data protection regulatory compliance will become increasingly complex.

All this is happening now. Having people trained and certified in privacy and data protection within your business is paramount for building trust with customers, service users, investors, and other organisation stakeholders. It also reduces your risk of a potentially costly and reputationally damaging data breach occurring.

From a career perspective, the **IAPP** and **BCS** offer the best combination of certified programmes combined with Freevac training and ongoing support. As a package, we have the expertise and capabilities to meet any privacy professional's ongoing education needs.



SEE OUR AVAILABLE COURSES



BCS Foundation Certificate in Data Protection

The Foundation GDPR Certificate from the BCS is recommended for anyone involved in the collection, usage or protection of personal information.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

IAPP Certified Information Privacy Professional Europe

The CIPP/E is the essential IAPP certification for privacy professionals covering Europe's framework of laws, regulations and policies, most significantly the GDPR.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BCS Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection

The GDPR Practitioner Certificate from the BCS is the leading industry qualification for UK focused DPOs and compliance professionals.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

IAPP Certified Information Privacy Manager

The CIPM is a unique qualification in privacy programme management from the IAPP that teaches DPOs and senior compliance professionals how to turn policies into accountability.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

BCS Practitioner Certificate in Freedom of Information

This BCS Practitioner Certificate is the recognised qualification for individuals with information access responsibilities under the FOIA or EIR.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)

IAPP Certified Information Privacy Technologist

The CIPT is an Industry recognised qualification for IT professionals who require the technical skills and knowhow to implement comprehensive privacy compliant solutions.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



Freevacy is an independent GDPR training provider. We offer accredited BCS and IAPP training for DPOs, privacy professionals and anyone with data protection responsibilities. We also deliver bespoke courses that can be adapted to suit your particular learning requirements.

For more information, please call: 0370 04 27001
or email: **contact@freevacy.com**

www.freevacy.com