



ACCREDITATION EXPLAINED

A Guide for Journalism Training Providers

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Accreditation explained

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.

Becoming a PPA-accredited course can help.

With access to more than 200 publisher members, the PPA knows what skills, knowledge and attitude your graduates need to have to get that all-important first step on the employment ladder. Our members range from traditional newsstand consumer magazines to business-to-business data and information providers, and from large multi-territory companies to smaller local creative teams.

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.

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

We look forward to hearing from you.

David Bostock

Accreditation 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 recognition, support and networking opportunities for new talent through our awards and events

- We also recommend courses from professional training providers through our training accreditation programme

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

- Allow tutors and students to benefit from the services we provide

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:

- Recognition for the university as a full PPA Associate Member and academic partner (only applies to colleges and universities), including access to the same annual membership benefits afforded to our publisher members;
- A certificate and accreditation report
- Enhanced promotion of accredited courses on ppa.co.uk, as well as a link to your own course website;
- Recommendation to prospective students who contact us to ask for information about accredited courses and careers in journalism;
- License to use the PPA accredited logo in marketing and publicity material;
- Promotion to the industry via PPA communications, including our new annual accredited course round-up on the PPA Radar e-newsletter;
- Two FREE tickets for course leaders to the PPA Festival;

- Preferential rates for your students to all PPA events;

- FREE entry to the Student Journalist category at the PPA New Talent Awards for up to 10 students

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How does the process of accreditation work?

New accreditation applications

Step one - We ask providers to provide details of the course, its objectives, delivery methods and teaching staff

Step two - The email is reviewed by the PPA Accreditation lead

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

Step four – The Accreditation lead will 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 senior editors and the Accreditation 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 Accreditation 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: 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 supply the following two weeks before the visit:

- 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.

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 students 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 for the course
- Sample of student work and written tutor feedback

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

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What is the cost?

No charge for preliminary advisory “dummy” visits and consultations.

Once accredited, PPA Annual Membership fee of £1,450 + VAT per annum will apply.

This includes a single course accreditation visit with no additional charge every two years (one year for new courses). Additional courses can be included in each training providers annual membership for an extra £200 + VAT per course.

Fee payment terms and cancellation details can be found in Section 8 of this document.

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FAQs

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](#)

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 me if you have any further questions.

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Supplementary information for accredited courses

Fee payment:

Annual membership runs from September 1 to August 30 each year to align with the academic year and budgets. Invoices are sent annually to accredited training providers on 31st July and payment must be received by 30th September each year. The PPA reserves the right to cancel membership for late payments in excess of 30 days.

Universities joining the scheme for the first time after Sept 1st will be charged pro-rata in year one. Thereafter they will be charged the full annual fee as above.

Cancellations:

Cancellation of membership must be made in writing and received by the PPA before 30th June each year prior to renewal or the full annual fee will apply.

Maintaining accreditation:

Monitoring visits: Monitoring visits may be requested, carried out at any time during the accreditation membership period. Courses will be given a minimum of four weeks’ notice prior to our 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 membership.

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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