The Institute
of
Fire Safety Managers

Established 1997

Policy for the Accreditation or Approval of Training Course Providers

Version: 13

Summary:	This document details the Institute of Fire Safety Managers (IFSM) application procedure for accreditation or approval of training course providers. It outlines the internal process, entitlements for successful applicants and the appeals procedure.	
Target Audience:	All members, Staff and Council	
Next Review Date:	April 2025	
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Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **1** of **9**

Table of Contents

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **2** of **9**

General Procedures for Accreditation of Courses and Approval of Training Centres and Similar Establishments

1   Introduction

The rules and regulations set out hereafter are enacted under the bylaws of the Insitute to detail the process and required information for the accreditation of courses, centres, and similar establishments by the Institute. This also includes the relevant qualifications for the initial assessment and continued validation of any approved course or centre and any qualifications delivered by these training providers. The following definitions apply in this document:

IFSM Accredited Course: Any course that the Institute determines is of a standard and quality worthy of association with the Institute.

IFSM Approved Centre: Any training centre or similar establishment that offers courses which the Institute determine are of a standard and quality worthy of association with the Institute.

Validation: The continuous maintenance of IFSM Accredited Courses and IFSM Approved Centres.

2   General procedures

a)   The Institute offers course accreditation or approved centre status on receipt of the appropriate fees and associated costs.
b)   The accredited qualification or approved centre status must be continuously validated by the Institute annually. A nominal annual registration fee will be charged for this process. This fee is set to cover administration costs and falls due on 31st January each year for the proceeding year. An invoice will be sent out at the beginning of each year.
c)   Failure to promptly pay the annual registration fee may result in the Institute withdrawing its accreditation or approval.
d)   If the accreditation or approval is withdrawn due to failure to pay the annual registration fees promptly, then a full accreditation or approval fee will become due if validation is to continue. After that, registration fees will become due as outlined in b) above.
e)   The Institute must be informed if there is to be any material change or additions to the accredited qualification(s) or if any significant changes in approved centres may affect its standing. On notification of such, the Institute will appoint a member of the office administration team to determine whether the changes affect the confirmed process regarding the qualification or centre.
f)   The Institute expects the training provider or approved organisation to maintain regular contact with the Institute and should supply proof of the maintenance of standards. The Institute will conduct an audit and review

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **3** of **9**

every five years, the costs of this to be borne by the training provider or approved organisation.

g) The Institute reserves the right to ask for proof of maintenance of standards.

3   Entitlements of Accredited Course providers and Approved Centres

a) Each organisation that runs accredited courses or holds approved centre status is entitled to use the Institute's name and 'Accredited/Approved Centre by the Institute of Fire Safety Managers for Training' Logo. This may be used on any material that has relevance to the accredited course or, in the case of an approved centre, all relevant courses that are run under the banner of the approved centre. The use of this logo may continue whilst all current fees have been paid.

b) The Institute will issue a general certificate of approval to an organisation holding approved centre status, provided all current fees have been paid. All organisations running accredited courses may use the Institute's accredited course logo on the certificates of the successful candidates, provided all fees have been paid and on receipt of a nominal roll of said successful candidates. Approved centres may use the same logo on all course certificates that are provided to successful candidates for those courses that have formed the basis of the approved centre status.

Internal Procedures for Accreditation of Courses and Approval of Training Centres and Similar Establishments

1.   Introduction and Authority

1.1   **Introduction**

This part of the document lays down the Institute's policy for the accreditation or approval of training course providers.
These procedures are set out for the use of the accreditation teams when carrying out accreditations or approvals for and on behalf of the Institute. They are designed to provide the accreditation teams with the necessary guidance and advice to make recommendations on the quality and standard of applications for accreditation or approval.
These procedures have been structured for 'internal' use only for those courses requiring accreditation and centres requiring approval.

1.2   **Prior Approval**

The approval and accreditation process shall normally be started upon receipt of an application by the Accreditation Secretary.

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **4** of **9**

1.3 **Authority to Progress Accreditation Negotiations and Contracts**

The authority to handle and progress all accreditation and/or approval matters shall be vested with the Accreditation Secretary, who will assemble, as necessary or appropriate, an assessment team from the IFSM team will assist with the accreditation activities as outlined in this document.

2. **Initial Procedure**

Accreditation applications should be submitted from our website; these will go to the IFSM Accreditation team for review. All fees and guidance on applying can be found on our website at www.ifsm.org.uk

3. **Receipt of Application**

3.1 Upon receipt of a completed application form, the Accreditation Secretary will:

a) Acknowledge receipt of the application with the applicant.
b) Check the applications for omissions and/or accuracy and take any remedial action necessary with the applicant.
c) Take action to start the process.
d) Advise the Council of new applicants at the next available Council meeting.

3.2 Upon receipt of a completed application form, the accreditation administrator shall contact the applicant and confirm the following:

a) Name of the course(s) or programme(s) being designed, delivered, or promoted by the applicant for which accreditation is sought.
b) Identity of the individual(s) who have prime responsibility for the course(s) or programme(s) for which accreditation/approval is sought.
c) Intended target audience of the course(s) or programme(s).
d) Identification of the certification or qualification linked to the course(s) or programme(s).
e) Confirm any confidentiality issues.

4. **Review and Evaluation of Information**

4.1 Upon confirmation of the information at 3.2 above, the accreditation team will evaluate the information contained in the application. It must be established that the applying body meets or exceeds the criteria laid down in the Institute's accreditation policy.

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **5** of **9**

4.2   When the accreditation team has decided that the criteria and requirements have been met, the Accreditation Secretary will contact the applicant and arrange a visit to the applicant's site to carry out the accreditation or approval.

5.   Site Visit Stage

5.1   There shall be at least **one** visit to the applicant's site before granting accreditation or approval of the course(s) or program(s).

5.2   Two representatives from the accreditation team shall visit the applicant's site to accredit the course(s) or programme(s) or approve the centre. These representatives shall evaluate the applying body and its educational and training processes, the procedures for ensuring quality assurance, academic standards, and resource provision.

5.3   The Accreditation/Approval Team should pay particular attention to the following points:

5.3.1   The purpose and objectives of the course.
5.3.2   Course management.
5.3.3   Admission requirements and student selection.
5.3.4   Criteria for the progress of students through the course.
5.3.5   Failure rates.
5.3.6   Course structure, philosophy, and methodology.
5.3.7   Technical subjects taught.
5.3.8   Teaching methods.
5.3.9   Subject options.
5.3.10 Integration of design, management, and professional studies.
5.3.11 Projects.
5.3.12 Methods of assessment.
5.3.13 General resources.
5.3.14 Staff qualifications and experience.
5.3.15 Support staff.
5.3.16 External moderation arrangements (including quality control and standards, e.g., BS/ISO).
5.3.17 Extent and arrangements for practical work.

5.4   The Accreditation/Approval visit should aim to achieve the following:

5.4.1   Meet staff and students and discuss the course with them.
5.4.2   Inspect a selection of students' work, examination papers and assessments.
5.4.3   To ascertain, by inspection, whether adequate facilities are available

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **6** of **9**

for the course.

5.5 The Accreditation/Approval visit should last as long as required to include the following phases:

5.5.1 An initial meeting of the Accreditation/Approval Team alone.
5.5.2 A meeting with the Head of Department/Course Leader.
5.5.3 Discussions with members of the academic staff.
5.5.4 Meeting with a representative group of students (if possible).
5.5.5 A tour of all facilities.
5.5.6 A final meeting of the Accreditation/Approval Team.
5.5.7 A final meeting with the Head of Department/Course Leader.

6. Accreditation

Subject to a satisfactory conclusion following the site visit and evaluation of the course(s) or centre, the accreditation team will present their recommendations for ratification of accreditation or approval.

7. Appeals Procedure

The Institute has the right to reject an application if it does not meet the standard set out in the Accreditation Policy. When this is the case, the applicant will be informed by the accreditation team of the reason(s) for the rejection. Feedback will be provided where possible.

An Applicant may appeal against the decision by submitting a formal Letter of Appeal to the Business Manager of the Institute. The appeal must be within seven days of the receipt of the decision. It should contain the grounds on which the appeal is based and should be accompanied by such evidence that the Applicant feels is necessary to support the appeal. This further evidence should be additional material, not just a re-submission of the original application.

On receipt of the appeal, the Business Manager will form an Appeals Committee consisting of at least three members of the Institute, only one of which can be from the original Assessment Panel, who will review the appeal, together with the initial application and make a decision.

Only one appeal will be allowed with any one application. However, it is hoped that following an unsuccessful appeal, the Appeals Committee will be able to offer advice to the appellant.

8. Disputes and Complaints

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **7** of **9**

In the case of any disputes or complaints arising from any of the procedures in this guidance document or about an accredited centre or course provider, the Business Manager will inform the Institute's Council and appoint a Council member to review the dispute or complaint and submit the findings to the Business Manager for further action as required. This may be via the Institute's Code of Ethics / Disciplinary Procedures.

9. Monitoring and Control

The Institute shall monitor all matters relating to how the applicant handles and manages the course(s) or programme(s) for which accreditation has been given and take any necessary action through Council. The onus remains with the training provider to inform the Institute of any changes, modifications or amendments made to the accredited or approved centre so that a review can be carried out, if necessary, and any action required can be taken.

10. Costs, Fees, and Final Administration

All costs and fees for the accreditation, approval or validation of courses will be charged at the rate approved by the Council of the Institute. The applying body will also be liable for all reasonable and relevant out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the accreditation team during site visits.

Note: Invoicing for accreditation and/or approval fees plus incurred expenses will be actioned by Accreditation Admin Support on notification of the Accreditation Secretary.

Once the Accreditation Secretary and Council have approved the decision, they will issue the appropriate certificates of the Institute to the training provider.

11. Validation and Review

All courses will be continuously validated to maintain their current status with the Institute by paying an annual validation fee. All accredited courses and approved centres will be validated annually, and fees will be charged in accordance with the schedule of fees determined from time to time by the Council.
The Accreditation Committee will review all accredited courses and approved centres at least every five years.

Before the fifth anniversary, the accreditation team will contact the provider & request the submission of a review pro forma application steps three to seven above will be followed. The charges for this review visit will include the accreditation team expenses plus the annual fee if outstanding.

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **8** of **9**

Version Control

Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Page	Reason for Change
24/09/21	J Cowie	10	ALL	To reflect changes due to the new website and online application form. Formatted to house style.
22/04/22	H Hilton	11	7 & 8	Updated appeal procedure, more detail added to mirror TFRAR. Added Disputes & Complaints
05/09/22	H Hilton	12	ALL	Removal of appendices as forms now on the website or internal controlled documents.
28/09/22	R King	13	ALL	Removal of reference to appendices and minor grammar changes.

Reviewers/contributors

Name	Position	Version Reviewed & Date
JC / LB / RK / HH	Accreditation Sub Committee	V10 - 24/09/21
JC / HH	Acc Sec & BM	V11 – 22/04/22

Registered in England and Wales with Company Number 5669063.
Head Office: The Institute of Fire Safety Managers, Office 109, Dunston Innovation Centre, Chesterfield, S41 8NG

Accreditation Policy – V13
28/09/22

Page **9** of **9**