



THE NAUTICAL INSTITUTE

ACCREDITATION AND VALIDATION

Information for providers seeking accreditation

Services

Procedures

Agreement

Accreditation form

By order of Council
December 2002
Revised December 2004

CONSIDERATIONS FOR PROVIDERS SEEKING ACCREDITATION

- Discuss the issues in confidence with the Institute
- Consider the most appropriate form of accreditation which may be from other sources
- Decide which approach best suits your need

If The Nautical Institute is chosen:

- Discuss in more detail the broad requirements with the Institute including timescale for accreditation procedures
- Start preparing course(s) to meet the Institute's accreditation procedures
- Write formally at least six weeks before the proposed date for accreditation
- Submit documentation at least one month before the due date
- Prepare to receive assessors during a course
- Take note of comments and recommendations
- Receive Certificate

For further information contact

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SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

The Nautical Institute provides a variety of accreditation services and the following guidance is designed to illustrate how these services fit into the wider context of verification. There are many different meanings given to accreditation and for the purpose of this guidance the following definitions apply.

ACCREDITATION is an assessment of a training provider offering a particular course where The Nautical Institute verifies the standard, approves the training provider and issues a certificate. The training provider is re-assessed at regular intervals and has to maintain specified standards and records.

APPROVAL is a generic term applied to any approved training course or programme. It derives its meaning by discriminating between those courses which are approved to comply with governmental or industry standards and those which are not.

ASSESSMENT is the process undertaken to validate or accredit training.

VALIDATION is the process of verifying that different elements of a training programme have been complied with to an agreed standard.

FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN SEEKING APPROVAL FROM THE NAUTICAL INSTITUTE

There are many different ways to gain approval for training programmes and it is necessary to consider both the appropriate authority and the funding arrangements. For example certificates of competency and the associated short courses are approved under the STCW convention by Maritime Administrations. Under these circumstances the Maritime Administration would have to delegate authority to The Nautical Institute to approve a course on their behalf.

Many educational and vocational training programmes are linked to national funding arrangements. The education authorities providing the funding generally have procedures for validating and accrediting approved courses. Under these circumstances The Nautical Institute would not seek to become involved unless the education authorities delegate this function.

Training providers offering specialist training which is not mandatory or funded, have a number of options which they can consider if they want to obtain some form of external recognition for the training they provide. There are advantages and disadvantages with each approach.

INDUSTRY LEAD BODY RECOGNITION: Most industrial sectors have a nationally based industry lead body whose main role is to encourage training, develop relevant training to meet new needs and to harmonise standards nationally. Many such industry lead bodies have links with similar organisations in other countries e.g. offshore energy operations and the ports industry. These industry lead bodies often have access to funding for approved training either directly or indirectly.

The limitations concerning the use of nationally based industry lead bodies for validation and accreditation are seen in an international context where there is a need to have independent assessment which is recognised internationally. Training organisations are competitive and therefore may not be impartial when supporting individual programmes overseas.

QUALITY STANDARDS: Training providers can choose a variety of quality standard awarding bodies through which to become approved. These may include the registered quality assessment organisations or national schemes such as Investors in People.

Generally the quality standard applies to the training provider rather than to individual courses. The provider uses the quality organisation to approve the practices and procedures used by the training provider. The quality audit is designed to ensure that the quality standards put forward by the training provider are met consistently. The quality standard can be high or low.

The main limitation in using quality assurance for training is the fact that the auditors are not necessarily experts in the specific application of individual courses. As a result the quality assurance process seldom has a direct link with the industry or the trainees who are dependent on the standard.

PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION: Professional institutions which establish professional qualifications as a requirement or recommendation to practise, protect their standards by accrediting educational courses of study which can lead to membership or a component of the membership qualification. Where the professional association, in the UK, carries the authority to licence practitioners, such as The Law Society, The Institute of Chartered Accountants or The Chartered Institute of Physiotherapy, the associations will generally have the recognition bestowed upon them by the Privy Council who can confer chartered status on the organisations concerned. Also professional associations often validate and accredit specialist courses within their special competence.

THE NAUTICAL INSTITUTE: Is an international professional association for qualified mariners and runs accreditation services. For example the Institute validates the training programme and issues certificates for officers in charge of a watch on dynamic positioning vessels. The Institute currently accredits fourteen simulator providers in seven different countries and has a central register of all certificates issued.

The Institute accredits training, on behalf of the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency, in oil spill response as defined by the International Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention OPRC, which has been ratified by the UK Government. Here the Institute accredits seven providers offering different levels of training but each level is accredited to the same standard.

The benefits of using The Nautical Institute for this work are seen in two complementary aspects.

First the Institute can accredit uniform standards internationally. Where ships' crews are concerned this is a particular advantage as, for example, an officer can take the dynamic positioning operations induction/basic course from one provider in one country and the follow on simulator/advanced course from another provider in a different country to obtain a valid certificate. Because there is just one international standard all certificates are recognised worldwide without question.

Although accepted internationally it must be stated that DP certification, though covering critical operations at sea, is not mandatory but certification is generally required as a charterer's condition of hire.

The Institute's involvement in accreditation means that all providers offering the same courses are delivering the same standard. Where available this would be the accepted industry standard.

Training providers like this as it maintains uniformity of standards and prevents the lowering of standards due to adverse competitive influences. Industry welcomes uniform certification.

A particular value in using The Nautical Institute is its approach to accreditation, which is designed to support and improve the relevance of the training. This is done in three ways: -

- (i) Where possible the assessors are drawn from industry and/or other training providers offering the same courses so ensuring relevance and team support.
- (ii) The Institute organises an annual users and trainers forum to discuss problems, identify trends and consider improvements
- (iii) The Institute issues a newsletter to keep training providers in touch with recent developments

PROCEDURES

FORMAL REQUEST:

Training providers wishing to seek Nautical Institute accreditation can do so by contacting the Institute's Education and Training Manager.

CONTENTS OF THE REQUEST:

When contacting the Institute the following information will be required:

- The name of the course or programme
- The objectives
- The method(s) of delivery
- The outline syllabus
- The nature of the supporting documentation
- The broad qualifications of the instructors
- What the student should be able to do or demonstrate on completion of the training

TIMING OF THE REQUEST:

The Institute suggests a minimum of six weeks before the assessment so that pre-assessment queries can be resolved prior to the assessment.

THE ASSESSORS:

At all times there will be a minimum of two assessors, one of whom will be a practitioner in the area under review and the other an experienced training manager linked to the Institute's administrative staff. Additional specialist assessors may be called in when appropriate.

DUTIES AND CONDUCT OF ACCREDITATION TEAM MEMBERS:

Team members will: -

- Review and report on the materials submitted by training centres
- Participate in accreditation visits and related activities in accordance with the guidelines, policy and procedures laid down by the Institute.
- Maintain confidentiality with respect to information gained from centres during the accreditation process. This includes carrying out any of the following activities without the appropriate permission: -
 - Discussion of the training centre's activities
 - Duplication of training materials received from a centre
 - Discussion of any confidential information received during the process
- Return all training materials received from a centre either to the centre or the Institute.
- Act in the best interest of The Nautical Institute and in accordance with good professional conduct.

THE SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT:

The assessors will receive the course documentation one-month in advance and will then visit the provider on the chosen date. When a course is running the assessors will expect to talk to students and instructors. The assessors will require evidence of and to verify the following:

- (i) The purpose of the course
- (ii) The course objectives are relevant and meet industrial/occupational needs
- (iii) The overall philosophy of the training strategy
- (iii) The training manuals, documentation, equipment and where relevant simulation or exercises

- (iv) The methods of delivery
- (v) Correct use of equipment
- (vi) The range and scope of practical exercises and how they are conducted
- (vii) The course documentation, the keeping of records, conduct and programming of the course and general administrative arrangements
- (viii) The qualifications, experience and suitability of the training staff
- (ix) Accommodation, lecture rooms, equipment and safety considerations
- (x) The examination or other assessment methods to verify the standard of understanding obtained by the student
- (xi) A formal student feedback system to record feedback from students concerning the content and conduct of the course
- (xii) The procedures for issuing course certificates
- (xiii) Methods of dealing with complaints and appeals
- (xiv) A master training manual to be kept up to date by the provider, which is available for audit at any time
- (xv) The maintenance arrangement and records for keeping equipment in working order and reliably available (with particular reference to simulators)

THE INSTRUCTORS' MANUAL:

Each course must be supported by an instructors' manual, which will contain the background material from which the training is derived together with well-structured documentation demonstrating how the course material is to be delivered, copies of the slides, overheads or PowerPoint presentations and the learning objectives for each session. This course material should be submitted one month before the agreed date of the assessment. Copies of the student handouts should be contained within the manual.

In most cases training organisations hold copyright of their training materials and prefer to have control of all manuals on site. The Institute supports this approach but requires at least one master record to be kept by the training provider, which can be audited at any time.

As a general rule providers will have to demonstrate how they intend to conduct the training. In so doing it must supply the course structure, the scheme of work, lesson plans, exercises, practicals and the relevant teaching materials. These activities must be supported by good administration and record keeping.

NEW TRAINING PROVISION:

There is a problem of advertising accredited courses before they have been accredited. The practical solution is as follows: When the provider sends in the course documentation and instructor qualifications, provided they are of an acceptable standard, they will be given provisional approval until the formal visit. If the accreditation is successful the provider will normally be accredited for three years. If the provider was unsuccessful, the students on the course may be asked to attend an independent personal assessment from an approved individual.

Where an accreditation is unsuccessful the provider will be told the reasons and invited to re-submit its application. The Nautical Institute aims to be supportive throughout this period.

ACCREDITATION:

The assessors will write formally to award accreditation at four levels:

- (a) Approval
- (b) Approval subject to minor improvements (Recommendations)

- (c) Approval on completion of significant improvements which must be confirmed by due dates (Requirements)
- (d) Failure with reasons and invitation to re-submission

Accreditation May Be Cancelled Or Withdrawn For Any Of The Following Reasons: -

- Failure to settle the accreditation/re-accreditation invoice within 90 days (N.B. The Institute's payment terms are strictly 30 days)
- Failure to be re-accredited within 3 months of the expiry date of the existing accreditation
- The accredited training provider or their parent organisation going into bankruptcy/receivership/liquidation
- Failure to notify the Institute of significant changes to the management, training delivery or resources
- Failure to attend a training providers meeting, where available, within a three-year period.
- Misrepresentation, misuse, abuse or misdemeanour relating to the accreditation by the accredited training provider

RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION:

On successfully obtaining accreditation The Nautical Institute will issue a certificate to the provider with authorisation to add the Institute's logo and the words "Accredited by The Nautical Institute" to its course literature. The Institute will publish details of the accreditation in its international journal SEAWAYS.

THE COST OF ASSESSMENT:

The Nautical Institute is a not for profit organisation and will carry out the assessment at full cost recovery plus administrative overheads. Typical costs are as follows:

Pre-course assessment, reviewing documentation - two person-days
 Course assessment - two person-days
 Travel and accommodation as relevant
 Expenses, taxis, meals if relevant
 Follow up action provider certification etc. - one person-day
 The cost of any local Tax

HARMONISATION OF STANDARDS:

The policy of The Nautical Institute is to:

- (i) Ensure similar courses conducted by different establishments for the same purpose meet the same standards.
- (ii) Ensure that when distance-learning or other techniques are used as a means of preparation or delivery, the programmes are properly harmonised with the course objectives
- (iii) Ensure that when courses cover the activities of several different disciplines persons with the required amount of expertise are brought in to the training programmes, e.g. Health and Safety inspectors, Government surveyors, chemists, lawyers or medical practitioners.

THE NAUTICAL INSTITUTE'S QUALITY STANDARDS AND AUDIT PROCEDURE

The procedures in this section have been approved by the Institute's Council who have delegated their detailed application to the Institute's Education and Training Committee. The Education and Training Committee audits accreditations annually in accordance with the attached documentation.

The committee requires to be kept informed of all accreditation activities and keeps the accreditation process under review.

TRAINING PROGRAMME VALIDATION

Where The Nautical Institute issues certificates to candidates who have completed an approved training programme, which may include experience and testimonial evidence as well as satisfactory attendance at an accredited training provider, the Institute staff will validate the data from authenticated sources before issuing a certificate.

CONCLUSION

The value of accreditation should be seen as a shared partnership between the provider and The Nautical Institute based upon agreed standards and specified trainee knowledge and performance.

AGREEMENT

The training provider agrees to the following conditions:

- 1.** The training provider voluntarily agrees to accept Institute's accreditation standards, to submit the necessary documentation for accreditation and to receive the approval visit, if appropriate, in accordance with the Institute's policy and procedures.
- 2.** The training will be designated "accredited" when the accreditation team has completed its considerations and determined that the training provider meets or exceeds a minimum standard. Subject to a right of appeal, which would be at their own expense, the training providers will abide by the decision of the accreditation team.
- 3.** The Institute will prepare and publish periodically lists of accredited training providers.
- 4.** The Institute and the training provider will follow the procedures and policies developed, periodically reviewed and updated by the Institute regarding the setting of standards, reporting of information, complaints, display of certificates, use of Institute logo, appeals and other matters.
- 5.** The training provider will use all practical means at its disposal continuously to assure that the services it provides fully comply with the applicable accreditation standards at all times.
- 6.** When an accreditation visit to a training provider is required, requested, or otherwise deemed necessary or desirable, the Institute agrees with the training provider the approximate date of the visit. Detailed arrangements for the visit are made through direct contact between the Institute and the training provider.
- 7.** The training provider agrees that if a formal complaint is raised concerning their operation under the Institute's accreditation procedures, policies or standards, it will promptly comply with any requests of the Institute for necessary information. The training provider agrees to reimburse the Institute for any related expenses incurred. If the claim was raised by another training provider and is found to be without merit, the latter may be required to reimburse the Institute.
- 8.** When reference is made to accreditation, the following may be used:
 - (i)** "Accreditation by The Nautical Institute Pending", in a font and style established by the Institute, which may be used by a training provider which has made application for accreditation, until that time it is notified of the accreditation team's decision;
 - (ii)** The term "Accredited by The Nautical Institute", in a font and style established by the Institute, which may be used by a training provider that has been notified that it has received either provisional or full accreditation.
- 9.** The official logo of The Nautical Institute may be used on appropriate materials. The Institute will have the right to notify the training provider of any material used or issued by them that the Institute considers to be incorrect, inappropriate or misleading.
- 10.** The Institute recognises that courses and materials are the property of the course providers and that all materials submitted to the Institute will be treated as confidential.

11. The training provider agrees not to hold the Institute, its directors, officers, members and employees liable for any loss, damages, costs, or expenses, which they may incur or be required to pay as a consequence of their actions.

12. This agreement will run from the date below. The agreement may be terminated on one month's notice from the Institute or the training provider

Signature of the Responsible Person from the Training Provider

Date

Name and Title/Position of the Responsible Person from the Training Provider

Name of Training Provider



RE-ACCREDITATION DUE _____

THE NAUTICAL INSTITUTE

COURSE ACCREDITATION

CENTRE		
ADDRESS		
TELEPHONE		
FAX		
EMAIL		
WEBSITE		
PERSON IN CHARGE		
CONTACT PERSON		
QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM		
DATE OF VISIT		ACCREDITATION/RE-ACCREDITATION*
ACCREDITATION TEAM		
COURSE(S) TO BE ACCREDITED		
DELIVERY SITES		

INSTRUCTORS	QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE	CV
DELIVERY METHODS		
TEACHING AREA(S)		
EQUIPMENT		

SIMULATOR (If applicable)		
SUPPORT MATERIALS		
COURSE MANUALS		
MASTER COPIES HELD		
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION		
STUDENT RECORDS		
FEEDBACK FORMS		
CERTIFICATES		

GENERAL COMMENTS					
<div></div>					
			RESULT OF ACCREDITATION	ACCREDITED WITH NO CONDITIONS	
				ACCREDITED WITH RECOMMENDATIONS	
				ACCREDITED SUBJECT TO REQUIREMENTS	
	NOT ACCREDITED				
REQUIREMENTS/ RECOMMENDATIONS					
<div></div>					
LETTER					
INVOICE					
CERTIFICATE					
PAYMENT TO TEAM MEMBER(S)					

RECORD CHANGES HERE
STAFF
EQUIPMENT
TRAINING METHODS