**ACCREDITATION GUIDANCE**

Accreditation is for external clients (e.g. employers, sector bodies, commercial training and development organisations) who wish to accredit their own sector–specific, in-house or generic courses that are not linked to UWTSD validated programmes or modules.

Distinguishing characteristics of this provision include:

* **Teaching**. Delivery of the learning experience will be undertaken by the client.
* **Enrolment and Registration**. The learners will not be enrolled on the UWTSD Student Record System (SITS), but instead will be registered as external learners on SITS upon successful completion. Learners will receive a transcript that states the credits achieved.
* **Programme or Module Learning Outcomes and Content**. The learning outcomes and content are developed by the client and agreed by UWTSD, i.e. not associated with UWTSD modules.
* **Assessment**. Learners undertake assessment designed and first marked by the client (not linked to validated modules). UWTSD moderates the assessment.
* **Exam Board**. The RPEL and Accreditation Board considers the assessment (oversight by the EE associated with claims for non-standard applications for credit).

Formal process for the approval of the proposal (overview) – an executive function

1. Initial accreditation proposals should be approved by the Senior Leadership Team via the Permission to Engage with a Potential Accreditation Client form ([Appendix AC9](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/4593/download?attachment)). This initial stage is intended to briefly outline the proposal and seek permission to engage further with the client. This (i) considers the value and fit with UWTSD strategic objectives and avoids accreditation tutors undertaking unnecessary work, (ii) highlights areas of risk that need extra intervention/mitigation for consideration, (iii) maintains harmony in the relationship with the client and (iv) protects UWTSD from reputational damage.
2. Outcomes from due diligence and an Agreement to Supply Services must be submitted for consideration by the Due Diligence Group.
3. Appendix [AC2 Proposal for Accreditation](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1752/download?attachment) and associated documentation must be submitted for consideration by the Curriculum Planning Group (CPG) - or Chair, where time to market is critical.
4. Finally, the AC2 is noted *or* approved by the Academic Standards Committee, as appropriate.
5. A flowchart of the approval stages in the accreditation process is provided in Annex 1.

General guidance for developing the proposal

1. Accreditation clients should be reputable and an established organisation (not individuals).
2. The relevant Institute should allocate an accreditation tutor to the client/proposal.
3. The relevant Institute must have suitable occupational competence in the subject for accreditation and moderation. Permission to recruit additional expertise must be sought with HR and/or Finance Department, as appropriate. This additional expertise must be through a University employment relationship, e.g. cannot be a Professor of Practice, and there should be no conflicts of interest.
4. Accreditation cohort numbers should be viable. Typically, in the region of a minimum of 12 learners. However, it is recognised that there may be other strategic reasons for the proposal, which should be outlined in the AC2 form.
5. The client’s learners are not UWTSD students, therefore, they do not have access to UWTSD resources and facilities, e.g. the library. Clients must provide their own suitable learning resources, facilities, etc.
6. The University’s accreditation costing model should be used in determining costs and revenue. See Annex 2.

Working with the client

1. If the client’s course *already* *exists,* in the initial stages, accreditation tutors must review the course (e.g. learning outcomes, content and assessment) to determine the comparable HE level (as per [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (qaa.ac.uk)](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/the-frameworks-for-higher-education-qualifications-of-uk-degree-awarding-bodies-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=3562b281_11)) and credit-worthiness (e.g. volume of assessment as prescribed in [PV4 Assessment Equivalence Policy](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1935/download?attachment)). Other checks include:

* the quality of learning materials;
* a review of marketing materials;
* the suitability of tutors to deliver (CV check, academic ability, and ability to assess and mark fairly and to University standard – additional training may be offered to the client).

1. Sometimes, negotiations with the client are necessary to tweak aspects of their provision in accord with HE norms.
2. Accreditation tutors should support the client in the design of *new* courses, e.g. how to write learning outcomes at the appropriate level, programme design, volume and credit rating. Clients may adapt existing UWTSD modules for their learners (e.g. based on modules in the Professional Practice Framework).
3. The client must develop an approved assessment specification. AQH appendix [GA36](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/2602/download?attachment) can be used by way of best practice. The client should explicitly state in the specification the expectations of the tasks, a word count (if applicable), a submission deadline together with any regulations that may be applied (which could alternatively be detailed in a supplementary document); this includes, for example and where relevant, the pass mark, mitigating circumstances procedures, penalties for late submissions, number of permitted resit opportunities, word count penalties and any other conditions or penalties that may be applied.
4. Accreditation tutors should support the client in the design of suitable assessment / marking criteria. UWTSD’s [GA35 generic assessment criteria](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1893/download?attachment)  may be used or adapted for this purpose.
5. During client negotiations, Appendix [AC2a Client Proposal for Accreditation](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1762/download?attachment) must be used to gather supporting information for the due diligence.

Due diligence and agreements

1. The accreditation tutor should undertake proportionate academic, legal and financial due diligence. See [AC4 Due Diligence (accreditation of commercial learning programmes)](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1765/download?attachment) for guidance on this activity. The outcomes and evidence of due diligence must be submitted to the Due Diligence Group for consideration and approval, prior to seeking CPG approval.
2. An Agreement to Supply Services (Appendix AC10) must be produced, (including a service level agreement and a costs schedule) for a typically 5-year agreement. This details roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders, *inter alia*. This Agreement must be submitted to the Due Diligence Group for consideration, prior to seeking CPG approval.

Submission of proposal to CPG

1. The information gathered from the client and the due diligence is then summarised into Appendix [AC2 Proposal for Accreditation](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1752/download?attachment), which includes a risk assessment and the costing model. This form must be approved by the Dean prior to submission to the CPG.

Information that must be submitted to CPG includes:

* AC2 Proposal for Accreditation;
* AC2a Client Proposal for Accreditation;
* Approved due diligence report or portfolio, based on the information required in [AC4 Due Diligence (accreditation of commercial learning programmes)](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/1765/download?attachment);
* Approved Agreement to Supply Services;
* Training materials or access to the training materials;
* Assessment specification;
* Assessment criteria.

CPG may require additional information before making a decision.

Post-CPG approval procedures

1. Once the proposal is approved by CPG, it progresses to ASC for *noting* (if nothing has changed since CPG approval) or for *approval* (if assessment specification/criteria have changed or were not originally provided to CPG). The accreditation tutor prepares a committee coversheet for ASC that contains the recommendation to note or approve the accreditation together with the approved AC2. ASC will then inform the RPEL and Accreditation Board of the approved proposal.
2. Once an application is approved, the [UWTSD Branding Guidelines](https://uowtsd.sharepoint.com/staffmyday/corporatecomms/Documents/UWTSD-branding-guidelines.pdf) and [‘use of logo’ request form](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fforms.office.com%2Fe%2F7pAhdTTihp&data=05%7C02%7CArwel.Lloyd%40uwtsd.ac.uk%7Cd0e7b8ef5ac04c66581508dc8acaf153%7C4e0f11f9046e45059cb8db2152311e21%7C0%7C0%7C638537851432805310%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=AxCcx%2Fc2TsoO3Fh9vzIjybdoEWInjboJH%2FcactQ9qvc%3D&reserved=0) should be forwarded to the client with the Agreement to Supply Services to enable them to market their newly accredited programme.

Recruitment and Registration

1. The accredited provider is responsible for recruitment for the provision. The recruitment to the provision is normally not advertised publicly and applications and registration on the course will be limited by the arrangements made with accredited provider. The accredited provider organisation will be responsible for registration of learners as specified in the Service Level Agreement. Upon successful completion, learners are registered on the Student Records System (SITS) for the purpose the provision of certificates or transcripts as relevant. If this leads to a named award, the procedures for validation apply as outlined in Chapter 4 of Academic Quality Handbook.

Accredited programme implementation and moderation

1. The client delivers their accredited programme. The accreditation tutor maintains contact with the client during the delivery to provide support, troubleshoot, and to ensure that quality is maintained. This can include observation of the learning experience.
2. The client marks the learner’s assessment according to the assessment criteria. Marking is on a pass / fail basis but a percentage mark may be given to learners by the tutor to indicate the level of achievement.
3. The accreditation tutor moderates the assessment and completes a whole-cohort moderation summary that details, *inter alia,* learner names, marks/grades awarded, whether a student has exceeded the word count, if applicable, any penalties, feedback to the client, etc. The accreditation tutor’s role will include:

* Moderating the submitted work by the learners on the accredited provision;
* Reviewing learner feedback provided at the completion of every cohort;
* Ensuring that accurate information is provided to Institute, Registry and RPEL and Accreditation Board as appropriate;
* Liaising with the lead on the accredited provision in relation to all matters pertaining to the accreditation and academic standards;
* Reporting annually to Academic Standards Committee (ASC) on its operation.

1. A suitable sample of moderated work must be submitted to the Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning and Accreditation Board (RPELA) for consideration. For the first cohort, all learner work is moderated and submitted to RPELA Board. For subsequent cohorts, approximately 10% or minimum six scripts (whichever is the highest) of the work will be sampled, unless the accreditation tutor identifies issues that warrant the whole cohort being sampled. The RPELA Board acts as the examining board and has External Examiner(s) as members. The items that must be submitted to the RPELA Board include:

* Assessment specification;
* Assessment criteria;
* Moderation summary sheet;
* Access to the learner submissions;
* Committee coversheet to explain the proposal and a recommendation for approval.

1. A Learner Registration Form ([Appendix AC11](https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/media/4622/download?attachment)) is completed for each learner when their assessment is submitted for moderation. This must be accompanied by a copy of a valid personal ID for each learner (e.g. a driving licence or passport). The form and ID must be submitted to the Secretary of the RPELA Board, alongside the moderated work.
2. If the RPELA Board is satisfied that the assessment meets all criteria for a pass, then for each successful learner, the secretary of the RPELA Board will forward the ‘Learner Registration Form’ to Registry for the creation of a learner record to enable the transcript to be issued.
3. Accreditation is normally for 5 years, after which, an application must be made for re-accreditation. Re-accreditation will involve the submission of an application form, an updated portfolio and a review with the Institute. Applications will be submitted to the Curriculum Planning Group for approval.
4. Programmes are reviewed annually, and clients must report any material changes between accreditations.

Payment of fees and cost schedule

1. *One-off fees*: An initial accreditation fee is paid on submission of the client’s proposal (AC2a and supporting documents), and a second fee is required upon CPG approval of the application (AC2). The accreditation tutor will ask the client to raise a purchase order (PO). Upon receipt of the PO number, the tutor completes a form to raise an invoice, which must be approved by the budget holder (e.g. an Academic Director).

*Learner/cohort fees*: For each learner cohort, a fee is payable on submission of the assessments for the cost of moderation, board scrutiny and for the issue of the transcript. The process for this is as described previously.

1. A schedule of fees is detailed in Annex 2. This is reviewed annually.

**ANNEX 1 - Flowchart of the approval stages in the accreditation process**

Approval sought from **Senior Leadership Team**

Develop Permission to Engage with Potential Accreditation Client form

**CPG** considers proposal

Approval given, Institute Accreditation Tutor to work with client to develop AC2a client application for accreditation (with supporting documents) and gather AC4 Due Diligence information (with supporting documents)

Approval given, Accreditation Tutor to develop AC2 Accreditation Proposal (with supporting documents)

Due Diligence report and Agreement to Supply form considered by **Due Diligence Group**

Institute Accreditation Tutor to prepare a report on Due Diligence, an Agreement to Supply form and a committee coversheet

No approval given, no further action on accreditation

No approval given, application does not continue

Approval given, **Academic Standards Committee** notes the approval, or is asked to approve if the assessment specification/criteria have changed or were not originally provided to CPG

Note: This process separates the executive business decisions (SLT, DDG, CPG) from the academic quality assurance process. The RPEL and Accreditation Board is no longer part of the approval process and acts in an ‘exam board’ role after moderation by the Accreditation Tutor is carried out on any submissions

**ANNEX 2 - Schedule of Charges from 4 September 2024**

**Accreditation of Commercial Learning and Development Programme**

**A) Accreditation (standard, single course)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Initial contact, exploratory discussion including qualifying criteria - Information pack - Proposal review, and guidance on preparing application | no fee |
| 2. Review of client application | £500 |
| 3. Administration and accreditation - quality assurance of the course level, content, structure, materials and delivery processes and the submission of the application to the relevant university boards for approval. | £3500 |

**B) Accreditation multiple courses**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Initial contact, exploratory discussion including qualifying criteria - Information pack - Proposal review, and guidance on preparing application | no fee |
| 2. Review of client application  (one application will cover multiple courses) | £500 |
| 3. Administration and accreditation - quality assurance of the course level, content, structure, materials and delivery processes and the submission of the application to the relevant university boards for approval. | £3500 for first course |
| 4. Administration and accreditation of additional courses | £1000 per additional course |

**C) Moderation, Approval by Accreditation Board and Certification**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. QA monitoring (external verification) and sampling (variable) for each cohort (includes moderation by Accreditation Service, referral to RPEL and Accreditation Board for scrutiny and providing transcript and Certificate of completion. | £125 per learner  Minimum charge of £1250 per cohort. |

**D) Other costs (as required)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Additional training for   * design and development of programme materials; * assessment and feedback skills and practice; * any other areas.   for up to ten people where delivery and assessment is done by clients’ staff or agents. | £675 per day |
| 2.Any courses requiring specialist subject matter expertise beyond that available within the relevant Institute would incur an additional cost. | Accreditation tutors will liaise with the Finance department on a case-by-case basis |

**E) Re-accreditation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. All accredited courses/programmes will be subject to re-accreditation every five years.  2. Programmes are reviewed annually and clients must report any material changes between reviews. | £1,500  No charge unless changes to programme require re-accreditation. |