

ACCREDITATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

APPLICATION GUIDELINES TO AID COMPLETION OF FORM: SCHEME SUBMISSIONS

MAKING AN APPLICATION

Applying to a single institution

This form is for organisations seeking accreditation or re-accreditation of a professional development scheme and should be completed and returned to the institution selected. It is advisable to inform and to seek any further advice from the chosen institution prior to completing the form.

Applying to more than one institution

This form facilitates a multiple institution accreditation submission to any of the following Institutions: The Institution of Engineering and Technology, The Institution of Mechanical Engineers, the Institute of Physics and the Royal Aeronautical Society, one of whom you should nominate as the “lead” institution to co-ordinate the accreditation process. You are advised to inform and to seek any further advice from the chosen institutions prior to submitting the completed form.

This same submission can be presented to each institution unless the scheme offers different solutions for different disciplines or different categories of registration. Where this is the case, it may be necessary for separate submissions to be made. Please consult with the selected institutions before attempting to submit a scheme.

Sending in the completed applications

Although this application may be sent electronically it is likely that supporting documentation will take the form of hard copy.

Please make sure that TWO copies of the full application and supporting documentation are supplied to EACH selected institution.

When applying for a single institution accreditation please post THREE hard copies of the full application and supporting documentation.

Accreditation Visit

Where accreditation is sought from more than one institution, a single joint accreditation visit can be arranged to avoid unnecessary disruption to your company and personnel. This will be co-ordinated by the “lead” institution.

THE SECTIONS

Section 1 – Company Information

This section requests basic details about your organisation and contacts, as well as basic information on the scheme being submitted for assessment, including any relevant accreditation history (if any).

Section 2 – Accreditation Criteria:

This section requests information that indicates how the scheme addresses the accreditation criteria. Please provide as clear as possible descriptions in your responses to these. Further guidance on the type of information and the indicators you might consider including in your response is given below.

Section 3 – List of Attachments

Please list any appended supplementary information. This might include a Scheme Manual, Mentor Scheme Notes, examples of logs or records kept for monitoring progress and verified assessment of work completed.

Section 4 – Checklist and Declaration

Please check to ensure all sections have been completed. The application must be signed by an authorised or senior person, e.g. Chief Executive or other person who has the authority to allocate the company resources required to support the scheme.

Special Note: If your scheme uses the IMechE's Monitored Professional Development Scheme (MPDS) please indicate this in your response to IMechE. No further explanation is required where MPDS evidently satisfies the criterion concerned.

DETAILS TO BE CONSIDERED TO AID THE ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHEME

Section 2 Additional Guidance

The questions raised follow an agreed multi-institutional approach to scheme assessment. The first five cover the general operational aspects of the scheme whilst the second five relate to the processes employed.

Q2.1 Track Record

Those seeking accreditation for the first time should state this clearly.

Where possible, responses should show how your organisation has gained a good reputation for engineering training and development, perhaps from previously accredited schemes with a professional institution. In this case it is helpful to include information relating to the success of such a scheme, eg: the number of candidates achieving registration per year, as well as information on current scheme status, or reasons for discontinuing the scheme etc.

It is also helpful, where appropriate, that mention be made of your organisation's involvement with other initiatives, such as Investors in People (IiP) as this may provide additional background on aspects of people development and quality systems to support your application.

Q2.2 Candidate Entry

Responses should indicate whether scheme entrants are at different ages and stages or have different academic qualifications and if so, what methods are used to establish their development needs. It should indicate the rationale behind whether individuals are given different or the same learning and development pathways. It is also helpful to show, where appropriate, how gaps in academic attainment might be tackled within the scheme and how prior knowledge and/or skills are taken into account.

Q2.3 Scheme Content

Responses should detail the scheme, its content and duration. Points that should also be covered include how the scheme develops competence, links to any competency framework and whether the competences required for registration have been allowed for, perhaps by mapping company to registration competences.

It is helpful to show how candidates become familiar with all aspects of any underlying business, process, project, contract, or product cycle, and what scope there is for increasing responsibility and rotational assignments.

Q2.4 Candidate Completion

Responses should indicate the roles that candidates may typically undertake on completing the scheme and stepping forward for registration. This includes sample job descriptions, levels of responsibility and whether progression is possible through similarly supported Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

Q2.5 Learning Environment

Responses should indicate the level of commitment that exists to support the scheme. Where this is shown in the organisation's business plan or mission statement this should be stated. It is important to show how support cascades down through management. Also, to indicate the facilities and infrastructures that are in place to support learning, such as intranet sites or learning centres and any current active involvement with the profession.

Any policies in place that relate to the payment of professional membership fees should also be mentioned.

Q2.6 Candidate Support

Responses should indicate the employer's understanding of the desired outcomes, including satisfying the registration requirements. State who provides support to candidates and what their role is. This should include mentoring/coaching methods and the qualifications/experience/training of those involved. It is also important to show how this operates within the scheme, for example with the use of individual and flexible development plans.

Q2.7 Candidate Assessment

Responses should outline the methods and frequency of assessments employed to ensure candidates are performing. Also an indication of how they gain feedback to keep them on a development track. This may include Performance Reviews, Appraisals, Training and Development Action Plans as well as Competence Records.

Please indicate how competence is defined and assessed to be at a given level within the organisation's performance management system and how this maps to the registration requirements in UK SPEC.

Q2.8 Candidate Records and Scheme Documentation

Responses should cover two aspects.

The first should show how the candidate can gather evidence relating to the registration competence criteria. This may follow a variety of formats that may be translated or put into portfolio format for the purposes of the Professional Review. This evidence should show how records are maintained and updated, and how they are appropriately annotated when verified or assessed by assessors/mentors/sponsors.

The second aspect relates to the scheme documentation including any manual that describes the scheme content and its operation, the roles and responsibilities of those involved, and details of any steering group, mentor or candidate forums aimed at maintaining and improving the scheme.

Q2.9 Scheme Co-ordination and Quality

Responses should outline the control mechanisms and quality systems that are in place to ensure the consistency and integrity of the scheme. This is particularly important where the scheme operates across other divisions or locations. Evidence of auditing processes and self-assessment reports might be included as well as how feedback from all those involved is used to improve the scheme. Registration to any formal quality standards should be stated where relevant.

Q2.10 Risks Factors

Responses should identify those actions or plans in place to address any key factors that might render the scheme ineffective during the 3-5 years a candidate may need to complete IPD. It is helpful to include such aspects as succession planning of key staff and what arrangements are in place to honour the learning contract.

ADDRESSES AND CONTACTS:

The Institution of Engineering and Technology

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Institution of Mechanical Engineers

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Website: www.thempds.org.uk

Institute of Physics

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Royal Aeronautical Society

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