

Finance Stream Session

13/07/2021



I haven't got my NHS email, so should I wait to register for CIPFA?

General question asked by **Wenxin W.** | 6 replies



Kirsty W.

Professional Programmes Manager, CIPFA
13/07/2021

Hi, you can register with your personal email and, once you get your NHS email, you can add this to your account



Wenxin W.

13/07/2021

It shows my personal email is not in NHS leadership academy email list, so after I registered, I can't set business account for it.



Kirsty W.

Professional Programmes Manager, CIPFA
13/07/2021

You can join/register as a student with your personal email and, once you have your business email address, you can create a business role.



Wenxin W.

13/07/2021

Ok thank you~~~



Kirsty W.

Professional Programmes Manager, CIPFA
13/07/2021

If you have any issues after this, just drop me an email at kirsty.wall@cipfa.org



Wenxin W.

13/07/2021

Okie, thanks for the help



Was it hard to balance the CIPFA qualification with Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Course

General question asked by **Fawad N.** | 4 replies

Natascha B.



Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Hi Fawad, at particular points in the scheme there may be EGA deadlines and finance exams that fall quite close together, and that can get a bit tricky in terms of balancing them at those points in time. However most of the time on the scheme they are not too bad to balance, perhaps just around exam time it can get more stressful. The good thing is with finance exams you get a set number of study days, and I tend to take annual leave days around exams as well, to alleviate that pressure a bit.



Natascha B.
Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Having said that, if you are good at forward planning, you can get the EGA assignments done well in advance of the deadline, so if the deadline does fall close to the finance exams, you can get EGA out of the way and then concentrate on the exams



Fawad N.
13/07/2021

That sounds like a good idea! thank you for the advice



Natascha B.
Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

No problem! Also if you do get in a really stressful position, you can explore the option of getting an extension to your EGA deadline, and your Regional Trainee Support Manager is a key person to support you if you are finding it difficult.



Does the CIPFA qualification easily translate into the Private Sector or is it only really used within the Public Sector

General question asked by **Sam A.** | 6 replies



Alison S.
Training Delivery Manager, CIPFA
13/07/2021

Hi Sam. Yes, the CIPFA qualification is transferable to the private sector as you will be a chartered accountant with a CCAB qualification that is recognised throughout the world. You'll have the same technical skills as any chartered accountant but with the added insight of understanding the public sector and its pressures and the application of management and other theories in practice.



Sam A.
13/07/2021

Ok thank you!



Sam A.
13/07/2021

I was also told on my welcome call that it may be necessary to take online courses in Microsoft Excel before starting on the scheme - is this true?

Alison S.



Training Delivery Manager, CIPFA
13/07/2021

Not necessary for the CIPFA qualification.



Clare R.
Programme Officer, NHS Leadership Academy
13/07/2021

Sam - your placement will also be best place to offer you any additional training you need and will be helpful in 'training' you in anything you need, so I would encourage you to talk this through with them as and when you need to.



Sam A.
13/07/2021

Ah ok that makes sense thank you for the advice



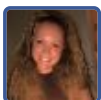
Hello! Question for the trainees - what would you say has been the most challenging aspect of the finance scheme so far?

General question asked by **Orla E.** | 12 replies



Claire W.
GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Hi Orla, thanks for the Q! I'd say personally it has been managing my placement manager & team's expectations of how much I will be in the office whilst placed with them. I think it is important to get the dates in your calendar ASAP (once provided by CIPFA) and share calendars with your placement managers so they always know what you're up too. I have found it easier if my placement manager was a trainee themselves or has had previous trainees. But even if they are not it is easy to overcome.



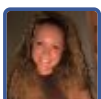
Claire W.
GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Hope that helps, please let me know if you'd like more clarification.



Orla E.
13/07/2021

That's great thank you! Thanks for the calendar tip :)



Claire W.
GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

It's my scapegoat sometimes, "it was in my calendar"



Natascha B.
Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Similar answer from me - last year when the finance lectures restarted in September (you do finance lectures/exams during 2 periods per year: March-June and September-December) I wasn't forthcoming enough with reducing my workload when the lectures started (i.e. handing work over to other colleagues). This meant I had the same workload in

about half the time, so I got quite overworked quite quickly. Was a good learning curve for me to know that in the future I need to be more confident with reducing my workload when finance lectures restart, and keeping good boundaries in place with regards to work-life balance (e.g. no working past 6.30pm).

**Orla E.**

13/07/2021

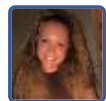
Thats interesting, thank you! Do you mind me asking if it's been difficult/awkward to hand over work to colleagues when lectures and exams have been on or is everyone really understanding about it?

**Natascha B.**

Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I would say it depends on a couple of things: the context of the team (in the example above my team was short staffed so it was quite difficult to pass workload on to other colleagues who already had too much themselves); and the people within the team (if they are previous trainees or have had trainees before they may be more understanding).

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I think it is important to remember, we are in addition to their core staffing and shouldn't be left with ultimate responsibility of doing a task. It is great if we have responsibility of doing something, but if we are unable due to scheme requirements, there should be someone there to take this on.

**Natascha B.**

Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

However I would say you if you come into any issues with it, your first port of call for support is your regional trainee support manager (RTSM) who will be really supportive and really advocate for you, and any big issues they can talk to your manager about it to resolve any issues. Absolutely agree with Claire, that is the way the scheme is meant to work, so that can give you some confidence when handing work back over to other colleagues.

**Orla E.**

13/07/2021

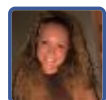
That's really helpful, thank you both!!

**Natascha B.**

Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

Welcome!

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

No probs, good luck on the scheme Orla!



Any advice/tips on how to best prepare ourselves before the scheme commences?

General question asked by **Paul G.** | 12 replies

**Hannah P.**

13/07/2021

Adding on to this, as I have no previous experience in finance is there any preparation you could recommend prior to starting the placement?

**Clare R.**

Programme Officer, NHS Leadership Academy

13/07/2021

Hi Paul, I would say read around the NHS if you are coming from a non-NHS background - the Kings Fund have a lot of great articles and videos that will get you up to date with current news and issues. In terms of Finance, there is nothing to prepare in advance, as you will be taught everything you need once you start on the course.

**Clare R.**

Programme Officer, NHS Leadership Academy

13/07/2021

Hannah - you will be given everything you need once you begin so don't worry about starting early. The course is designed for beginners and takes into account people may not have a previous finance background.

**Paul G.**

13/07/2021

Thanks Clare, I'll make sure to do that!

**Hannah P.**

13/07/2021

Thank you Clare!

**Natascha B.**

Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I also didn't have any finance experience before starting the scheme and that was absolutely no problem at all. If you are keen and do have time/want to do some preparation before starting, I'd say have a play around with Excel and get familiar with how to do different things on it, as you will use it a lot!

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I'd say even having finance experience before starting, don't tell too many people. It's a good opportunity to learn from the basics again (even learning how they do things). It's nice for people not to assume you can do things. You'll only ever impress if you get it quickly too!

**Paul G.**

13/07/2021

Awesome, thank you! Excel was my main concern as well, I'll have a play around just to make sure I'm somewhat comfortable

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I find youtube videos really helpful. I'd say research on how to do VLOOKUPS, Pivot Tables, SUMIF, SUMIFS.

Wenxin W.



13/07/2021

Thank you Claire!

**Natascha B.**

Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

With excel I have only ever learned on the go, so for example I know i want to do something on it, can't quite remember the formula to use, so I search it on google and the answer is always there. Google has all the answers when it comes to excel! If you're struggling though I think there are excel courses you can do - you can ask your placement manager about this, sometimes the trust may have a course or maybe HFMA may do one.

**Paul G.**

13/07/2021

Thanks guys, very helpful to know :)



Is it quite easy to balance studying whilst also working on the scheme?

[General](#) question asked by **Joe D.** | 8 replies

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

Hi Joe, on the scheme you are allocated days off for studying CIPFA which are fixed. As I mentioned to Orlas question, add these to your calendar ASAP and share with managers so they know where you are if not in the office. EGA is manageable as there is time in between each module deadline. If you are struggling with workload have a chat with your placement manager and if they're happy allow you to block out a couple of hours in your diary to focus on EGA every now and then, make the most of it!

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

Each placement manager is different so if it is on offer, make the most of it!

**Joe D.**

13/07/2021

That's great advice thank you! Also, how much choice is there with the flexi placement, in terms of where we can choose to go?

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

It's completely your choice!! I've stayed in the NHS just because it was my preference, but you can do anything (as long as in the UK)

**Hannah P.**

13/07/2021

Hi Claire, how much study time are we allocated for studying CIPFA?

**Joe D.**

13/07/2021

Thankyou!

**Clare R.**

Programme Officer, NHS Leadership Academy

13/07/2021

Hi Hannah - you will get each module teaching day off as study time (usually 2 modules per sitting which roughly translates to 1-2 days per week over 8-12 weeks, with the larger modules taking the longer time. The timetable you will receive from us shortly will outline these dates though, but essentially you will get the module teaching days and then one day before each exam (to be schedule between yourself and your placement) as study leave.

**Hannah P.**

13/07/2021

Okay, thank you for your help Clare



Hello-I wanted to ask what a typical day looks like for a finance trainee and any tips for balancing work loads.

Also, out of interest if you could provide insight into the current working from home/in the office balance at the moment that would be great. Thank you for your time today!

General question asked by **Jasmin W.** | 7 replies

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

Hi Jasmin, thanks for the Q!

It differs quite a lot depending on your placement. I have had the benefit of having a placement manager who will have a meeting coming up and invite me along if he thinks it is beneficial, which I've found really interesting, but my day can be empty and then fill up rather quickly. Whereas another who has let me plan my own working day, so being an organised person, I've put blocks in my diary for doing different tasks. (I've found blocking out diary helps with managing work load, also letting manager know what I've got on my 'to do list').

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

With regards to working from home, again depends on the organisation. Currently at my local CCG the whole organisation is WFH, whereas in the acute trust I have recently left it was your preference, so you could go into the office to get the 'team vibe' if it helped you.

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I chose my Flexi Placement because I could go into the office (after WFH since March 2020), I thought I needed that human interaction today, but now being here for a month I'd like to go back to not having my commute!

Jasmin W.

13/07/2021



That is really helpful thank you for the advice
- Interesting that you have changed minds about your WFH preference!



Claire W.

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Yes, I've done a complete 360. I am more productive from home and can spend more time on personal/scheme stuff when I would be commuting.



Claire W.

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

It does add to the team vibe, but if your team are all WFH then there isn't any point in you going in. I've started in a team WFH and integrated myself well, it won't stop you forming relationships.



Natascha B.

Finance GMTS Trainee, NHS
13/07/2021

Typical day will depend on if you are working in financial management or financial services. I haven't done financial services in my placements yet so can't comment on that, but financial management involves: bigger team meetings with the finance team to understand the key broad things the team are working on, doing month end reconciliations and putting in month end journals (you will learn all about this so don't worry if that doesn't make sense!), meetings with service managers to go over their budgets and look at if they have spent too much or too little in the past month, working on spreadsheets etc.



On the CIPFA powerpoint i got sent. there was a diploma, certificate and professional stage of the qualification.

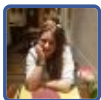
[General](#) question asked by **Joe D.** | 3 replies



Joe D.

13/07/2021

Do we complete all 3 on the scheme?



Kirsty W.

Professional Programmes Manager, CIPFA
13/07/2021

Hi Joe - yes, the three stages (12 modules) form the Professional Qualification which you would take on the scheme



Joe D.

13/07/2021

Brilliant, thank you!



Is the difficulty of CIPFA comparable to the ACA or is it slightly more manageable?

General question asked by **Sam A.** | 1 reply



Alison S.

Training Delivery Manager, CIPFA

13/07/2021

It's very difficult to compare the two as they focus on different things. I would say that each qualification brings its own unique challenges and they are tightly regulated to ensure that the qualification is robustly examined and that there are high levels of integrity throughout the entire process.



Since we are all in different trusts, is there much opportunity for trainees to meet up with each other on the scheme?

General question asked by **Orla E.** | 10 replies



Jasmin W.

13/07/2021

I was going to suggest making a Whatsapp chat for Finance if there was not one already! Perhaps we could organise to meet ourselves if there isn't much formal opportunity to:)



Orla E.

13/07/2021

Yeah that would be great! I'd be very down



Fawad N.

13/07/2021

Here is the whatsapp chat link : chat.whatsapp.com/TLZBakuadY1zvheXiWuRt



Clare R.

Programme Officer, NHS Leadership Academy

13/07/2021

Hi Orla - yes, there will be. You will meet with those in your region on your regional welcome event, you will meet nationally on the national welcome event and there will be some networking built into this. We also encourage trainees to set up WhatsApp groups if not already done - this forum is good place to swap numbers and get this going. You will then be mixed with other trainees from other specialisms within your EGA group and your ALS group so you get to know a good mix of people.



Claire W.

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

It's really helpful to have a finance WhatsApp and a whole-region one, Finance tend to have different issues and queries than the whole region you're in.



Jasmin W.

13/07/2021

Ah Thank you Fawad!

**Orla E.**

13/07/2021

Thanks Fawad!

**Fawad N.**

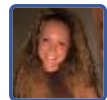
13/07/2021

No worries!

**Sam A.**

13/07/2021

I think it would be a good idea to meet up as a team in person if possible if theres a mutually convenient location for everyone

**Claire W.**

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

When you're fully on the scheme you'll be meeting up regularly for EGA residentials, Experientials, ALS's, CIPFA lectures etc. Hopefully soon you will be face to face!



Do you want to know what support CIPFA provides for student wellbeing?

Just to let you know that CIPFA offers support to students around wellbeing as we recognise the importance of good mental health to our students. We have trained Designated Safeguarding Officers and you can report any safeguarding/wellbeing concerns to them - contact details in your student handbook. As CIPFA Students, you will also be able to access our new wellbeing platform FROG - details on our website. We also have a number of trained Mental Health First Aiders if anyone has a mental health emergency. We also have some wellbeing webinars that you will find in your CIPFA Learning account.

General question asked by **Alison S.** | 4 replies

**Wenxin W.**

13/07/2021

That's really helpful, thank you Alison~

**Sam A.**

13/07/2021

That's really encouraging to hear, thank you

**Jasmin W.**

13/07/2021

Thank you Alison!

**Paul G.**

13/07/2021

Great to know Alison!



At what point on the scheme do we go on our flexi-placements and how long are we on them for?

General question asked by **Sam A.** | 3 replies



Clare R.

Programme Officer, NHS Leadership Academy

13/07/2021

Hi Sam - you will complete your Flexi Placement after you begin your second placement, so a while off yet. Closer to the time, we will send you all of the information you need around this and you will be able to see where you'd like to go and what you'd like to do. These last for 8 weeks and will be in June/July 2023.



Claire W.

GMTS Finance Trainee, NHS

13/07/2021

I would add after Clare's point, make sure you calculate how many days you'll be out of the office during your flexi placement either for study/annual leave/other scheme events taking place. It's a really valuable time so you need to make sure you extend it for the days you will be missing.

If you're organised, plan ahead and give the dates to your placement manager you'll be returning to and Flexi placement when you contact them first to arrange.



Sam A.

13/07/2021

Ah ok that's really helpful, thank you both!