

ppa

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Accreditation Explained

A Guide for Journalism Training Providers



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Accreditation explained

Introduction

Responding to the extraordinary pace of change in media is challenging, but essential - particularly for courses looking to place their graduates with media owners in our industry.

It is essential for the talent supply chain to develop a comprehensive and deep understanding of the trends in the market and industry's evolving skills needs.

Becoming a PPA-accredited course can help.

The PPA knows what skills, knowledge and attitude your graduates need to have to get that all-important first step on the employment ladder.

The PPA has access to more than 200 employers ranging from traditional women's weekly consumer magazines to

business-to-business data and information providers, and from large multi-territory companies to smaller local creative teams.

We know the industry and know what the industry wants.

Consequently, our accreditation bestows special status on courses, and recognition to educators as partners committed to maintaining the highest standards of training and development for those seeking to join the industry.

This guide aims to help you understand the value - and get the most out - of accreditation.

It explains how the scheme works, outlines what you need to do to achieve accredited status, and details the benefits of becoming an accredited course.

And if you reach the end and we haven't answered all your questions, you can contact us for more help.

We look forward to hearing from you.

David Bostock
PPA Careers Lead
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What is accreditation?

PPA Careers exists to enable talented individuals to establish and develop successful careers in publishing. Our relationship with our members brings you closer to the UK's leading publishers who are committed to the future of a thriving publishing industry and the creation of rewarding, challenging careers within it.

- Our stringent accreditation programme ensures that degrees and post graduate courses carrying the PPA-accredited logo will equip students with relevant skills that are sought by employers
- We provide a framework and guidance help ensure Internship and Work Experience programmes run by employers are industry standard and genuinely

beneficial to those who participate

- We provide recognition, support and networking opportunities for new talent through our awards events and masterclasses; mentoring schemes; and online, including careers advice and the chance to showcase talent
- We also recommend courses from professional training providers through our training accreditation programme

Our vision is for a fully professionalised industry, with equal recognition and opportunity for employees across all functions of the business.

What is accreditation?

Status as an accredited course is available to suppliers of high quality publisher training to magazines and business media and is designed to:

- * improve the quality of journalism training
- * recognise and kite-mark high quality journalism training
- * involve the industry in the training of publishers
- * allow tutors and students to

benefit from the services
we provide

Who can apply?

Accreditation is open to any supplier of high quality journalism training for those seeking to join the magazine and business media industry. This includes degrees and post graduate qualifications, as well as commercial training providers offering fast-track training courses.

Courses must meet the strict accreditation criteria for journalism training.

Courses need not be those that specialise only in magazine and business media journalism. Those that also cover media such as books or newspaper publishing must include sufficient teaching and practice for magazine, business media and digital journalism to meet the accreditation criteria.

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What are the benefits?

In return for meeting the high standards demanded by the accreditation criteria, we provide the following service to courses which have achieved the standard:

Marketing and promotion of your course

- * recommendation to the students who contact us to ask for information about accredited courses and careers in journalism
- * promotion to the industry through PPA publications and events
- * promotion of accredited courses via the PPA website as well as a link to your own course website
- * use of the accredited logo in marketing and publicity
- * a certificate and accreditation report
- * opportunity to enter students in the student category of the annual New Talent Awards

Invitations to industry events

- * free student spaces at Magazine Academy masterclasses
- * invitation to the annual Magazine Academy networking and awards event
- * the opportunity to attend PPA events at member rates and discounts on PPA publications

Additional benefits

- * advice for lecturers looking for job shadowing opportunities
- * free copies of the guidelines for work experience placements
- * free copies of the guidelines for internships
- * opportunity to receive weekly PPA members' email updates
- * recognition as a PPA Academic Partner (only applies to colleges and universities)

In addition, we organise networking events.

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How does the process of accreditation work?

New accreditation applications

Step one - We ask providers to complete and return a short application form giving details of the course, its objectives, delivery methods and teaching staff

Step two - The form is reviewed by the PPA Careers lead

Step three - The Careers Lead determines whether it is likely the course will be accredited and if a preliminary meeting should take place

Step four - We appoint a panel (the the Careers Lead and one editor) to carry out an advisory or "dummy" visit. This visit takes place prior to a course achieving full

accreditation and provides an opportunity for us to review the course at close hand, meet the course team and students and offer advice on any changes needed to meet our exacting accreditation standard

Advisory visits take place towards the end of the course year. We may undertake more than one "dummy" visit but reserve the right to decline to visit a course if - in the view of the panel - the course is unlikely to be able to meet the accreditation criteria

Step five - The course is given the panel's preliminary feedback on the day of the visit. A copy of the report is sent to the course leader

Step six - A successful advisory visit leads to a full accreditation visit. In exceptional circumstances, some courses are given immediate accreditation after the dummy visit

The panel will normally include two senior editors and the Careers Lead.

A full accreditation visit usually takes place one year after the advisory visit

Re-accreditation applications

Step one - We ask providers to complete and return a short questionnaire along with a pack of supporting material giving details of the course, its objectives, delivery methods and teaching staff

Step two - We appoint a panel of the Careers Lead and two editors to carry out a full accreditation visit. It reviews the course at close hand to ensure it continues to meet our exacting accreditation standard

Step three - The course is given the panel's preliminary feedback on the day of the visit. A copy of the report is sent to the course leader

NB: Failure to provide the necessary information and/or arrange a visit within the re-accreditation year and month results in accreditation being suspended. The course must then begin the accreditation process as if from new.

It is the course leader's responsibility to contact the PPA at the beginning of the course/start of the appropriate academic year to give notice that the course will be applying for accreditation/re-accreditation.

The nature of our accreditation scheme means that visits take place over a very short period of time. We cannot be held responsible for not being able to schedule a visit to any institution that has not given adequate notice.

Once an accreditation visit has been scheduled and confirmed by both the PPA and the course provider any cancellation by the course provider will incur the full accreditation fee.

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What happens on an accreditation visit?

In advance

Before an accreditation visit the PPA will ask you to complete and return a simple self-assessment questionnaire and to see the following:

- * Timetable for the visit
- * Biogs of all tutors (max. one side A4 each tutor)
- * Outline of the course syllabus
- * Outline of weekly timetables
- * List of students' work experience destinations
- * Destination list of graduates
- * List of guest speakers, their job roles, organisations and the subjects covered
- * Details of the external examiner/s used and their comments on the course

The course leader must supply three copies of all the

required information **at least three weeks** before the visit takes place. Please bear in mind that the panel may have to travel some distance to a course and it is advisable to contact us to talk through timetable arrangements in advance.

On the day

The normal procedure for an accreditation visit is:

- * Brief, private meeting of the accrediting panel
- * Meeting with the course leader to discuss the overall objectives of the course, current challenges and future plans
- * Meeting with the course team to discuss the course content, teaching methods, student selection process, staffing and guest speakers, external examiners, course assessment policy, progress of past graduates. If the course is applying for re-accreditation the panel will be particularly interested to know what improvements have been made since the last visit and how the course has responded to any recommendations made by previous panels

- * Examination of coursework (private panel meeting)
- * Visit to the lecture rooms and other course facilities
- * Meeting with the students¹ for feedback on the course, tutors and syllabus
- * Opportunity for private discussion by panel members
- * Final meeting with senior staff to discuss the results of the visit

On the day of the visit the panel will need to see:

- * Course assessment policy
- * Course syllabus
- * Evidence that the commercial considerations, different areas of the industry and understanding sources of revenue have been covered
- * Magazines, websites and digital products produced by students as part of the course
- * Facilities - including computers and software used

¹ Short commercial course: the panel must see all the students on the course. Under/postgraduate degree: the panel must see approx. 30 students (10 from each year). The panel will not accredit a course that does not provide sufficient numbers of student for interview

for the course

- * Sample of student work and written tutor feedback²

The panel will give feedback to the course team during the final meeting, along with their recommendation regarding accreditation.

The decision of the panel will be ratified at the first available meeting of the Board after which the course will receive a written report and certificate.

²The panel will expect to see a broad sample of student work including marked/assessed work and work on which feedback has been given. The panel will look to see how students have improved over time and will examine the marks and quality of written feedback given by tutors. Evidence is key; the panel will not assume marking is fair and feedback comprehensive and will not accredit a course that does not provide sufficient examples of work

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What is the cost?

We are committed to keeping the cost of accreditation low and so only charges fees to help cover expenses, and to ensure the PPA provides an efficient service.

Preliminary panel - no charge

There is a charge of **£800 + VAT** for advisory or "dummy" visits - that is, visits that take place prior to a course achieving full accreditation. Accreditation costs **£950 + VAT**.

Accreditation lasts for a maximum two years and payment must be made in advance of the accreditation panel's visit.

There is no annual membership fee.

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FAQs

How quickly can my course become accredited?

The PPA will not accredit a course until it has seen an entire cohort/intake of students complete it.

Why does the accreditation only last for a maximum two years?

We are committed to ensuring courses maintain the highest standards of training and know that the fast pace of change being experienced by the industry presents challenges to course tutors and employers alike. Carrying out an accreditation visit every two years helps us monitor the progress of a course, check that it keeps pace with industry developments and ensures that students are trained to a suitable standard.

Accreditation lasts for a maximum of two years and we reserve the right to accredit

courses for a shorter period - or not at all.

Which courses are currently accredited?

Details of current accredited courses can be found on our website:

www.ppa.co.uk/resources/resources/training-and-careers/ppa-accredited-courses

What should I do next?

Review the pre-accreditation visit. If having done so you are satisfied your course meets the standard you should contact us to arrange an accreditation visit. If you are applying for the first time you will need to arrange a "dummy"/advisory visit rather than a full-accreditation visit.

We do hope you've found this guide helpful; don't hesitate to contact us if you have any further questions.

Good luck!

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Supplementary information for accredited courses

Fee payment

Payment for all visits must be received at least one month in advance of the visit taking place.

Transfer: The PPA cannot guarantee that a panel will be available should circumstances mean that you need to transfer to another visit date. If it is possible to arrange a transfer then the following fee will apply dependent on the notice given:

More than eight weeks prior to the course visit - no transfer charge

Four-eight weeks prior to the course visit - 50 per cent of the visit fee

Less than four weeks prior to the course visit - 100 per cent of visit fee

Courses will be charged the full accreditation fee for the new visit date.

In all transfer cases courses will also be charged for any

pre-booked panel accommodation or travel which is not transferable. This will be in addition to the transfer fee (where applicable).

Cancellations: If you have to cancel the visit the following charges will apply:

More than eight weeks prior to the course visit - no charge
Four-eight weeks prior to the course visit - 75 per cent of the visit fee.

Less than four weeks prior to the course visit - full fee - i.e. no refund

In all cancellation cases courses will be charged for any pre-booked panel accommodation or travel which is not transferable. This will be in addition to the cancellation fee (where applicable).

Cancellation or transfer must be made in writing and received by the PPA by the due date.

Maintaining accreditation:

Monitoring visits

Monitoring visits may be requested, carried out and charged for at any time during the accreditation period. Courses will be given a minimum of four weeks' notice and must pay the full fee for the visit.

The purpose of a monitoring visit is to check progress with any

- issues identified at or since the previous accreditation visit
- conditions applied at the time of accreditation

Suspension and removal of accreditation

Renewal of accreditation is not automatic; PPA may not renew accreditation or may temporarily suspend accreditation at any time.

Accreditation is removed where a course fails to meet the required standard - this includes failing to respond to requests for improvement.

Accreditation may be suspended if the course fails to provide information the PPA requires or does not co-operate with the PPA. Suspension of accreditation will normally result in the PPA setting a number of objectives that will need to be met within a prescribed timescale. Failure to meet the objectives is likely to result in the removal of accreditation.

The PPA's decision is final.

The PPA shall not be liable for any costs or losses sustained or incurred by the

centre arising directly or indirectly from the removal of the PPA accreditation.

Courses may reapply for accreditation.

The PPA must be informed - in advance - of:

- changes to senior staff, particularly staff responsible for teaching subjects relevant to magazines and business media journalism and publishing
- major changes to the course structure, particularly if the time dedicated to teaching subjects relevant to magazine and business media journalism and publishing is affected

It is usual for the PPA to be consulted concerning these changes; The PPA will act in an advisory capacity to the course.

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