Certificate in Partnering Practice

Introduction

The Certificate in Partnering Practice is for participants of The Partnering Initiative's (TPI) in-person or online training courses, or other organisations' qualifying courses, who wish to extend their training through self-reflective learning. The certificate also demonstrates a knowledge of partnering standards, and an understanding of good practice in multi-stakeholder collaboration.

To gain certification, participants submit an assignment of 2,000 to 2,500 words, demonstrating application and contextualisation of the tools, frameworks and learning from the course to their own partnership situation. The assignment can be **either** a *reflective essay* **or** a *partnership plan*. The assignment will be assessed by TPI, and a Certificate in Partnering Practice awarded if the appropriate standard is reached.

Assignment content and guidance

Choice 1: Reflective essay

If you choose this option, your reflective essay should take the key concepts, skills and frameworks from the course, and demonstrate how these apply to your own partnership context. The essay should take a critical, analytical approach, reflecting on the challenges and strengths of the partnership, your own role within it (if applicable), and the good practice from the partnership training that could be applied to it.

The subject and approach of your essay will, of course, depend on the partnering context and on your own interests. Options include (but are not limited to):

- Critical analysis of an existing partnership. This might include, for example, looking at the partnership "building blocks", the resources and drivers of the different partners, the partnership relationships, power structures, what could be improved, and how value could be maximised.

- Analysing a portfolio of existing or potential partnerships, to understand the value they are – or could be – delivering, and suggesting strategy and action to increase the value of the partnership portfolio.

- Analysing your organisation's systems, processes and competencies to see to what degree your organisation is "fit for partnering", and how capacity could be improved.

- A topic of your choice *(*as long as it meets the criteria above).

Choice 2: Partnership plan

This option involves developing a plan for a specific existing or prospective partnership[1]. The assignment should analyse the current situation, reflect, and develop a plan for taking it forward. A partnership plan might include (but not be limited to):

	Existing partnership	**Potential/new partnership**
Analysis	Understanding the type of partnership and the different forms of collaborative advantage it is creating collectively, and the value add for your organisation;	Analysing the context and undertaking a stakeholder mapping; Understanding the interests, challenges, and organisational culture of potential partners; Suggesting appropriate partnership models to achieve your and your partners' objectives;

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[1] If you would like to work on the partnership plan collaboratively with a colleague who is also registered for the Certificate in Partnering Practice, please contact us for guidelines on how to do this.

| | Undertaking a partnership health check to understand to what extent the building blocks are in place – what is working well, what is not working and why;

Thinking through how the partnership could be more ambitious or deliver greater value to you and your partners. | Considering what action is needed to ensure all the building blocks are in place;

Looking at the different ways the partnership could create value. |
|---|---|---|
| Reflection | Considering the partnership from your and partners' perspectives, what are likely to be some of the challenges (both internal and external) to developing / improving the partnership?

What might be some of the key levers you could use?

What might partners, or your own organisation, respond well to, and where might you get pushback? | |
| Action plan | Clearly set out your plan of action:

What are the steps you will take?

What tools / processes will you use?

What do you to hope to achieve by the end of each step?

What does ultimate success look like? | |

Best practice and tips (for both options)

Your assignment should:

- Include a short context-setting introduction;
- Take a critical, analytical approach throughout;
- Explicitly demonstrate the application of your learnings from the training to a "real-world" partnering situation;
- Include a reflection on your own role within (or in relationship to) the partnership(s).

References

The preferred system for referencing is the Harvard System also known as the Author Date Method.

Text references: 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.

Reference lists: The reference list at the end of the essay contains the full details of the book or journal cited. 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.

More detailed guidance can be found here: https://www.open.ac.uk/library/referencing-and-plagiarism/quick-guide-to-harvard-referencing-cite-them-right

*Note: references are **not** included in the total word count for the assignment.*

Certification process and timings

Registration for the CPP

After completion of a partnership training course, participants wishing to undertake the Certificate in Partnering Practice should register directly with TPI (info@tpiglobal.org) or through their organisation if that has been arranged.

Essay / partnership plan outline

Within one month of registration, you are requested to send a one-page outline of your essay or partnership plan (in MS Word). This should include a brief context to your assignment, and an outline showing the structure and main focus points of your essay or partnership plan, including where you will be applying tools, frameworks etc. You will not be assessed on this outline, but you will receive feedback from the TPI assessor to help you write the full paper.

The outline should be sent to info@tpiglobal.org. You should receive feedback within 10 days.

Writing your essay / partnership plan

The satisfactory completion of the reflective essay or partnership plan is essential for the award of the Certificate in Partnering Practice.

Take note of the length of your assignment. If your assignment is substantially shorter than the set limit (2,000-2,500 words), you may not have addressed all the points needed. If it is longer, then you may be asked to revise it. References, brief footnotes, and non-essential annexes can be excluded from the word count.

Your essay or partnership plan should be sent to info@tpiglobal.org within two months of receiving feedback on your outline. You should receive feedback and the assessment result within 14 days.

Assessment

When assessing your essay, the marker will award the Certificate based on your demonstration of 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

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

Certification

Upon successful completion of the certification process, you will receive a formal letter and certificate by email within two weeks of receipt of feedback. If you would like a printed copy of the certificate, please notify us.

Timeframe	Process
	Attendance at TPI training course/registration for CPP
+ 1 month	Submit essay / partnership plan outline to TPI for feedback
+2 months	Submission of final essay/partnership plan to TPI for assessment

Further information

Late submissions

Although TPI will be flexible when there are good reasons for late submissions, this may result in 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 Executive 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.

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 assignment.

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.

If you have any questions, either after reading these guidelines or while preparing your assignment, please message info@tpiglobal.org