# Course Accreditation Scheme

## Guide to applying

### Preparing to make your application

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The pre-application preparation stage is important for getting the application right ahead of its submission.

Please note that we are currently unable to accept applications from courses which have not yet graduated a cohort of students.

Please read each criterion carefully - consider and decide if the course is meeting it in full and whether this can be evidenced clearly. These two points will help you consider your course in the context of the application form:

***1. What description or explanation could you provide about how the course is meeting that criterion?***

Bear in mind that our assessors do not have any previous knowledge of your course. When you complete the application form, this sort of explanation will be required alongside each criterion. They are known as self-statements.

***2. What actual evidence could you provide to support the explanation and to demonstrate that the course is meeting the criterion in practice?***

Self-statements must be accompanied by a sufficient piece of evidence which supports them. To help the assessment process, please label your appendices clearly and cross reference accurately, so that the assessors can find each piece quickly and easily amongst all the evidence submitted in support of the application (portfolio of evidence).

### How to fill out your application – getting the basics right

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**How much information?**

Consider the amount of material you could send through compared to how much information the assessor really needs to see. If you are referring us to something very straightforward such as the existence of a complaints policy, you can signpost us to where it is on a website (hyperlink) rather than send it as a separate file appendix. Extracts might be sent instead of whole documents.

**Completing the application form:**

* All boxes in the form should expand automatically to fit your responses as you type. The form has been designed specifically for A4 portrait format. Please do not alter the wording, orientation of the form or modify it by deleting boxes, changing its content, size or format or save it as another type of file as it may become incompatible with our office software.
* Please bear in mind that it is your particular course that we are assessing. If your course is based on the requirements of a national body, awarding body or network organisation, we will need to consider the documentation published specifically by you, the training provider, regarding the delivery of your course. In other words, we are not assessing the requirements and documentation of the awarding/other body; we are assessing your particular delivery of the course as the training provider
* When completing the application form, keep a copy of the current course accreditation criteria document next to you at all times and refer to it regularly to ensure that the information that you are providing is aligned with the necessary requirements.
* When completing the application form, for each criterion (underneath the heading ‘How is this criterion met?) you will need to type an explanation of how the course meets its requirements. This explanation is known as your ‘self-statement’.
* Next, you need to type an exact and specific cross-reference into the section entitled ‘Reference to supporting evidence’, to direct the assessor to the precise location of the corresponding piece of supporting evidence. You may also wish to include hyperlinks to the specific evidence in this section.
* Make sure that all evidence is clearly labelled and correctly cross-referenced in the application form – **please refer to the rest of this document for more detailed guidance on collating your application and the portfolio of evidence.**
* Please leave all other sections on the application form blank (e.g., Assessor comments and Assessor decision) and do not delete them as they will be used for the assessor’s report.
* It is essential that we receive the completed application form electronically as a Microsoft Word document, so please do not change or convert the file in any way (i.e., don’t write protect it or save as a PDF).

### What makes a good application?

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*Hints and tips from the assessment team*

* **Clear and explanatory self-statements:** they must contain enough information for the assessors to know how the course is meeting a criterion and that they will make sense to the assessors.
* **Sufficient evidence:** make sure that all the evidence referenced is included with the application and that what is being submitted is enough to show that the course is doing what it says it is doing. However, if the relevant information can be found on various documents, you only need to reference the main one.
* **Specific cross-referencing:** the assessors need to locate the information easily within the evidence documentation and go to exactly where it appears within a document or page (e.g., page number/paragraph). Please note that the response 'see course handbook' is not an exact location; assessors must be able to refer to the evidence quickly rather than having to search pages or whole documents for the necessary evidence. If the evidence is a brief sentence embedded within a document, please indicate exactly where this can be found or highlight it.
* **Well-organised and assembled:** the application must be in order, be clearly labelled and have page numbering etc.

We highly recommend that you set sufficient time aside to familiarise yourself with the requirements and to prepare, write, evidence and assemble your application. It is better to take your time and get things right than submit an application that has been rushed.

Poor quality applications will be returned for revision if they are incomplete, do not have clear, specific referencing or the evidence is poorly collated which, in turn, will delay the assessment process.

Please note that we cannot accept evidence that is located on staff only sections of websites which require a log in and/or Moodle/Blackboard etc. In that case, you would either have to take a screenshot of the evidence or copy and paste the information into a separate document.

**Staff details**

Please fill in the template for submitting an overview of the course staff team ([*Course Staff Overview*](https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/apply/)) which will help us assess the eligibility criteria A5 and A6.

Also, applications must include sufficient details of all course staff, including training, qualifications, accredited/registered status with either BACP or another professional body and relevant work experience.

Professional staff CVs (without personal details) can be included if the information required above is included and clearly presented, otherwise, the information required can be submitted using the application document [*Team Member Profile*](https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/apply/).

It is a course’s responsibility to comply with the [Information Commissioner's Office](https://ico.org.uk/) (ICO) requirements when sharing personal data for accreditation purposes.

**Other reports**

Please include the current or most recent report from the external examiner and/or consultant and an indication of how this feedback and evaluation has been integrated into the course.

### Part A: Eligibility criteria – specific guidance

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Our [Eligibility Guide](https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/apply/) has been designed to get you working on your course’s eligibility for accreditation against Criteria A1 – A9.

When the criteria are met in full, we will report back to you and provide a deadline for you to submit Part B of the application process.

### Part B: Course delivery criteria – specific guidance

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Over time, the assessment team have picked up on a number of criteria that can cause difficulties for courses and where pitfalls may arise.

The most common mistake overall tends to be when courses do not respond specifically to the criterion and, where relevant, any respective sub-criteria. Another is where courses do not provide actual evidence to support self-statements about how the course addresses these issues. In addition, misunderstandings may occur regarding the type of evidence that assessors might be looking for in relation to each criterion.

In light of this, and to pre-empt any potential issues, the assessors have compiled [guidance documents](https://www.bacp.co.uk/membership/organisational-membership/course-accreditation/apply/) specific to the Course Delivery Criteria (B1-9). The guides aim to identify those criteria that most often cause problems for courses, to highlight some of the common pitfalls and provide additional guidance in order to facilitate the application and assessment process.

### The application form – real examples

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Due to the limits on their assessment time, assessors are unable to give feedback about every criterion. However, they will always offer an explanation where a criterion is not met in full (conditions) and make recommendations where there is room for development. Consequently, most criteria that have been met will not show any corresponding comments.

***Example of a where a criterion is met.***

#### B8.2

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| **The course must give students regular opportunities to evaluate their training experiences and give feedback on the course.** |
| **How is this criterion met?** |
| Various opportunities are provided for students to evaluate their training experiences and provide feedback on the course, e.g. end of term meetings, end of term individual tutorials with the Training Manager. Students can also comment on the feedback offered in the end of term and end of course reports from seminar leaders, tutors and supervisors. |
| **Reference to supporting evidence** |
| 5C, Course Handbook, part 12, 10A – C, 12B, 13A - D |
| **Assessor comments** *- course to leave blank* |
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| **Assessor decision** *- course to leave blank* |
| Met |

***Example of a recommendation***

#### B4.12

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| **The course must ensure that students have regular and sufficient supervision in line with the requirements of the Ethical Framework. A mix of individual and group supervision is strongly recommended.** |
| **How is this criterion met?** |
| All of our placements offer group or individual supervision - the supervision requirements are set out in the Placement Contract |
| **Reference to supporting evidence** |
| Section 7: “Placement Contract” |
| **Assessor comments** *- course to leave blank* |
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| **Assessor decision** *- course to leave blank* |
| Met  **Recommendation:** It is strongly recommended that students who are only receiving group supervision in their placement also have access to individual supervision. Please address this recommendation in the next annual review. |

***Example of where a criterion has not been met, with accompanying condition and deadline***

#### B4.17

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| **The boundaries of supervision on the course and supervision at the placement provider must also be specified. This contract must include provision for the supervisor to report concerns about any aspect of the student’s practice.** |
| **How is this criterion met?** |
| Supervision is not provided by the course. Procedures for the supervisor to report concerns about any aspect of the student’s practice are explained in the Student Handbook and Supervision Information Sheet – a copy is provided to each supervisor each year. |
| **Reference to supporting evidence** |
| Student Handbook pages 25, 30-35 and Appendix D; Supervision Information Sheet. |
| **Assessor comments** *- course to leave blank* |
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| **Assessor decision** *- course to leave blank* |
| **Not met – Condition:** that the course amends the supervision contract so that it details the provision for the supervisor to report concerns about any aspect of the student’s practice. |

### Part C: Course Visit – specific guidance

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Generally, completed evaluation forms, coursework and other potentially sensitive materials should be presented at the assessment visit rather than included with the application.

### Sending your finalised submission to BACP

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**Intention to Apply**

**It is important that you notify us of your intention to apply for accreditation, preferably two months before your anticipated submission date. This will allow time for us to set up a secure portal for you to upload your documents and for us to plan time with assessors. Please note that a declaration of intent does not obligate you to apply for accreditation. If your plans change at any stage, please let us know so we can release your booking. Please contact us via email:** [accred.course@bacp.co.uk](mailto:accred.course@bacp.co.uk)

**Uploading your completed application**

**Once you have completed your application, you can upload the application form and supporting documents into your secure One Drive folder via the link supplied to you. Don’t forget that you will have to pass Part A (Eligibility Criteria) first before you can submit Part B (Delivery Criteria).**

#### Information and assistance

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Please contact the office team for further information or if you wish to discuss any part of your application. Email: [accred.course@bacp.co.uk](mailto:accred.course@bacp.co.uk)

If you have further questions regarding evidencing specific criteria, you can arrange for a free 45-minute telesurgery with one of our assessors (once you have passed Part A of the application). Please refer to our Course Accreditation Telesurgery Guide for further information.

**Date: July 2021**

**Review date: July 2024**