

Accreditation Committee

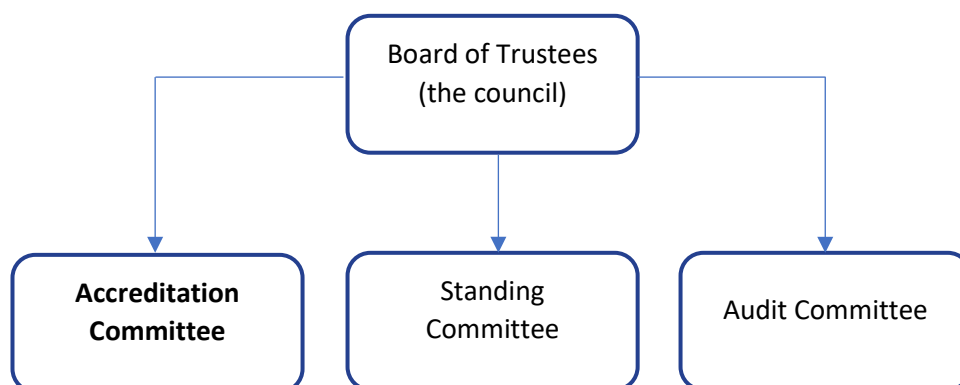
Terms of reference

Approval history

Version	Date	Notes	Approver
V0.1	25 November 2021	First draft to Accreditation Committee	
V0.2	27 January 2022	Revised following feedback from Accreditation Committee	
V1.0	16 June 2022	Approved with minor revisions	Board of Trustees (Council)
V1.1	22 September 2022	Annual review	Accreditation Committee
V1.1	13 October 2022	Annual review	Board of Trustees (Council)
V2.0	28 September 2023	Annual review. One substantial amendment.	Accreditation Committee

Next review: September 2024

1. Governance



- 1.1 The Accreditation Committee (the committee) is a standing committee of the Board of Trustees (the council) and reports to the council regularly (article 15). The council's responsibilities are outlined in the memorandum and articles of association (our governing documents).
- 1.2 The committee has the council's authority to decide whether to award, withhold, renew, withdraw or suspend accreditation. It makes its decisions based on inspection reports and other information about whether institutions are meeting our standards and requirements. It is also responsible for keeping our accreditation standards, criteria and procedures under review.
- 1.3 The arrangements for carrying out the committee's business will be as set out in our governing documents.
- 1.4 If any members of the committee have any direct interest in an item on the agenda, they must declare it and will not take part in any discussion about that item.

2. Terms of reference

- 2.1 To review the standards used to inspect and judge institutions wanting accreditation and the criteria institutions must meet in order to be awarded accreditation.
- 2.2 To make recommendations to the council if it feels it is appropriate to make changes to the standards and criteria.
- 2.3 To make recommendations to the council on eligibility criteria for accreditation and to recommend any specific or specialist accreditation scheme it considers to be appropriate.
- 2.4 To approve the appointment of inspectors on the recommendation of the chief inspector.
- 2.5 To use inspectors' reports and other formal evidence to decide whether an institution has met our minimum standards for accreditation and whether accreditation should be awarded, deferred, refused, renewed, withdrawn or suspended.
- 2.6 To receive and review reports on an accredited institution's performance and make recommendations to the council.

- 2.7 To consider any wider issues of educational policy which appear to be relevant to our work or the work of the committee.
- 2.8 To regularly consider any risks to us arising from its discussions and decisions and from the activities and performance of accredited institutions.
- 2.9 To reflect on its own performance and ways of working at least once every two years.

3. Membership

- 3.1 There will usually be 10 committee members and these will be appointed by the council.
- 3.2 The committee will include at least one trustee, who will be the chair. It will include representatives from organisations that are relevant and appropriate to its work. The committee will include an international member and a student member. All members can attend, speak and vote at any meeting of the committee.
- 3.3 Members will be appointed to the committee for a term of three years and may be reappointed for one further term.
- 3.4 Student members will be appointed to the committee for a term of three years and may be reappointed for one further term. For the criteria student members will need to meet in order to be eligible to join the committee, see the operational manual for committees.
- 3.5 Arrangements for searching for, selecting, appointing, inducting and training committee members and the chair, for continuing and ending their membership, and for declaring any interest in an item on the agenda are described in the AC Member Handbook.
- 3.6 The chair of the committee will be appointed by the council.
- 3.7 The chair of the council will be an ex officio member (they will hold the position because of another office they hold). They will have the right to attend and speak at any meeting of the committee, but can't vote. Any member of the council who is not a member of the committee can attend any committee meeting but cannot vote and they can't speak at the meeting unless the chair of the committee asks them to.
- 3.8 If the chair is not present at any meeting of the committee, the members who are there will decide between them which one of them will chair the meeting.
- 3.9 Our consultants and employees cannot serve as members of the committee.
- 3.10 The secretary to the council (or someone they nominate) will act as the secretary of the committee.

4. Decision-making

- 4.1 The committee can ask any inspector, employee or member of the council for any information it needs in order to perform its duties.
- 4.2 The committee can formally ask the council to get, and we will pay for, any professional advice it needs to be able to carry out its responsibilities more effectively.
- 4.3 The committee can fulfil its responsibilities either in a live meeting or through an offline decision-making process (where members email their judgements to the committee and the

chair makes the final decision). Items on the agenda that need to be discussed must be dealt with during a committee meeting.

- 4.4 There must be at least five committee members present for a meeting to go ahead. If there are not five members present within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time of an ordinary meeting, it can continue as a discussion meeting. The members at the meeting may agree to recommend decisions to all members of the committee, who will be asked to vote on each item by email within 10 working days of the date of the meeting. If members do not agree to this, the meeting will be postponed.
- 4.5 At least five members must submit their judgements for decisions to take effect through the offline decision-making process. Decisions will take effect immediately and do not need to be formally agreed at a meeting, although they must be reported at the next meeting.
- 4.6 Decisions will be made by a majority vote, and the chair will have the casting vote.
- 4.7 In exceptional circumstances, the committee can delegate to its chair the authority to award and withdraw accreditation, and to make other decisions associated with accreditation as appropriate. These decisions must be recorded at the next committee meeting.

5. Meetings

- 5.1 At least six ordinary live meetings and four dates for offline decision-making will be scheduled during our financial year (September to August). The dates for the upcoming year will be provisionally agreed by the committee at the penultimate meeting of the year and confirmed nearer the time of each meeting. The chair, or the chair of the council, may also call an extraordinary meeting if they consider it necessary.
- 5.2 The agenda and papers will be sent to members at least seven days before the meeting or decision deadline. The papers may be sent later than the agenda or, in urgent cases, shared at the meeting (with the approval of the chair).
- 5.3 Ordinary meetings of the committee will normally be held online. For more details about the offline decision-making process, please see the AC Member Handbook.

6. Reporting

- 6.1 The chair will report to each council meeting on the work of the committee (article 17.3).
- 6.2 The chair will report to the council each year on our accreditation activities, the outcomes of inspections and any wider policy matters considered by the committee.

7. Review

- 7.1 The committee will review these terms of reference each year at its first meeting of the financial year and will submit them for final approval at the council's first meeting of the year.

Related documents

Articles of association (governing document)

AC Member Handbook

Council terms of reference

Audit Committee terms of reference

Standing Committee terms of reference