

Supporting applicants for accreditation – a guide for members

Professional Standards – November 2011
Version 3

Introduction

BACP is committed to ensuring equality of access to its products and services for all members and to ensure reasonable adjustments are provided to facilitate this.

Purpose

This document sets out the support available to applicants with disabilities who wish to apply for accreditation.

BACP in particular Professional Standards recognise that the Accreditation process may pose particular challenges for some applicants with certain disabilities. Therefore we positively encourage the disclosure of disabilities so as to ensure that individual needs can be met and reasonable adjustments made. We fully understand that some members may not wish to disclose their disability, but hope that by relating disclosure to improved services and provision more applicants may be willing to share their needs with us. Non-disclosure may also result in us failing to meet the individual needs of the applicant which BACP seeks to avoid.

The legal position

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in employment. Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful for an employer to:

- ✓ Treat a disabled employee less favourably, simply because of their impairment, i.e. worse than someone without that impairment when all surrounding circumstances, including the abilities of the disabled person, are the same. This type of direct discrimination is unlawful and cannot be justified
- ✓ Treat a disabled person less favourably for a reason related to their impairment unless the treatment can be justified. Less favourable treatment can only be justified if there is a material and substantial reason for it
- ✓ Harass an employee because of their impairment

Definition of disability under the Act

The Equality Act 2010 gives rights to disabled people who have, or have had, an impairment or condition which makes it difficult for them to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The term “disabled” covers both physical and mental impairments that have a substantial and long-term (i.e. has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months) effect. Normal day-to-day activities are ones that may involve:

- ✓ Mobility
- ✓ Manual dexterity
- ✓ Physical co-ordination
- ✓ Continence

- ✓ Ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- ✓ Speech, hearing or eyesight
- ✓ Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- ✓ Perception of the risk of physical danger

Although the Equality Act has removed this list and says that it is enough to show that a person's ability to carry out everyday activities is badly affected by their disability, it is still helpful to refer to when deciding whether or not someone fits the definition of disability.

General Considerations

Many applicants with disabilities will be able to engage fully with the accreditation process with no additional help or support. The application process is designed so that there are no pressures of time and very few requirements to present information in a specified way, therefore applicants with physical disabilities, assuming they have adaptive technologies, should be able to complete the process successfully.

Applicants who may have particular difficulties are those for whom presentation of written material, either hand-written or typed, is problematic.

Where an applicant has advised the Professional Standards team that they have a disability which may affect their application, this information will

be forwarded with their application for assessment. All BACP assessors are familiar with the requirement to note the disability and to consider this when making their assessments.

Support Available

Applicants for accreditation who require additional support may apply in writing in advance of making their application, for a reduction in the application fee of £45. This amount is in recognition that additional support can incur costs over and above that is normally required. It is acknowledged that this may not cover all additional costs involved to an applicant.

This fee reduction is only awarded once – that is, if the reduction is applied for on initial application it cannot be awarded for resubmissions as well. However, if an applicant did not apply for the reduction when they made their initial application, they may apply for it if they need to resubmit.

The fee reduction cannot be claimed retrospectively.

Applicants should address their request in writing (which can be either by letter or by e-mail) to the Head of Professional Standards and set out the additional support they require. In the case of applicants with dyslexia, a copy of either the summary or the report of a formal assessment for dyslexia should be included with the application.

BACP runs many workshops and a small number of surgeries across the

UK to help members prepare for making an application for accreditation. Further details can be obtained by contacting our Customer Service Team or visiting the Events section of the website.

BACP staff are able to provide general advice on completing an application but are not able to assist by reading, clarifying or explaining the criteria. Nor are they able to provide access to assessors outside of the workshop or surgery events.

Applicants who have difficulty in reading and/or understanding the application pack can receive this either in hard copy or electronically. On request, hard copies can be made available in different fonts/print size/coloured paper etc.

Applicants with reading or understanding difficulties who wish to use an electronic copy on a PC to complete their application are encouraged to access screen reading software. Many free versions are available via the internet. Some websites which offer a variety of options are www.ebility.com or www.dyslexia.com/helpread. Other sites offer only their own version, for example www.screenreader.net. BACP does not endorse any of these products, nor can they offer any technical assistance with these products. Applicants should contact the relevant provider directly.

Applicants should also be encouraged to use existing sources of support such as supervisors, colleagues, peers.

Applicants may submit their application in any suitable medium which enables the assessors to read, see or hear their material.


Record Keeping


Whilst your application is in process, all documentation relating to the application must be retained with the application. Once the application has been fully processed, all information relating to the applicants disability must be destroyed in line with normal record destruction processes.

On receipt of an application for a reduced fee, a note must be made on the members CONCEPT (electronic membership) record for audit purposes.

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