



The
Chartered
Society of
Forensic
Sciences

Brief for New Assessors on Educational Accreditation Visits

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Introductory points for new assessors on behalf of the Chair of the Accreditation Sub Committee (ASC) and the Panel Chair

Hello,

Welcome as an assessor for Educational Course Accreditation – Accreditation and/or Re-Accreditation.

For your first visit we try and arrange this to be a reaccreditation as the course is already accredited and, in theory, should still continue to be. Here are a few introductory points.

1. Katharine and the Chair of the ASC agree the panel well in advance – comprising a Panel Chair and, ideally, an assessor (academic) and a second assessor (practitioner).
2. You will be sent (electronically) all the submitted programme paperwork - this is sorted by Katharine who provides the University with a list!
3. You are expected to read all the paperwork to get a feel for the programme (BSc/MSci/MSc). It is good practice, as you read the various documents to note down the good points, queries, things that you could consider good practice or commendations. There is a template for this and it helps hugely later in the process.
4. It is important that you agree with the Panel Chair which one of the component standards you would like to take the lead in. As this is your first assessment the Panel Chair would normally ask which area you would like to lead but don't be afraid to volunteer your area early on. This means that while you are doing a general read you can also start to develop your queries on your specific area. It's worth checking their matrix for their examples of how the standards are met but you may take a different view.
5. You are expected to submit your template to the Panel Chair a week before the event.
6. Normally the full panel meet the evening before the event, over dinner, to talk through the templates and agreed the format and key questions to be asked and importantly the areas and questions you will be asking.
7. The panel Chair will run through the day and who does what. In general the events runs as follows:- panel pre meet, meet with senior staff, meet teaching staff, meet students (usually over lunch), see facilities and a final meet.
8. Domestic – Katharine will book any accommodation required. You will need to sort your own travel arrangements.

The preparation for the event is in your own time and at your own pace although the fee allows for one days preparation. The actual event is pretty full-on but enjoyable – so enjoy.

Brian Rankin (Chair of Quality Standards)

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Introductory assessor panel points on behalf of the Panel Chair

1. The programme starts with a meeting with Senior Staff – this largely focuses on resource issues and the Panel Chair tends to take the lead in the questions for this meeting.
2. The next meeting is with the teaching staff. This is where you will each have the opportunity to raise questions in general on the forensic provision and on your “specific” Component Standard. The Panel Chair would join in with general questions more to do with content and delivery, staff development etc.
3. The final formal meeting is with the students. Generally one of the assessors (not the Panel Chair) takes on this role as Chair for this session (please feel free to volunteer) – this allows the Panel Chair to take full notes on the discussion (see next point). You will probably pick up various questions from your reading. The questions/prompts can be very general and a mix of open and closed such as: Why choose this course? Are the staff approachable? What’s good about this course? What’s not so good about this course? How do you get your project title? Do you get hands on the analytical equipment? Do you get opportunities to attend activities outside the University? Are there any outside speakers?
4. The Panel Chair will produce all sections of the Recommendation Report with the exception of a section on Component A and Component B which each assessor would submit. This would normally be no more than a page in length and covers the component standards. Ideally as free flowing text as opposed to bullet points. Whilst each assessor has a particular Component Standard on which to lead discussion, we should each cover all aspects of the documents for the discussion sessions.
5. The Panel Chairs often have a number of visits close together, so they tend to have a copy of a draft Report to you for your comments within a day or two of the Visit. The quicker we can get this to Katharine the better all round, so if you are able to produce your section (~ three-quarters of a page) during the day then that would be great. There is time during the day and this way you are pretty much finished on the day.
6. There is also a tour of the facilities which can be carried out individually or as a group depending on the type of facilities or our own special interests. This can be decided on the day.
7. The other time slots are for the panel to be in the base room looking at student work *etc.* and discussing any key issues. One thing that we have to complete by the end of the day is the formal list of Conditions/Requirements – if any – and the Recommendations/Commendations.
8. The final meeting at about 1530 just provides an opportunity to thank them for the documents *etc.* and for the hospitality, as we are not able to inform them of the outcome until the Recommendation Report is formally approved by the Accreditation Sub Committee.
9. There is also a template to complete on how the whole event / experience went – this helps our future planning, practice and process.

Professor Charlie Bryce (Panel Chair)