

The Institute of Fire Safety Managers



Accreditation Guidance For Training Providers and Courses

Version: 1

Summary:	This document gives guidance on the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) application procedure for accreditation and approval of training course providers. It details the requirements and process, for successful applicants and ongoing validation.	
Target Audience:	All Members, Staff and Council, Training Providers and Applicants	
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1. Introduction

This guidance document supports the Accreditation Policy for Training Providers and Courses and explains the process for applying for and maintaining accreditation with the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM).

It is intended to assist organisations seeking accreditation by explaining:

- the accreditation process;
- the information required to support an application;
- how applications are assessed;
- what applicants can expect during the assessment process; and
- the ongoing responsibilities of accredited training providers.

This document should be read alongside:

- Accreditation Policy for Training Providers and Courses
- Guidelines on the Official Use of IFSM Logos
- Appeals Policy
- Complaints Policy

Unless otherwise stated, terms used in this guidance have the meanings given in the Accreditation Policy.

2. Accreditation Overview

The IFSM accredits organisations and training courses that meet the Institute's standards for quality, technical competence and professional integrity.

Accreditation provides independent recognition that a training provider has demonstrated appropriate arrangements for the delivery and management of fire safety training.

Accreditation is intended to provide confidence to learners, employers and other stakeholders that approved courses are delivered to recognised professional standards.

Accreditation is granted following assessment by the Institute and remains subject to ongoing validation and monitoring.

3. Before You Apply

Before submitting an application, applicants should ensure that they can demonstrate compliance with the requirements of the Accreditation Policy.

Applicants should ensure they have:

- reviewed the accreditation requirements;
- appropriate management arrangements in place;
- suitably competent trainers;
- appropriate insurance;
- quality assurance procedures;
- suitable course documentation; and
- all supporting documentation ready for submission.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Institute if they are unsure whether their proposed course or organisation is suitable for accreditation.

4. Accreditation Standards

The Institute assesses applications against the accreditation standards outlined in this section. A summary of the assessment criteria is provided in Appendix B.

These may include:

4.1. Organisation

Applicants should demonstrate that they operate as a legitimate organisation with appropriate governance and management arrangements.

4.2. Trainer Competence

All trainers should possess appropriate qualifications, industry experience and technical competence relevant to the subjects being delivered.

Evidence may include:

- Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- professional qualifications;
- teaching qualifications;
- CPD records;
- membership of relevant professional bodies.

4.3. Course Content

Courses should include:

- clear learning outcomes;
- structured lesson plans;
- supporting presentation materials;
- learner resources;

- course duration;

4.4. Assessment Methods

Applicants should demonstrate that learners are assessed using appropriate methods that are relevant to the course learning outcomes.

Assessment methods should be fair, valid, reliable and capable of demonstrating that learners have achieved the required level of competence.

Where applicable evidence may include:

- assessment papers or question banks;
- practical assessment criteria;
- marking schemes or guidance;
- assessment procedures; and
- examples of learner certification.

4.5. Certification

Where certificates are issued with the IFSM logo applicants should demonstrate that suitable arrangements are in place for issuing certificates to learners who successfully complete the course.

Certification arrangements should include:

- the criteria for successful completion;
- the information displayed on certificates;
- controls to prevent unauthorised issue or alteration of certificates;
- arrangements for replacement certificates; and
- record keeping.

4.6. Quality Assurance

Applicants should demonstrate how they ensure the consistent delivery and continual improvement of their training.

Examples include:

- internal verification;
- learner feedback;
- trainer observations;
- course reviews;
- document control procedures.

4.7. Organisational Policies

Applicants should maintain policies appropriate to the size and nature of their organisation.

Policies should cover:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion;
- Complaints;
- Data Protection;
- Health and Safety;
- Quality Assurance;
- Appeals;
- Conflict of Interest;
- Assessment and Examination Policy.

Equivalent policies will normally be accepted where they meet the same objectives.

4.8. Compliance

Applicants should demonstrate compliance with all relevant legal, regulatory and IFSM requirements applicable to the delivery of accredited training.

This includes, where applicable:

- appropriate insurance;
- compliance with relevant health and safety legislation;
- data protection requirements;
- copyright and intellectual property requirements;
- compliance with the IFSM Accreditation Policy; and
- compliance with other applicable IFSM policies and guidance.

5. Application Process

An application for Training Provider Accreditation may include up to **three courses** for assessment as part of the initial accreditation application.

Applicants wishing to accredit additional courses must first achieve IFSM Accredited Training Provider status. Once accreditation has been granted, additional courses may be submitted for assessment at any time, subject to the applicable accreditation fee.

Courses must not be advertised or promoted as IFSM accredited until written confirmation of approval has been issued by the Institute.

The following steps outline the process for applying for IFSM Training Provider and Course Accreditation. The application process is also summarised in Appendix C.

5.1. Step 1 – Review the Accreditation Requirements

Before preparing an application, applicants should read the Accreditation Policy and this Guidance document to ensure they understand the accreditation standards and requirements.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Institute if they have any questions before submitting an application.

5.2. Step 2 – Prepare Your Supporting Documentation

Gather all documentation required to support your application. Providing complete and accurate information at the outset will help avoid unnecessary delays.

- The required documentation will include:
- organisational information;
- trainer qualifications and CVs;
- course syllabus and learning outcomes;
- lesson plans and training materials;
- assessment methods;
- quality assurance procedures;
- organisational policies; and
- evidence of appropriate insurance.

A full checklist of supporting documentation is provided in Appendix A.

5.3. Step 3 – Complete the Application Form

Complete the online IFSM Accreditation Application Form, ensuring that all sections are completed accurately and all required information is provided.

5.4. Step 4 – Submit Your Application

Submit the completed application form together with the supporting documentation and payment of the applicable accreditation fee.

Applications should normally be submitted electronically unless otherwise agreed with the Institute.

The Institute will acknowledge receipt of the application.

5.5. Step 5 – Administrative Review

On receipt of the application, the Institute will undertake an initial administrative review to ensure that:

- the application form has been completed;
- all required supporting documentation has been provided;
- the appropriate fee has been received; and
- sufficient information has been supplied for the assessment to proceed.

If information is missing or clarification is required, the applicant will be contacted before the technical assessment begins.

5.6. Step 6 – Technical Assessment

Once the application has successfully completed the administrative review, it will be assessed against the accreditation standards set out in the Accreditation Policy.

During the assessment, the Institute may:

- request clarification or additional information;
- request amendments to submitted documentation;
- arrange an online meeting or interview;
- request examples or additional evidence relating to the course or training provider; or
- undertake any other reasonable verification activities considered necessary to complete the assessment.
- In exceptional circumstances, where considered necessary by the Institute, arrange a visit to the applicant's premises.

Applicants will be kept informed of progress throughout the assessment process.

6. Fees and Refunds

6.1. Accreditation Fees

Fees are payable for accreditation applications, annual registration, reassessment and additional course submissions.

The current Schedule of Accreditation Fees is published on the IFSM website and may be amended from time to time. Applicants should ensure they are aware of the applicable fees before submitting an application.

The initial accreditation application fee includes the assessment of up to three courses and the first year of accreditation, unless otherwise stated by the Institute.

The annual registration fee becomes payable one year after accreditation is granted and thereafter on each annual anniversary of the accreditation date for as long as the Training Provider wishes to maintain accredited status.

The annual registration fee includes the Institute's ongoing validation process and is tiered according to the number of IFSM-accredited courses held by the Training Provider. The applicable fee band is determined by the total number of accredited courses at the time of renewal.

Additional courses submitted after accreditation has been granted are subject to the applicable course assessment fee. Where the approval of additional courses results in the Training Provider moving into a higher annual fee band, the revised annual registration fee will apply from the next renewal date.

Applications will not normally be processed until the appropriate fee has been received.

6.2. Overseas Applications

Applications from organisations based outside the United Kingdom will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Additional assessment requirements and fees may apply depending on the location, complexity and resources required to complete the assessment.

6.3. Refunds

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that they have read and understood the Accreditation Policy and this Guidance before submitting an application.

The administration element of the application fee is non-refundable.

Where an applicant withdraws an application before the technical assessment has commenced, the Institute may, at its sole discretion, issue a partial refund of the application fee, less the administration fee.

Once the technical assessment has commenced, no refund will normally be provided.

Approved Training Providers may cancel their annual renewal within 14 days of payment and receive a full refund of the annual registration fee, provided no benefits of accreditation have been used during that renewal period.

Where an Accredited Training Provider resigns, allows their accreditation to lapse, or has their accreditation suspended or withdrawn during a renewal period, no full or partial refund of the annual registration fee will be made.

Any exceptional requests for refunds will be considered by the Institute on a case-by-case basis. The Institute's decision shall be final.

7. Accreditation Decisions & Outcomes

Following completion of the technical assessment, the Accreditation Team will review the findings and determine the appropriate outcome.

Where necessary, the Institute may seek clarification or additional information from the applicant before making a decision.

The Institute aims to process applications as efficiently as possible; however, the time taken will depend on the completeness of the application and the complexity of the course(s) being assessed. Applications will remain open for no more than six working weeks from the receipt of application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all documentation is provided within this time frame.

Possible outcomes include:

7.1. Approved

Where the application demonstrates that the required accreditation standards have been met, the applicant will be granted accreditation.

The approval notification will confirm:

- the accredited Training Provider;
- the approved course(s);
- the accreditation period;
- any conditions applicable to the approval; and
- details regarding the use of IFSM logos and branding.

The training provider will be issued a certificate of approval.

7.2. Approved with Conditions

Where minor issues have been identified that do not prevent accreditation being granted, the Institute may approve the application subject to specified conditions.

The applicant will be advised of:

- the conditions to be met;
- the evidence required to demonstrate compliance; and
- the timescale for completing the required actions.

Failure to satisfy the conditions within the specified timescale may result in accreditation being suspended or withdrawn.

7.3. Deferred

Where insufficient information has been provided to enable the Institute to reach a decision, the application may be deferred.

The applicant will be advised of:

- the additional information required;
- any amendments requested; and
- the timeframe for providing the outstanding information.

The assessment will continue once the requested information has been received.

7.4. Refused

Where the Institute determines that the accreditation requirements have not been met, the application will be refused.

The applicant will receive written notification outlining the reasons for the decision and, where appropriate, recommendations to assist with any future application.

After a minimum period of two month and having addressed the reasons for the decision the applicant may request reassessment (see section11)

Applicants have the right to appeal the decision in accordance with the IFSM Appeals Policy (see section 12)

8. After Accreditation

Once accreditation has been granted, Training Providers are responsible for maintaining the standards on which approval was based.

8.1. On going Requirements

Accredited Training Providers should:

- continue to deliver courses in accordance with the approved syllabus;
- maintain appropriate quality assurance arrangements;
- ensure trainers remain suitably qualified and competent;
- maintain accurate learner and assessment records;
- maintain sufficient insurance cover;
- comply with all applicable IFSM policies; and
- notify the Institute of any significant changes affecting the organisation or approved courses.

8.2. Annual Registration Fee

To maintain IFSM Accredited Training Provider status, an annual registration fee is payable. Please refer to the IFSM website for the current schedule of fees.

The annual registration fee contributes towards the administration and ongoing management of the accreditation scheme.

The first annual registration fee will become due one year after the date accreditation is granted. Thereafter, the fee will be payable annually for as long as the Training Provider wishes to maintain its accredited status.

An invoice will be issued by the Institute at the beginning of each renewal period. Continued accreditation is subject to payment of the annual registration fee.

Failure to pay the annual registration fee may result in the suspension or withdrawal of accreditation in accordance with the IFSM Training Provider and Course Accreditation Policy. The timeframes for suspension or withdrawal are at the discretion of the Institute.

8.3. Changes That Must Be Notified

The Institute should be notified as soon as reasonably practicable of significant changes, including but not limited to:

- changes to the organisation's legal name or ownership;
- changes to the primary contact;
- changes to lead trainers or assessors;
- significant changes to course content or learning outcomes;
- changes to assessment methods;
- changes to quality assurance arrangements; or

- any matter that may affect continued compliance with the IFSM Accreditation Policy.

Failure to notify the Institute of significant changes may affect accreditation status.

8.4. Use of IFSM Logos

Accredited Training Providers may use the appropriate IFSM accreditation logos only in accordance with the Guidelines on the Official Use of IFSM Logos.

The IFSM Training Provider logo is the official logo issued to organisations that have successfully achieved IFSM Accredited Training Provider status.

Accredited Training Providers may also use the IFSM Certified CPD logo in accordance with the published logo guidance.

Logos must only be used:

- while accreditation remains valid;
- in relation to approved courses;
- in the format provided by the Institute; and
- in accordance with the published logo guidance.

Accreditation of a Training Provider or course does not:

- confer IFSM membership on learners;
- permit learners or certificate holders to use IFSM logos or branding;
- entitle learners to use IFSM postnominals; or
- imply that the IFSM endorses any products or services offered by the Training Provider beyond the accredited course(s).

The Institute may require the removal of logos where accreditation has expired, been suspended or withdrawn, or where the logos are being used incorrectly.

9. Validation and Monitoring

Accreditation is subject to ongoing validation to ensure that accredited Training Providers continue to meet the standards required by the IFSM.

The purpose of validation is to support continual improvement, maintain consistency across accredited providers and protect the integrity and reputation of IFSM accreditation.

9.1. Validation Period

Accreditation is normally subject to validation every two years, unless otherwise determined by the Institute.

The Institute reserves the right to undertake an earlier review where circumstances indicate that this is necessary.

9.2. Validation Process

Prior to the validation date, the Institute will contact the Training Provider with details of the information required to complete the validation.

The validation process may include a review of:

- organisational details;
- Insurance documentation;
- trainer qualifications and competency;
- course content and learning outcomes;
- training and assessment materials;
- quality assurance arrangements;
- learner feedback;
- complaints relating to accredited courses;
- continued compliance with IFSM policies; and
- the use of IFSM logos and branding.

The Institute may request additional information where necessary to complete the validation.

9.3. Monitoring

The Institute may undertake monitoring activities at any time during the accreditation period where this is considered appropriate.

Monitoring may be undertaken:

- as part of the routine validation process;
- following a complaint;
- where concerns have been raised regarding compliance with the Accreditation Policy;
- where significant changes have been notified by the Training Provider; or
- where the Institute considers additional verification to be necessary.

Monitoring activities will be proportionate to the circumstances and may include requests for additional documentation, meetings with the Training Provider or other reasonable verification activities.

10. Additional Courses

Once a Training Provider has successfully achieved IFSM Accredited Training Provider status, additional courses may be submitted for accreditation at any time.

The initial accreditation application includes the assessment of up to three courses. Additional courses submitted after accreditation has been granted will be subject to the current course assessment fee.

Each course is assessed independently against the IFSM accreditation standards and approval is not automatic.

10.1. Submitting an Additional Course

Applications for additional course accreditation should include:

- a completed Additional Course Application Form;
- the applicable assessment fee;
- the course syllabus;
- learning outcomes;
- presentation materials;
- learner assessment methods;
- copies of learner resources; and
- any additional information requested by the Institute.

Where a course is based upon an existing approved course, applicants should clearly identify the amendments or additions that have been made.

10.2. Assessment

Additional courses are assessed using the same accreditation criteria as the initial application.

During the assessment, the Institute may:

- request additional information;
- request amendments to course materials;
- seek clarification from the Training Provider; or
- request further evidence where necessary.

10.3. Approval

Training Providers will receive written confirmation of the outcome of the assessment.

Additional courses must not be advertised, promoted or described as IFSM Accredited until written confirmation of approval has been issued by the Institute.

11. Reassessment

Where an application was refused, applicants may submit a revised application for reassessment. The decision to allow reassessment is at the discretion of the IFSM accreditation team.

In order for reassessment to take place, the applying training provider must wait a minimum of two months from the date of the original outcome.

A reassessment application should demonstrate that the issues identified during the previous assessment have been satisfactorily addressed.

The Institute may request additional evidence before undertaking the reassessment.

Reassessment applications are subject to the applicable fee.

In the event of another fail, no further accreditation attempts can be made within a 12-month period and a full, new application will need to be made to the IFSM.

12. Appeals

Applicants who disagree with an accreditation decision may submit an appeal in accordance with the IFSM Appeals Policy.

Before submitting an appeal, applicants are encouraged to consider whether the issues identified in the assessment can be addressed through a revised or resubmitted application. Where an application has not met the required accreditation standards, resubmission will often be the most appropriate course of action.

Appeals should:

- be submitted in writing;
- clearly identify the decision being appealed;
- state the grounds of appeal;
- explain why the applicant believes the decision was incorrect or procedurally unfair; and
- include any supporting evidence the applicant wishes the Institute to consider.

Only one appeal may be submitted in respect of each accreditation application. The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Details of the appeals process are contained within the IFSM Appeals Policy.

13. Complaints

Complaints relating to the accreditation scheme or an Accredited Training Provider will be managed in accordance with the IFSM Complaints Policy.

Complaints should be submitted using the Institute's Complaints Form together with any supporting evidence.

The Institute will acknowledge receipt of complaints and consider them in accordance with the Institute's Complaints Policy.

Where a complaint identifies potential concerns regarding an Accredited Training Provider's continued compliance with the accreditation standards, the Institute may undertake additional monitoring or validation activities.

Appendix A –Application Checklist

Before completing and submitting your application, please ensure you have the following information and supporting documentation available. Some items will be requested within the application form, while others may be requested by the Institute during the assessment process.

- ☐ Payment of the applicable accreditation fee
- ☐ Company information
- ☐ Public Liability Insurance
- ☐ Professional Indemnity Insurance (where applicable)
- ☐ Name of individual(s) who have prime responsibility for the administration of courses and quality assurance
- ☐ Name of individuals who have responsibility for delivery of course(s) or programme(s)
- ☐ Trainer CVs (of above names individuals)
- ☐ Trainer qualifications (of above names individuals)
- ☐ Trainer CPD
- ☐ Professional Membership, accreditations from other providers, ISO certifications, such as ISO 9001, ISO21001, ISO29993

Course Details (up to a maximum of three)

- ☐ Course title
- ☐ Name of regulator (if regulated qualification)
- ☐ Level of the qualification (if applicable)
- ☐ Course Duration (in hours)
- ☐ Course syllabus & Content
- ☐ Learning outcomes
- ☐ Presentation materials

- ☐ Assessment methodology
- ☐ Learner Feedback (Where available)
- ☐ Sample learner certificate (where applicable)
- ☐ Quality Assurance Policy
- ☐ Complaints Policy
- ☐ Appeals Policy
- ☐ Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- ☐ Data Protection / Privacy Policy
- ☐ Conflict of interest policy
- ☐ Exams/ assessment policy
- ☐ Health and Safety Policy (where applicable)
- ☐ Any additional documentation requested by the Institute

Appendix B – Accreditation Assessment Matrix

Applications are assessed against the following areas:

Assessment Area	Examples of Evidence
Organisation	Company details, governance arrangements
Trainer Competence	Qualifications, experience, CPD
Course Content	Syllabus, lesson plans, learning outcomes
Assessments	Assessment papers, marking guidance
Certification	Sample certificates, certificate issue procedures, criteria for successful completion, certificate register/records, controls for the use of IFSM logos (where applicable)
Quality Assurance	QA procedures, learner feedback, course reviews
Policies	Organisational policies and procedures
Compliance	Insurance, legislative compliance, IFSM requirements

Meeting these criteria does not guarantee accreditation. The Institute will consider the application as a whole before reaching a decision.

Appendix C – Accreditation Process Flow

The accreditation process normally follows the stages below:

1. Review the Accreditation Policy and Guidance.
 2. Prepare the supporting documentation.
 3. Complete the Accreditation Application Form.
 4. Submit the application and supporting documents.
 5. Administrative review by the Institute.
 6. Technical assessment.
 7. Accreditation decision.
 8. Accreditation granted (where successful).
 9. Ongoing validation and monitoring.
 10. Submission of additional courses (where applicable).
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Version Control

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