Guidelines for Assessors when Completing an Educational Accreditation or Reaccreditation Recommendation Report

1. Executive Summary

The summary outcomes; any conditions[1], requirements[2], recommendations[3] or commendations[4] must be included here.

There is no need to write anything other than the outcomes above, unless the report author particularly wants to convey a message to the ASC or future assessors. The panel recommendations in relation to degree programmes and component standards to be accredited should be clear from the table on the front page of the report and there is no need to reiterate them here.

The conditions, requirements, recommendations and commendations are the only part of the report that are transferred into the outcome letter which is sent to the institution. Therefore these outcomes should be 'stand-alone' i.e. understandable to the institution without any further context which may be provided in the body of the report.

The executive summary should incorporate a university overview if for a first accreditation visit. A university overview is **not** required for a reaccreditation visit.

2. The Programmes

For reaccreditations, there should be a clear understanding that only changes since the last (re)accreditation are covered and material from previous reports is not repeated.
A student numbers table should be included.

A further table/diagram of the programme structure would be helpful to the reader in understanding how the programme works, especially if there are multiple programmes with some shared units. If possible, a column should be added to this table to indicate the changes to the programme since the last review and these could be expanded as footnotes. For a reaccreditation with minimal changes to the programme structure, this section may be very short.

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[1] Condition - must be achieved prior to the educational accreditation being awarded. Evidence to be provided to the Society before the award will be granted.

[2] Requirements – educational accreditation is being granted on the understanding that the post accreditation requirements must be met prior to the next surveillance visit. If this is not successfully evidenced at the next review accreditation will be withdrawn. The client may opt to have the option to refuse the accreditation at this stage and opt for a pre-condition. For a requirement, an institution is often asked to provide an action plan with a timescale in keeping with the issue and the academic timetable.

[3] Recommendations are seen a suggestions of ways of improving your service offering. You are not obliged to implement these changes but you will be required to respond to these at your next review point. If you decide you cannot implement these recommendations then the rationale for that decision will be required.

[4] Commendations are examples of excellent/innovative practice. Over time such examples may become standard practice in forensic education. At that point the commendation would deemed to be no longer valid.

3. Component Standards

Include tour/review of facilities if significant under the relevant standard and any lists of facilities should be added as an appendix.

This should be an overview summary of each component standard and not a repeat of the information in the matrix. Any issues or progress should be highlighted and any other information that would be particularly helpful to future assessors. Avoid references to individual modules unless there is a specific reason for doing so.

For a straight forward review of a component standard, this section may only consist of a few sentences. The panel chair should give guidance about the expected word count for this section to the assessors on the team.

4. Meeting with the Senior Management

Reflect on the institutional strategy for forensic science, resources (human and physical), staff development and student enrolments. The strategy provided by the institution could be added as an appendix if necessary.

5. Meeting with Programme Teaching Team
This section should include information on:
- Good Practice/Programme Enhancement as identified by the teaching team ()
- Specific issues identified by the panel for discussion and responses from the teaching team

6. Meeting with Students

Please note that recommendation reports will be read usually by the Chair of ASC before being fully circulated.

Helen Davies
Chair of Accreditation Sub-Committee