



RCP Accreditation Unit

Assessor training pathway

About this document

The comprehensive assessor training programme is designed to deliver high quality, effective assessors. This document describes assessor selection, training and on-going management and support for the accreditation programmes run by the Royal College of Physicians. This document does not describe the training pathway for lay assessors, who follow a different pathway.

Assessor selection process

Assessors are selected to take part in the assessor training programme following review and approval of their application form.

The review component of the assessor selection process is undertaken by a quality assurance panel where a review of the applicant's qualifications and experience is undertaken. Applicants must meet the mandatory requirements outlined in the assessor job description in order to proceed to the next stage. Candidates may also be screened and selected based on the current needs of the accreditation programme regarding the assessor pool.

Key competencies for assessors

All assessors are required to possess the core competencies defined in this section and the supporting skill level.

1. Technical

- a) Planning and organisation skills.
- b) Assessment skills.
- c) Communication, report writing and feedback.

2. Behavioural competence

- a) Covers a range of qualities and attributes of behaviour and character needed to perform the role of an assessor effectively.

3. Knowledge

- a) Knowledge of the domains and standards, application area and technology.
- b) Legal and safety regulatory framework, standards, guidance or codes of practice.
- c) Experience of the wider specialty including services in other sectors and countries.

The above categories are expanded upon in [appendix A](#).

Training pathway overview

The training pathway consists of three core stages:

Stage	Outline
Stage one	Assessor training day One day, classroom based learning with lectures, group discussions and case studies
Stage two	Shadow assessment The trainee assessor will shadow an assessment. The trainee assessor will complete a self-assessment and the lead assessor will then complete a summative assessment. This stage may be repeated if required.
Stage three	Guided assessment A formal assessment that will involve the trainee becoming part of the assessment team and conducting a full assessment. They will be guided by an experienced assessor who will follow the assessment, but will not partake in the assessment or the outcome.

These stages are described in more detail in the next section.

Assessor training stages

Stage one - assessor training day

Stage one is classroom based and consists of the following modules:

Module	Content covered	Knowledge required
Assessing services: key concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback and discussions on pre-course work • Reinforcing the values of the accreditation programme • Understanding how assessments contribute to continual improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the peer assessment process and the procedures
Assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of assessment (different sectors and types of services) • Team leadership and team management: to facilitate delegates' understanding of the need for management before during and after assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with the accreditation scheme; assessor requirements and information
Performing the assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards and evidence assessment • Understanding the full requirements • Understanding what constitutes non-conformance: common areas for deferral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the key evidence requirements, ability to identify non-conformances and recommendations.
Report writing and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collation of report • Summation meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with audit report writing and ability to identify record and classify non-conformances and recommendations.
Post- assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessor 360 assessment and feedback • Post-assessment process • Deferral management and assessor responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of assessor 360 process • Knowledge of deferral management process and responsibilities

In addition to the above, every assessor will have the opportunity to attend a remote online training session on how to use the web tool. This will be provided after the classroom based training day.

Stage two – shadow assessment

Trainee assessors will need to undertake a shadow assessment with an experienced assessment team, to learn first-hand about the accreditation process. Due to operational requirements, this may be on another accreditation programme than the one the assessors is training to assess on. The Accreditation Unit will allocate trainee assessors with the permission of the service being assessed and the assessors conducting assessment.

Each trainee assessor is expected to complete a competency based self-assessment on the web tool after the formative assessment against the assessor competencies. The assessment lead will then complete a formative assessment of the trainee. The lead assessor will follow up with all trainees to assess their suitability to progress to the guided assessment (stage four). Some trainees may repeat this stage if the lead or head assessor does not feel they are ready to progress to the next stage, or if the trainee would like to repeat this stage.

Stage three – guided assessment

Trainee assessors will form part of the assessment team and will undertake the full role, with the support of an experienced assessor.

The experienced assessor will guide the trainee assessors during the assessment, but will not partake in the assessing of the service or the outcome of the assessment. The experienced assessor will assess the trainee assessor against the assessor competencies and recommend whether the trainee assessor should receive final approval.

The head assessor and the accreditation manager will jointly discuss the progress of the trainee assessor to see if they are suitable to be signed off. Any assessor deemed unsuitable to progress beyond this stage will be offered feedback and an action plan agreed between the trainee assessor, the programme manager and the head assessor. Once signed off, the assessor will undertake assessments as a full member of the assessment team.

On-going management

All assessors are required to maintain their knowledge and skills. This will include an annual cycle of review and development. All assessors are required to complete the following:

1. Attend at least one scheduled assessor review day per annum.
2. Complete at least one assessments per year (unless otherwise agreed).
3. Complete a 360 degree peer review for their fellow assessors following each assessment.
4. Maintain an active and up to date presence within their speciality.

Appendix A – competency framework

All assessors are required to possess the core competencies defined in this section and the supporting capability level. Once assessors have completed the initial assessor training programme, these competencies will be assessed through a formative and summative assessment process on the web tool. Trainee assessors will rate themselves for each competency against the capability levels and provide supporting commentary. All assessors are required to attain competency level 4 to be approved as an assessor.

Capability levels

Level	Capability
1	Minimal knowledge and understanding about how the competence relates to practice.
2	Needs supervision to effectively carry out the range of skills within the competence.
3	Performs some skills within the competence effectively without supervision.
4	Confident of the knowledge and ability to perform all the identified skills within the competence effectively.
5	Can facilitate the knowledge and understanding of other professionals relating to the skills range within the competence.

Competencies

T1	Technical - Planning and organisation skills
T1.1	Identifies and plans for the work to be completed for each stage of the assessment
T1.2	Plans and sets timescales for the assessment process for area of expertise
T1.3	Presents an understandable summary plan with timescales to the lead assessor
T1.4	Identifies and plans for communication tasks to be completed for each stage of the assessment (includes co assessors and the service)
T1.5	Identifies problems early in the planning process and recommends or discusses appropriate actions (e.g. office, service, assessment team)
T1.6	Works in a flexible way to meet the needs of the assessment team and the service

T2	Technical - Assessment skills
T2.1	Understands the structure of accreditation and the webtool
T2.2	Takes a holistic and well balanced view of a service and identifies the most critical strengths and areas for improvement; those that have major impact on the service performance.
T2.3	Examines and reviews all evidence against the standards to support a judgement
T2.4	Provides objective and constructive written feedback to the Service that supports them to provide appropriate evidence
T2.5	Observes service activities to support judgements
T2.6	Verifies the accuracy of information gathered in interviews by observation, measurements and records analysis
T2.7	Identifies records and observational clues suggesting problems
T2.8	Identifies, with the assessment team, the most important and relevant additional information to request

T3 Technical - Communication, report writing and feedback skills	
T3.1	Communicates effectively, both verbally and in writing to the organisation, service and assessment team
T3.2	Interviews effectively, considering the key questions to ask staff
T3.3	Listens to gain an effective understanding of the service and the views of co assessors
T3.4	Takes the outcome from the assessment and individual findings, and turns it into clear and accurate written statements.
T3.5	Produces clear, objective and, accurate reports online
T3.6	Provides objective and constructive verbal feedback to the Service at the end of an assessment

B Behavioural skills	
B1.1	Acts with integrity and with professionalism, upholding the values of the accreditation scheme
B1.2	Develops and maintains excellent rapport and relations with the representatives of the Service being assessed
B1.3	Works to agreed priorities and is responsive to changes in requirement
B1.4	Maintains confidentiality at all times.
B1.5	Recognises when independence is compromised during an assessment and takes appropriate actions
B1.6	Creates a climate of openness and trust.
B1.7	Assertively presents him/herself as helpful and competent.
B1.8	Contributes positively and effectively as a member of the assessment team.
B1.9	Actively seeks to give and receive direct and constructive feedback.
B1.10	Identifies new learning techniques and ideas to improve self
B1.11	Maintains own performance and emotions in all situations (e.g. if challenged.)

K Knowledge skills	
K1.1	Understands services within different sectors, and the application of the standards and evidence requirements within those services
K1.2	Understands the key roles, structures, processes and systems of services within different sectors
K1.2	Understands own assessor role and the key areas of responsibility
K1.3	Understands the accreditation standards for different providers
K1.4	Understands accreditation process and outcomes for assessments
K1.5	Understands the key safety areas and when to escalate for action
K1.6	Understands who the key contacts are for expert advice and support
K1.7	Understands the performance and development requirements of the assessor role