Congratulations to the PMI’s April 2015 Prize Winners

We are delighted to recognise the outstanding performance of the Prize Winners following the April 2015 examinations. In each Module, one candidate is awarded the prize for best performance.

Module 201 (Providing for Retirement) Prize Winner

I have been working in the pensions arena since I graduated from the University of Durham, initially working for a County Council on their Local Government Pension Scheme with a population of over 20,000. I then moved on to Buck Consultants, a Xerox Company, who offered a comprehensive study support package, placing an emphasis on bespoke quality service, as I was keen to progress my studies and attain a nationally recognised qualification to increase my knowledge and progress my career.

With over nine years in the pensions industry, I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to work on a diverse range of schemes and clients. Studying towards the Advanced Diploma in Retirement Benefits has been a key part of expanding the breadth of my technical and practical knowledge, which can be directly applied in my current role as an associate benefit consultant.

I believe the key to exam success is making use of the online assignments and past exam papers, in conjunction with the examiner reports which identify areas that could be expanded on, or which candidates may have overlooked.

Cassandra Pappas
Associate Benefit Consultant
Buck Consultants, a Xerox Company

Module 203 (Defined Benefit Schemes) Prize Winner

I have worked as an administrator for the Universities Superannuation Scheme for the past four years. My mathematical background has helped me in what is a largely calculation-based role, and so the Advanced Diploma exams provide a pleasant break, with barely a number in sight.

The PMI have also helped me by rejuvenating a tired format, and creating examinations that rely largely on recollection; my memory has improved no end.

James Hynes
Administrator
Universities Superannuation Scheme Limited
Module 204 (Defined Contribution [Trust and Contract] Arrangements) Prize Winner

I have worked in the pensions industry for 13 years, working for a large in-house pension scheme for 10 years. I have been with Towers Watson for nearly three years, and they have supported me during my studies. During this time I have worked on defined benefit (DB), defined contribution (DC) and career average schemes, and I have been involved in a variety of projects.

I am currently studying toward the Diploma in Retirement Provision (DRP), with the intention to continue on to complete the Advanced Diploma.

Studying toward the DRP has increased my knowledge of pensions as a whole, which has assisted me in my current role at Towers Watson, and hopefully my ongoing career with them.

Laura Webb
Deputy Team Leader
Towers Watson

Module 205 (Investment) Prize Winner

I am currently a DC consultant at Towers Watson, and have now been working in the pensions industry for four years. My role includes helping clients with trust and contract-based DC arrangements in the design, implementation and ongoing governance of their DC plans.

As I work through the different modules towards the ADRP qualification, I am finding that each module contains well-written, up-to-date material which is relevant to my job role. This has given me a good grounding when discussing current pensions issues with clients. Alongside this I have also been able to use my practical experience at Towers Watson to provide context to the various topics. This has greatly benefited me in preparing for the examinations.

Module 205 (Investment) was particularly interesting as it covered a wide range of investment topics. While some of these areas reinforced the knowledge and understanding I use in my current DC consulting role, other aspects of the module broadened my knowledge. Together this has given me a solid, balanced and well-rounded understanding of investment as a whole.

Joshua Ford
DC Consultant
Towers Watson

Module 301 (Employee Compensation and Benefits) Prize Winner

The Module 302 (Management, Risk and Governance) Prize Winner

Having completed my other diploma modules, I was ready for the challenge of taking on the 302 Module in Management, Risk & Governance. It really helped develop my understanding of pensions risk management, service delivery and general management skills, and encouraged me to think strategically in these areas.

Throughout the module, I received in-house mentoring at LCP from staff who have already completed the Advanced Diploma, and also detailed feedback on the PMI assignments from my tutor, both of which were a great help. I now feel more confident when working on projects, and the knowledge and techniques I’ve gained by doing the qualification will be really useful as I progress my career.

Having won an award for my performance last year, I’m absolutely delighted to have won both the national and regional awards for my performance this year.

Rebecca Pilkington
Associate Consultant, Pensions Administration
LCP

Rebecca has worked at LCP for the last seven years, having started work in pensions in 2006. During this time she has studied and completed both QPA and RPC before moving on to the Advanced Diploma, which she has now completed.
Module 304 (Explaining Pension and Benefit Matters) Prize Winner

After graduating from the University of Leeds I joined Hewitt Bacon and Woodrow (now Aon Hewitt) in 2002 as an actuarial trainee. As a consultant for Aon Hewitt I was able to work with a wide variety of trustee and corporate clients, including project managing significant de-risking projects such as Enhanced Transfer Value and Pension Increase Exchange exercises, before moving to Towers Watson in 2013. My focus is now project work for large administration clients, including technical benefit specifications, new calculation set-ups and the implementation of member self-service web access tools.

I recently re-started studying for the ADRP qualification, as much of the subject material is relevant to my current projects role on the pensions administration side of the business. Although this year’s pre-issued 304 subject topic ‘De-risking Defined Benefit Schemes’ was particularly suited to my previous experience, I found the course materials valuable in broadening my understanding, and helping me to fill knowledge gaps in my current role.

Philippa Badley
Special Projects Coordinator
Towers Watson

Module 305 (International – 2: Managing International Employee Benefits) Prize Winner

I have been an international Employee Benefits specialist for over three years now, and prior to that an expatriate tax and pensions specialist. I currently work in BP’s Global Benefits team, supporting the management of strategy and policy through a centralised governance model, for employee benefits in all countries outside the Americas.

Along with my newly-acquired Diploma in International Employee Benefits (DipIEB), I am a qualified Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Advisor. This range of qualifications helps me to tackle a number of benefits-related issues, including governance, design and financial. In particular, the DipIEB has helped me to develop and refine my thinking on what best practice in the benefits world looks like, and to become a more rounded, effective benefits professional. It provides a great theoretical framework for anyone whose role touches employee benefits, no matter how experienced.

Simon Loveday
Eastern Hemisphere Consultant | Global Benefits
BP Pensions & Benefits

Module 306 (Retail Investment Advice and Regulation) Prize Winner

I have been working in the pensions industry for over six years, mostly in pensions administration. In the last year I’ve moved into a new and enjoyable role as an Associate Consultant for JLT Employee Benefits, working with a variety of trust-based schemes.

I am very fortunate that my pensions career so far has given me a broad understanding of the pensions industry. Studying towards a PMI qualification has been a great help in developing my knowledge and expertise, as the quality and variety of subjects offered by the PMI have provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the issues faced by scheme members, employers and trustees.

The qualification is extremely relevant to my job role, and has also given me the confidence to explain complex pension matters to clients, as well as deal with the challenges that occur on a daily basis.

Edward Beavis
Associate Consultant
JLT Employee Benefits

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