

Programme Accreditation

Core Competence Requirements, Standards and Procedures for Undergraduate (*UK levels 4-6*) and taught Postgraduate (*UK level 7+*) education and training of Associate Nutritionists

Approved by Accreditation Committee 14th September 2016.

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Introduction

About Us

Association for Nutrition (AfN) is a registered charity. AfN holds the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists.

AfN's purpose is to protect and benefit the public by defining and advancing standards of evidence-based practice across the field of nutrition and at all levels within the workforce. Registration with the UK Voluntary Register of Nutritionists is an accepted mark of professional status and competence in nutrition; nutrition professionals with shared ethical standards, scientific integrity and commitment to public protection.

In addition, AfN sets standards for the wider nutrition workforce and recognises high quality, relevant nutrition training through University Degree Accreditation, CPD Endorsement and Course Certification schemes.

For more information about the Association for Nutrition, please see;
www.associationfornutrition.org

About this Document

This document describes the core competencies, standards and procedures for the undergraduate and taught postgraduate education of nutritionists. It replaces previous documentation issued by AfN 'Standard Operating Procedures Course Accreditation,' approved July 2012 and revised February 2014. Programmes accredited by AfN meet the core competencies, standards and procedures described in this document. Students who successfully graduate from an AfN Accredited Programme are eligible for direct entry to the UKVRN as Associate Nutritionists and may use the letters ANutr after their name.

The Core Competency Requirements for Associate Nutritionists apply to individuals applying to the UKVRN register as Associate Nutritionists via portfolio, and to programmes preparing students for direct entry to the register. They describe the expected knowledge and understanding in nutrition at undergraduate and taught postgraduate level for an Associate Nutritionist. The core competencies were approved by AfN Council in June 2012 and remain broadly unchanged, with the exception of the addition of explicit reference to human or animal systems.

Standards describe the expected context for the delivery of the initial education and training including protecting the public from unsafe practice, the requirements for admission to an accredited programme, curriculum delivery, assessment and quality assurance. The standards draw upon previously approved policies contained either within the application form, mapping form or supplementary information.

Procedures describe how AfN receives and assesses applications from higher education providers for accreditation, including submission requirements, annual review and appeals. These have been revised and updated in line with best practice.

In preparing this document AfN undertook two consultations to ensure its proposals protected and benefited the public. The first informal consultation took place in Autumn 2015, when the academic community, including programme leaders and AfN accreditation assessors were asked to comment on the draft document. The views of the academic community were analysed

and comments, where judged appropriate, incorporated into the final draft document, which was issued for formal public consultation in March 2016. Analysis of the outcome of both consultations is published on the AfN website, and the AfN would like to thank everyone who took the time to comment on its proposals. The document will remain under review, and feedback and suggestions for improvements are welcome, and should be directed, in the first instance, to the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education).

International Programmes

Higher education providers outside the UK are welcome to apply for AfN Accreditation of undergraduate and taught postgraduate programmes. Early discussion with AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) is advised prior to making an application, to ensure appropriate application of these outcomes, standards and procedures within the host country.

Timescale (Implementation)

Core Competency Requirements

As the Core Competency Requirements for Associate Nutritionists remain broadly unchanged from those approved by AfN Council in June 2012, with the exception of the addition of explicit reference to human or animal systems, and all accredited programmes are expected to continue to meet the Core Competency Requirements.

Standards

All unaccredited programmes applying for accreditation at or after 1st December 2016 will be expected to meet the Core Competency Requirements for Associate Nutritionists and the Standards.

All currently accredited programmes will be expected to submit a cover letter describing how they meet the Standards as part of their 2017 annual monitoring.

All applications for reaccreditation at or after 1st December 2017 are expected to meet the Standards. Exceptions will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Procedures

Procedures will become effective from 1st October 2016 for all programmes.

Core Competency Requirements for Associate Nutritionists

Introduction

The Core Competency Requirements for Associate Nutritionists describe the expected knowledge and understanding in nutrition at graduate level for an Associate Nutritionist.

The five Core Competencies are;

Core Competency 1 - Science *Knowledge and understanding of the scientific basis of nutrition. Understanding nutritional requirements from the molecular through to the population level - for either human or animal systems.*

Core Competency 2 - Food or Feed Chain *Knowledge and understanding of the food or feed chain and its impact on food or feed choice. Integrating the food or feed supply with dietary intake - for either human or animal systems.*

Core Competency 3 - Social/Behavioural *Knowledge and understanding of food or feed in a social or behavioural context, at all stages of the life course - for either human or animal systems.*

Core Competency 4 - Health/Wellbeing *Understanding how to apply the scientific principles of nutrition for the promotion of health and wellbeing of individuals, groups and populations; recognising benefits and risks - for either human or animal systems.*

Core Competency 5 – Professional Conduct *Understanding of Professional Conduct and the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance, along with evidence of good character.*

The Core Competencies

Core Competency 1 - Science

Knowledge and understanding of the scientific basis of nutrition. Understanding nutritional requirements from the molecular through to the population level - for either human or animal systems.

Areas of knowledge & skills to be covered:

CC1a - The human/ animal body and its functions, especially digestion, absorption, excretion, respiration, fluid and electrolyte balance, cardiovascular, neuro-endocrine, musculoskeletal and haematological systems, immunity and thermoregulation, energy balance and physical activity

CC1b - Mechanisms for the integration of metabolism, at molecular, cellular and whole body levels for either human or animal systems.

CC1c - What nutrients are (including water & oxygen)

CC1d - Nature and extent of metabolic demand for nutrients.

CC1e - How nutrients are used by the body (either human or animal) consequences of deficiency and assessment of nutritional status.

CC1f - Non-nutrient components of foods, feeds and drinks that affect diet and health including alcohol for either human or animal systems.

CC1g - Nutrient analysis: calculating nutrient contents of foods, feeds and diets of an individual or group of individuals or animals, justifying choice of a method of dietary assessment for a specific stated purpose

CC1h - Digestion, absorption, transportation and storage of nutrients and non-nutrient components of foods or feeds for either human or animal systems.

CC1i - Nutrition in health and disease, consequences of an unbalanced diet for either human or animal systems.

CC1j - Nature of common conditions that require dietary manipulation or can affect physical activity, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, cancer etc. for either human or animal systems.

CC1k - How nutritional needs change with age, gender, physical activity, lifestyle etc. for either human or animal systems.

CC1l - Ability to plan, conduct, analyse and report on investigations into an aspect of nutrition in a responsible, safe and ethical manner

CC1m - Ability to carry out sample selection and to ensure validity, accuracy, calibration, precision, replicability and highlight uncertainty during collection in accordance with the basic principles of good clinical practice.

CC1n - Ability to obtain, record, collate, analyse, interpret and report nutrition-related data using appropriate qualitative and quantitative research and statistical methods in the field and/or laboratory and/or intervention studies, working individually or in a group, as is most appropriate for the discipline under study.

CC1o - Prepare, process, interpret and present data, using appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques, statistical programmes, spreadsheets and programs for presenting data visually.

CC1p - Health research methods, dietary nutrition methodologies and nutritional epidemiology for either human or animal systems.

CC1q - Theories of and development of practical skills in communication and learning

Core Competency 2 - Food or Feed Chain

Knowledge and understanding of the food or feed chain and its impact on food or feed choice. Integrating the food or feed supply with dietary intake for either human or animal systems.

Areas of knowledge & skills to be covered:

CC2a - Food or feed commodities (staple foods, main sources of key nutrients, novel sources etc.) within UK and/or internationally for either human or animal systems.

CC2b - Effect on chemical composition and nutritional quality of food, feed and diet for either human or animal systems of:

- methods of food or feed production, preparation, preservation, fortification and format
- sources of food or feed supply
- methods of cooking and storage

CC2c - Familiarity with and/or development of practical skills involved in the methods to analyse the composition of foods or feeds

CC2d - Ability to formulate ideas and opinions concerning foods or feeds, nutrients, non-nutrient components of food and nutrition effectively and appropriately for either human or animal systems.

CC2e - Understanding of issues associated with food or feed sustainability.

Core Competency 3 - Social/Behavioural

Knowledge and understanding of food or feed in a social or behavioural context, at all stages of the life course.

Areas of knowledge & skills to be covered:

CC3a – Food or feed and nutrition and health policy (at global, national and local level) for either human or animal systems.

CC3b - Significance of evaluation of nutrition in maintaining and driving public health agendas

CC3c - Factors that affect an individual's, communities' and population groups' nutritional needs and practices for either human or animal systems.

CC3d - Religious and cultural beliefs and practices that impact on food, nutrition and health

CC3e - Consideration of financial/social and environmental circumstances on diet and nutritional intake.

CC3f - Theories and application of methods of improving health, behaviour and change for either human or animal systems.

CC3g - Design and implementation of intervention projects and programmes, methods for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness and efficiency.

CC3h - Theories of nutrition health education and nutrition health promotion (humans only)

CC3i - Ability to design/formulate a diet to meet a specification appropriate for a stated situation for an individual, human or animal, or group of humans or animals.

Core Competency 4 - Health/Wellbeing

Understanding how to apply the scientific principles of nutrition for the promotion of health and wellbeing of individuals, groups and populations; recognising benefits and risks for either human or animal systems.

Areas of knowledge & skills to be covered:

CC4a - Principles and methods of measurement and estimation of energy balance; energy expenditure physical activity and fitness; body mass; body composition; how body mass and energy balance are controlled for either human or animal systems.

CC4b - Theory and methods of investigating the dietary, nutrient and activity patterns of the general population, sub groups and the individual for either human or animal systems.

CC4c - Scientific basis of the safety and health promoting properties of nutrients and non-nutrient components of food or feed, based on knowledge of the metabolic effects of nutrients, anti-nutrients, toxicants, additives, pharmacologically active agents (drugs); nutrient-nutrient interactions, nutrient-gene interactions, 'nutraceuticals', functional foods, and any other metabolically active constituents of foods or feeds and the diet.

CC4d - Scientific basis for the measurement and estimation of nutritional requirements, dietary reference values for the general population for either human or animal systems.

CC4e - Understanding the general principles underpinning, and strengths and limitations of, common methods of assessment of nutritional status including clinical, anthropometric, dietary, biochemical, physiological, and functional methods for either human or animal systems.

CC4f - Understanding the general principles and methods associated with determining the

efficacy, health attributes, health claims, safety, and legal aspects of foods, feeds, drinks and supplements for either human or animal systems.

CC4g - Ability to recognise strengths and weaknesses in dietary, nutrition and health research methods, in order to understand the limitations of the scientific basis of nutritional knowledge for either human or animal systems.

CC4h - Ability to integrate knowledge and understanding from a variety of sources to identify or propose solutions in one of the following areas: Improvement of human health or improvement of the welfare and/or productivity of animals or improvement of food production and sustainability.

Core Competency 5 – Professional Conduct

Understanding of Professional Conduct and the AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance, along with evidence of good character.

CC5a - Ethics and values of professions.

CC5b - AfN Standards of Ethics, Conduct and Performance.

CC5c - Legal context of nutrition practice; including current relevant legislation and guidelines to providing information to individuals.

CC5d - Responsibilities and accountability in relation to the current national and international legislation, national guidelines, local policies and protocols and clinical/corporate Governance in relation to nutrition.

CC5e - Can recognise the moral and ethical issues of investigation and appreciate the need for ethical standards and professional codes of conduct applicable to both interventional and observational studies.

CC5f - The relevance of research governance frameworks.

CC5g - Intellectual property issues

Standards

Introduction

The standards describe the expected context for the delivery of the initial education and training within an academic setting (normally a university/ higher education provider). Each standard is supported by criteria which must be met if a programme is to be accredited. Demonstrating that the standards are met should not be unduly onerous for a higher education provider, and guidance is given on the type of evidence providers may like to submit as part of their application. In many cases, this evidence should be standard university/ institutional documentation.

Accreditation Committee in its decision making will apply a fair and balanced consideration of evidence to meet standards. Higher education providers are encouraged to have an early conversation with AfN's Quality Assurance Manager (Education) if a provider can demonstrate that meeting a standard is inappropriate given the context, duration, location or size of a programme, to ensure appropriate application of these standards, for example, for programmes provided by higher education providers outside the UK.

Standards for the delivery of initial education and training

The standards for the delivery of initial education and training of an accredited programme are:

Standard 1 - Public and Population Safety *Education and training must be delivered in a context which assures public and population safety.*

Standard 2 – Admission of Students *Recruitment, selection and admission of students must be transparent.*

Standard 3 – Curriculum Delivery and Assessment *The curriculum for AfN Accredited Programmes must deliver and assess the core competency requirements.*

Standard 4 – Management, Monitoring and Review of Education and Training. *The quality of AfN Accredited Programmes must be managed, monitored, reviewed and evaluated in a systematic and developmental way, through transparent processes which show who is responsible for what at each stage.*

Standard 5 – Leadership, Resources and Capacity *Leadership, resources and capacity must be sufficient to deliver the core competency requirements in an academic and professional context, informed by evidence-based nutrition science.*

Standards for the delivery of the initial education and training

Standard 1 - Public and Population Safety

Education and training must be delivered in a context which assures public and population safety.

Criteria to meet this standard:

S1a - There must be effective policies and systems in place to ensure students do not jeopardise public and population safety. Concerns must be addressed immediately.

S1b - Students must have effective support for health, conduct and academic issues.

S1c - Students must understand what is and what is not professional behaviour and understand AfN's Standards for Ethics, Conduct and Performance.

S1d - There must be effective and robust policies and systems in place to ensure students who are not fit to practise understand that they will not be eligible for direct entry to the register.

Some examples of evidence to demonstrate this standard is met:

- 1.1 Evidence sources to meet this standard can include;
- Programmes specifications, programme, module or unit handbooks, reports from staff student consultative committees, programme, module or unit evaluation reports, policies on admissions, academic standards assessment and examination and quality assurance of academic standards assessment and examination.
 - Evidence that AfN's Standards for Ethics, Conduct and Performance is used to promote professional conduct.
 - For programmes delivered in the UK and Ireland, external examiner reports, internal examiner responses with evidence of analysis and follow up actions, submissions to and reports on QAA subject benchmarks.

Standard 2 – Admission of Students

Recruitment, selection and admission of students must be transparent.

Criteria to meet this standard:

S2a - Recruitment, selection and admission of students for entry to *undergraduate* programmes must be explicit and include;

- Academic and professional entry requirements appropriate to an AfN accredited programme, which must include sound underpinning knowledge in the biosciences.
- For programmes in the UK, admission requirements should normally include GCSE (or equivalent) passes at grade C and above or 4 + on new GCSE structure (England only) in English Language, Maths and two sciences

(Chemistry, Biology, Physics or double science equivalents (England & Wales only) and at least one appropriate science subject at A Level, Irish Leaving Certificate, Scottish Highers or equivalent.

- For international students attending programmes in the UK, academic and professional entry requirements must be broadly equivalent to those expected of UK students. At admission, students whose first language is not English must have English Language requirements appropriate to an AfN Accredited programme, which must not be less than 6.5 IELTS (or equivalent), with no individual section less than 6.0.
- Academic and professional entry requirements for mature students attending programmes in the UK must be explicit and may take account of equivalent prior qualifications (BTEC, HNC/D, access courses, etc.) and experience.
- For admission to programmes outside the UK selection criteria must be broadly equivalent to that of the UK and be able to demonstrate academic and professional entry and language requirements appropriate to the professional context of nutrition of the country in which the programme is delivered.
- Recognition of prior learning, if appropriate, in accordance with AfN policy (*to be developed*).

S2b - Recruitment, selection and admission of students for entry to taught *postgraduate* programmes must be explicit and include;

- Academic and professional entry requirements appropriate to an AfN accredited programme, which must include sound underpinning knowledge in the biosciences.
- For admission to taught postgraduate programmes in the UK, a recent, relevant undergraduate science-based degree is desirable, however, students without a science-based degree may be eligible, but may need to undertake action to ensure a sound underpinning knowledge in the biosciences to meet the demands of the accredited programme.
- At admission, students whose first language is not English must have English Language requirements appropriate to an AfN Accredited programme, which must not be less than 6.5 IELTS, with no individual section less than 6.0.
- For admissions to programme outside the UK selection criteria must be broadly equivalent to that of the UK and be able to demonstrate academic and professional entry and language requirements appropriate to the professional context of nutrition of the country in which the programme is delivered.
- Recognition of prior learning, if appropriate, in accordance with AfN policy (*to be developed*).

Some examples of evidence to demonstrate this standard is met:

1.2 Evidence sources to meet this standard can include:

- Evidence of programme recruitment, selection and admission processes
- Evidence of clear procedures for the recognition and evaluation of prior learning, including access courses.
- Evidence of training of admission tutors/ staff.

Standard 3 – Curriculum Delivery and Assessment

The curriculum for AfN Accredited programme must deliver and assess the core competency requirements.

Criteria to meet this standard:

S3a - Core Competency Requirements must be delivered in an environment which places study in an academic and professional context, is informed by research and provides opportunities for students to develop as learners and professionals, with a balance between taught components, directed learning and student self-study.

S3b - Core Competency Requirements must be delivered in a progressive and integrated manner; so that the component parts are linked into a cohesive programme of academic and professional study, introducing, progressing and assessing knowledge and skills until the Core Competency Requirements are achieved.

S3c - Core Competency Requirements must be assessed using a range of methods and all assessments of Core Competency Requirements must be passed. As a general rule, this means that compensation, trailing and extended re-sit opportunities within and between modules where core competences are assessed are not normally permitted. Assessment of the Core Competency Requirements must normally be within core modules.

S3d - Core Competency Requirements must be delivered in a context which provides opportunities for Inter-Professional Learning (IPL), team work and preparation for entry into the workplace.

S3e - An AfN Accredited programme must be delivered in an environment which is informed by research, but not all staff may be engaged in research. However, teaching must be informed by appropriate research and evidence-based nutrition science.

S3f - There must be a range of teaching and learning methods that provides scientific education in a range of practices and procedures to deliver the Core Competency Requirements drawing upon the strengths and opportunities of the University/ Higher Education Provider.

S3g - If students study abroad for parts of the accredited programme, the programme provider must provide evidence to demonstrate how Core Competency Requirements (if any) are met and or/ assessed by the modules studied abroad.

Some examples of evidence to demonstrate this Standard is met:

- 3.1 Evidence sources to meet this standard can include;
- Programmes specifications, programme, module or unit handbooks, programme, module or unit evaluation reports, policies on admissions, academic standards assessment and examination and quality assurance of academic standards, assessment and examination.
 - Assessment strategies, including impact of assessment on programme delivery and student progression.
 - University/ institutional policies and academic regulations
 - Reports from staff student consultative committees
 - Research assessment returns
 - For programmes delivered in the UK, external examiner reports, internal

examiner responses with evidence of analysis and follow up actions, submissions to and reports on QAA subject benchmarks.

Standard 4 – Management, Monitoring and Review of Education and Training.

The quality of AfN Accredited Programmes must be managed, monitored, reviewed and evaluated in a systematic and developmental way, through transparent processes which show who is responsible for what at each stage.

Criteria to meet this standard:

S4a - There must be policies and systems in place to ensure the quality of education and assessment is monitored and evaluated, and action taken to address concerns, including;

- Quality of teaching, learning support and assessment
- Quality of placements or work based learning (if available)
- Academic feedback systems for students
- Student consultative mechanisms
- Input and feedback from external stakeholders (public, employers, professionals)
- Outcomes of evaluations of resources and capacity

S4b - For programmes delivered in the UK there must be appropriate policies and systems in place for the selection, appointment, support, training and feedback to External Examiner(s) appointed by the higher education provider. One External Examiner must be a Registered Nutritionist.

For courses delivered outside the UK where External Examiner(s) are not normally appointed, AfN can provide guidance on alternative external independent quality assurance of academic standards which may be specified as a condition of accreditation.

Some examples of evidence to demonstrate this Standard is met;

4.1 Evidence sources to meet this standard can include:

- Programmes specifications, programme, module or unit handbooks, programme, module or unit evaluation reports, policies on admissions, academic standards, assessment and examination and quality assurance of academic standards, assessment and examination.
- Reports from staff student consultative committees
- Research assessment returns
- Programme management plans, schedule of responsibilities, diagrams.
- Service level agreements or other agreement between stakeholders/ providers.
- Evidence that the programme is developed with input from external stakeholders.
- For programmes delivered in the UK, external examiner reports, internal examiner responses with evidence of analysis and follow up actions, submissions to and reports on QAA subject benchmarks.

Standard 5 – Leadership, Resources and Capacity

Leadership, resources and capacity must be sufficient to deliver the Core Competency Requirements in an academic and professional context, informed by evidence-based nutrition science.

Criteria to meet this Standard:

S5a - Programmes must have an appropriate and sufficient level of ongoing resource to deliver the Core Competency Requirements.

S5b - There must be sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced staff from relevant disciplines to deliver and assess the Core Competency Requirements. This must include;

- An appropriately qualified and experienced programme leader.
- If the programme leader is not a Registered Nutritionist, the development of the programme to meet the Core Competency Requirements must be led by a Registered Nutritionist.
- It is expected all teaching staff leading or teaching substantial portions of modules related to the delivery or assessment of the Core Competency Requirements will be Registered Nutritionists/Associate Nutritionists. As a minimum requirement, least two FTE must be Registered Nutritionists; (one of whom may be the programme leader).

S5c - There must be policies and systems in place to ensure anyone delivering an AfN Accredited Programme is supported to develop in their professional, academic and research roles, as appropriate.

This must include;

- Opportunities for CPD, including personal and nutrition-specific development.
- Effective induction, supervision, peer support, mentoring and CPD.
- Realistic workload for full and part time staff.
- For academic staff, opportunity to gain teaching qualifications.
- Effective appraisal, performance review and career development support.

S5d - There must be appropriate and sufficient learning facilities to deliver and assess the Core Competency requirements. This must include;

- Appropriate and sufficient library and other information and IT resources.
- Access to specialist nutrition resources, including textbooks, journals, internet and web-based materials.
- Specialist teaching and learning facilities to enable the delivery and assessment of the Core Competency requirements.
- Clear approach to the delivery of the Core Competency requirements in relation to food or feed preparation and handling, which may or may not include on-site facilities.
- Enrichment activities, which may include non-compulsory, non-assessed elements.

Some examples of evidence to demonstrate this Standard is met:

5.1 Evidence sources to meet this standard can include:

- Programmes specifications, programme, module or unit handbooks, programme, module or unit evaluation reports, policies on admissions, academic standards, assessment and examination and quality assurance of academic standards, assessment and examination.
- Reports from staff student consultative committees
- Evidence that there are mechanisms for securing sufficient levels of resource to deliver the Core Competency requirements to the required standards, including

- historic and projected resource allocation and review.
- Evidence the staff profile can support the delivery of the Outcomes and the student experience, including staff plans, CVs Staff/Student Ratios, etc.
 - Evidence that learning resources, facilities and accommodation are appropriate and sufficient, including outcomes of allocation and review.
 - For programmes delivered in the UK, external examiner reports, internal examiner responses with evidence of analysis and follow up actions, submissions to and reports on QAA subject benchmarks.

Procedures

Introduction

The Procedures describe how AfN receives and assesses applications from higher education providers for accreditation, including submission requirements, annual review and appeals. AfN Council sets the overall strategy and policy for the accreditation of programmes. Governance of programme Accreditation is then delegated to AfN Accreditation Committee, supported by AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education). All applications for Accreditation, Reaccreditation or Annual Monitoring will be administered according to these procedures, which are reviewed regularly by the Committee to ensure they are fair, robust, reflect best practice and applied consistently.

Assessments of applications are undertaken by experienced Registered Nutritionists who are trained and supported by the AfN Accreditation Committee. Assessors are volunteers; therefore at peak periods, or in the summer or at Christmas it may take longer to complete the decision making. Normally, applications for Accreditation and Reaccreditation are considered, and a decision made, within six to twelve months of receipt. Notification of significant programme changes under the Annual Monitoring process are generally more straightforward and a decision is usually reached within three months.

Programme providers are encouraged to maintain close contact with the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education); early dialogue when considering programme changes or the development of new programme is helpful. Please also ensure your contact details are kept up to date, particularly if the programme leader or staff team changes, as most communication is conducted by email.

Procedures for Accreditation of Programmes

Applications for Accreditation, Reaccreditation and Annual Monitoring must demonstrate that the programme meets the outcomes and standards by providing documentary evidence as described in the application form, submit the correct fee and undertake to agree to AfN's terms and conditions.

The procedures consist of:

- Applications for Initial Accreditation
- Applications for Reaccreditation
- Annual Monitoring
- Standard Conditions
- Internal Resolution and Appeals

Applications for Initial Accreditation (for unaccredited programmes)

Initial Enquiries

P 1.1 Initial enquiries regarding applying for accreditation can be made directly to the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education). Please see www.associationfornutrition.org for contact details. Application forms, mapping forms and information/ advice regarding preparing your application for accreditation can be found on the website. Programmes not delivered or assessed in the UK are eligible for AfN accreditation, however early dialogue with the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) is advised.

Submitting an Application

P 1.2 AfN Accreditation Committee publishes deadlines for the submission of applications for accreditation, which are normally 1st February and 1st October of each year. Higher education providers who wish to apply for accreditation should visit the accreditation page and download the relevant application form and mapping forms to complete. Applications for accreditation must be supported by the relevant fee and higher education providers must agree to AfN's terms and conditions. Current fees are published on AfN website. Consideration of applications received after the dates above will be deferred to the next deadline.

P 1.3 Applications are screened by AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) to ensure programmes are appropriate for consideration, all necessary documents have been supplied and the correct fee has been received. To reduce cost, communication between AfN and the programme provider will be in general by email and teleconference. Upon initial screening, if any further information or documentation is required the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will request it from the programme provider, normally within four weeks of receiving the application.

P 1.4 An application that is incomplete and/or does not conform to the required format will not be assessed and it will be returned.

Assessment

P 1.5 Once the initial screening is complete, the application will normally be sent to two programme accreditation assessors for assessment. The assessors will independently assess the application and then confer and exchange assessments before submitting their separate Programme Assessment Forms within three months of receipt of complete applications, with their recommendations for one or more of the following;

- a. **Accredit for five years** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme meets the outcomes and standards.
- b. **Provisionally accredit with conditions** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme meets the outcomes and standards subject to the condition (s) that specific information is provided within a stated timeframe (see paragraph 1.6).
- c. **Do not accredit**: The programme does not meet the outcomes and standards; a redesign and/or extensive development work is likely to be necessary such that the programme would have to reapply (pay a fresh fee).

P 1.6 Assessor(s) may defer their decision in order to request further information/advice from the higher education provider, or policy advice from the Accreditation Committee; such information will be requested by the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) and be submitted by the higher education provider/ Accreditation Committee within 28 days of the request. Additional information/ evidence given by the programme provider will be considered by both assessors simultaneously and a recommendation made in accordance with item P1.5 within one month of receipt.

P 1.7 Occasionally submissions may be received from newly established programmes where external examiners reports will be unavailable. These programmes can be *provisionally accredited with conditions* subject to specific information being provided (such as subsequent external examiner reports) within a defined period until the first cohort has graduated (or similar). For programmes delivered overseas where there is no established system of external examiners; arrangements for alternative independent quality assurance of academic standards will be specified. The Committee may withdraw provisional accreditation at any stage for example, if there is evidence that demonstrates the required standards are not being met or the provider has not addressed a condition within a stated timeframe.

P 1.8 Assessors may offer advice to the higher education provider on desirable (but not essential improvements) to assist programme development and raise academic standards for example, on an aspect of the programme, its management or delivery which may assist in strengthening one or more parts of the programme, highlighting a strength, weakness or opportunity.

P 1.9 Upon receipt of the programme assessment forms the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will prepare a report for consideration by Accreditation Committee. If the assessors recommendations differ significantly, the application will be considered by a moderator (an assessor who may be a member of the Accreditation Committee) who will have a copy of both programme assessment forms and the complete application form, or by the Committee as a whole.

Consideration by Accreditation Committee

P 1.10 The Accreditation Committee will consider the recommendations of the assessors, along with the complete application, at the first available meeting. The Accreditation Committee may accept, alter or review or overturn a recommendation from an assessor or assessment panel, having due regard for public protection and professional standards.

P 1.11 Following consideration by Accreditation Committee, the Committee will agree one of the following:

- a. **Accredit for five years** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme meets the outcomes and standards.
- b. **Provisionally accredit with conditions** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme meets the outcomes and standards subject to the condition that specific information is provided in a stated timeframe (see paragraph 1.6).
- c. **Do not accredit:** The programme does not meet the outcomes and standards; a redesign and/or extensive development work is likely to be necessary such that the programme would have to reapply (pay a fresh fee).

P1.12 The Accreditation Committee may request further information/advice from the higher education provider or request a meeting with the provider (or member of the teaching team) or request a site visit; such actions will be requested by the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) and be responded to by the programme provider/ Accreditation Committee within 28 days of the request to the provider (except in the case of a site visit in which case separate guidance issued by AfN will apply.) Additional information/ evidence/ will be considered in a manner agreed by the Committee (either by the Chair, the assessors, a sub-group of the Committee or the Committee at its next meeting) and a recommendation made in accordance with item P1.11.

P 1.13 If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is to accredit or provisionally accredit, the decision, with the date from which accreditation shall apply (which will normally be the date of

application or other such date as the Committee shall agree) will be published on the AfN website, and a Certification of Accreditation issued to the higher education provider.

P 1.14 The Accreditation Committee (or a working group thereof) will oversee the recommendations of all assessment decisions periodically for comparability and proportionality, not less than at least once every two years.

Applications for backdating eligibility for Programme Accreditation

P 1.15 For new or unaccredited programmes, if the decision of Accreditation Committee is to accredit, a programme provider may then apply to have their programme accreditation backdated. Applications for backdating eligibility for Programme Accreditation should consist of;

- a. A letter from the programme leader demonstrating (with evidence) how the programme prior to the date accreditation was awarded met the outcomes and standards, with details of the years to which the backdating should apply.
- b. A letter of support from the External Examiner confirming that previous year(s) cohorts met the Outcomes (Core Competencies) and how the programme remains unchanged or improved since.
- c. The fee charged is £1000 for each years' cohort.

Applications for Reaccreditation (for currently accredited programmes)

P 2.1 Accreditation is normally time-limited to a period of not more than five years. Accredited programmes must therefore apply for reaccreditation periodically to ensure the programme continues to meet the standards and outcomes. Reaccreditation is in addition to annual monitoring, however, in the year reaccreditation takes place, annual monitoring is not required.

P 2.2 The AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will contact higher education providers approximately twelve months prior to accreditation ceasing with information regarding reaccreditation. Enquiries regarding reaccreditation can be made direct to the AfN Accreditation Manager. Please see www.associationfornutrition.org for contact details. Application forms, mapping forms and information/ advice regarding reaccreditation can be found on the relevant section of the website. There is no additional fee for reaccreditation.

Submitting an Application

P 2.3 Applications for reaccreditation are identical to accreditation. Accreditation Committee will publish dates for the submission of applications for reaccreditation, which shall normally be the same as for accreditation; 1st February and 1st October of each year. Higher education providers who wish to apply for reaccreditation should visit the accreditation page and download the relevant application form and mapping form to complete. Consideration of applications received after the dates above will be deferred to the next deadline and may result in the programme being unaccredited for a short period of time.

P 2.4 Applications are screened by AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) to ensure programme are appropriate for consideration and all necessary documents have been supplied. To reduce costs, communication between AfN and the higher education provider will be by email and teleconference. Upon initial screening, if any further information or documentation is required the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will request it from the higher education provider, normally within four weeks of receiving the application.

P 2.5 An application that is incomplete and/or does not conform to the required format will not be assessed and will be returned.

Assessment

P 2.6 Once the initial screening is complete, the application will be sent to normally two accreditation programme assessors for assessment. The assessors will independently assess the application and then confer and exchange assessments before submitting their separate Programme Assessment Forms within three months of receipt of complete applications, with their recommendations for one or more of the following;

- a. **Reaccredit for five years** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme meets the outcomes and standards.
- b. **Reaccredit for up to five years with conditions** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme has not demonstrated it meets a particular outcome and/or standard. Action must be taken by the higher education provider to address the condition within a stated timeframe (see paragraph 2.7).
- c. **Do not reaccredit:** The programme does not meet the outcomes and standards; a redesign and/or extensive development work is likely to be necessary such that the programme would have to reapply (pay a fresh fee).

P 2.7 A condition will be given when a programme has failed to demonstrate that it meets one (or more) of the outcomes and standards. Conditions must be addressed by the provider within the stated timeframe. Failure to meet a condition will result in accreditation being withdrawn. A higher education institution will be expected to include evidence of the actions being taken to meet conditions as part of their annual monitoring report.

P 2.8 Assessors may offer advice to the higher education provider on desirable (but not essential improvements) to assist programme development and raise academic standards for example, on an aspect of the programme, its management or delivery which may assist in strengthening one or more parts of the programme, highlighting a strength, weakness or opportunity.

P 2.9 Assessor(s) may defer their decision to accredit/not accredit a programme in order to request further information/advice from the higher education provider, or policy advice from the Accreditation Committee, such information will be requested by the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) and be submitted by the higher education provider/ Accreditation Committee within 28 days of the request. Additional information/ evidence given by the programme provider will be considered by both assessors simultaneously and a recommendation made in accordance with item P2.6 within one month of receipt.

P 2.10 Upon receipt of the programme assessment form the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will prepare a report for consideration by the Accreditation Committee. If the assessors recommendations differ significantly, the application will be considered by a moderator (an assessor who may be a member of the Accreditation Committee) who will have a copy of both programme assessment forms and the complete application form, or to the Committee as a whole.

Consideration by Accreditation Committee

P 2.11 The Accreditation Committee will consider the recommendations from assessors, along with the complete application, at the first available meeting. The Accreditation Committee may accept, alter or review or overturn a recommendation from an assessor or assessment panel, having due regard for public protection and professional standards.

P 2.12 Following consideration by Accreditation Committee, the Committee will agree one of the following:

- a. **Reaccredit for five years** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme meets the outcomes and standards.
- b. **Reaccredit for up to five years with conditions** (subject to annual monitoring): The programme has not demonstrated it meets a particular outcome and/or standard. Action must be taken by the higher education provider to address the condition within a stated timeframe (see paragraph 2.7).
- c. **Do not reaccredit:** The programme does not meet the outcomes and standards; a redesign and/or extensive development work is likely to be necessary such that the programme would have to reapply (pay a fresh fee).

P2.13 The Accreditation Committee may request further information/advice from higher education provider or to request a meeting with the higher education provider (or member of the teaching team) or conduct a site visit, such action will be requested by the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) and be submitted by the higher education provider/ Accreditation Committee within 28 days of the request to the provider (except in the case of a site visit in which case separate guidance issued by AfN will apply.) Additional information/ evidence/ will be considered in a manner agreed by the Committee (either by the Chair, the assessors, a sub-group of the Committee or the Committee at its next meeting) and a recommendation made in accordance with item P2.12.

P 2.14 Occasionally submissions may take longer to consider, if, for example, the programme is unusually complex or there are significant gaps in the information submitted. At the discretion of Accreditation Committee, reaccreditation for previously accredited programmes may be extended beyond the normal period of five years, whilst a decision is made regarding accreditation.

P 2.15 If the decision of the Accreditation Committee is to reaccredit, the decision, with the date from which accreditation shall apply (which will normally be the date previous accreditation lapsed or other such date as the Committee shall agree) will be published on the AfN website, and a Certification of Accreditation issued to the Programme Provider.

P2.16 If the decision of Accreditation Committee is not to not reaccredit, the decision of the Accreditation Committee shall be given to the higher education provider in writing, with the date accreditation shall cease. The programme provider may request a meeting with the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) or members of the Accreditation Committee to plan how to communicate this decision to the public, existing and prospective students and teaching staff. Arrangements will need to be put in place by the higher education provider to ensure graduating students not eligible for direct entry onto the UKVRN as Associate Nutritionists are prepared for portfolio assessment for the register.

P 2.17 The Accreditation Committee, or a working group of it, will oversee the recommendations (for information) of all assessment decisions periodically for comparability and proportionality, not less than at least once every two years.

Annual Monitoring

P 3.1 The AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will contact higher education providers approximately once every twelve months with a request for information to be supplied by the higher education provider for annual monitoring. In the year reaccreditation takes place, annual monitoring is not required. The purpose of annual monitoring is to ensure the information held by AfN is correct, and to maintain an open and regular channel of communication with programme

providers. Enquiries regarding annual monitoring can be made direct to the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education). Please see www.associationfornutrition.org for contact details.

P 3.2 The Annual Monitoring Form is available from the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education). Applications for annual monitoring must be supported by the relevant annual programme accreditation fee and higher education providers must continue to agree to our terms and conditions. Current fees are published on our website. Information required for annual monitoring is;

- a. Information about changes to the programme
- b. List of eligible graduates to enable them to apply for admission to the register by Direct Entry
- c. Changes to information held about the programme by the AfN.
- d. Annual programme accreditation fee

P 3.3 Annual Monitoring Forms are screened by AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) to ensure all necessary documents have been supplied and the correct fee has been received. To reduce cost, communication between AfN and the higher education provider will be in general by email and teleconference. Upon initial screening, if any further information or documentation is required the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will request it from the programme provider.

P 3.4 A form that is incomplete, is not submitted and/or does not conform to the required format will not be assessed and will be returned and accreditation will be suspended.

P 3.5 The AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will prepare a summary report for the Accreditation Committee. If additional information is required or Annual Monitoring has highlighted areas of concern, Accreditation Committee will review the complete Annual Monitoring Form and may recommend one or more of the following;

- a. Request further information from the higher education provider.
- b. In the case of very serious concerns, where outcomes and standards may no longer be met, the Accreditation Committee may decide the period of reaccreditation is shortened and bring forward the date by which the programme provider must reapply for accreditation.
- c. If annual monitoring has highlighted an immediate danger to the public, patients, students or teaching staff, or if the annual monitoring, terms or conditions have been breached (including non-payment of the fee) accreditation can be suspended with immediate effect. Once accreditation status has been suspended, a new application for accreditation will be required.
- d. Notifying the provider that Annual Monitoring is now complete.

Standard Conditions

P 4.1 Accredited programmes are required as to inform the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) of all major changes to the programme (in addition to annual monitoring) such as;

- a. change to programme leader
- b. significant change in resources, staffing and /or other resources
- c. change to admissions policy or practice, or significant change in recruitment
- d. adjustments affecting > 25% of the programme aims, objectives or learning outcomes
- e. programme review or re-validation,
- f. new or revised module descriptors, changes to the mode of delivery and assessments.

P 4.2 All correspondence and documents pertaining to an application shall normally be kept for

ten years or to comply with relevant regulations, whichever is longer. All correspondence and documents not already in the public domain in respect of an application will be treated as strictly confidential to the applicants, AfN staff, assessors and Accreditation Committee members.

P 4.3 Accreditation is dependent on the following standard conditions;

- a. Higher education providers accurately describing the Accredited Programme. Once the programme is accredited the provider may use the AfN name and AfN Programme Accreditation logo solely for marketing the programme which has been accredited. The AfN Programme Accreditation logo shall not be used in such a way as to suggest that AfN has approved any programme other than that accredited or any product or any service supplied by the provider, or used in any other misleading manner.
- b. If accreditation is discontinued for any reason, use of the logo and term 'AfN Accredited Programme' must cease at once. The logo may not be altered in any manner including its proportions, font, design, arrangement, colours or elements or animated, morphed or otherwise distorted in perspective or appearance. AfN reserves the right to revoke the logo licence for any reason, in which case the provider agrees to remove the link and stop use of the logo within two working days of notice of revocation. In such a case, you will be prohibited from reinstating the link or using the logo without further written permission from AfN.
- c. Payment of the correct fees. The fees are a contribution towards the costs of administering the scheme and are non-refundable. Applications for accreditation/ reaccreditation/ annual monitoring will not be assessed until the fee is received and cleared with our bank. See item P4.4-4.9, below.
- d. The higher education provider agrees AfN may promote the accredited programme on its website and in its marketing materials. The provider agrees that the institution's name and the details of the accredited programme will be published on any electronic or printed list of AfN Accredited Programmes. The provider must ensure that AfN has the correct information contact details and description of the programme for its marketing information, and must inform AfN promptly of any changes to contact details. The AfN will not be liable for any losses or damage for publishing incorrect information supplied to it by the programme provider.
- e. List of eligible graduates to be submitted to AfN Registration Manager, to enable graduates to apply for admission to the register by Direct Entry

P 4.4 Applicants for initial accreditation are required to pay an application fee upon submission by the given deadline. Application fees for initial accreditation are published on the AfN website and are normally revised on 1st April each year. Incomplete applications, applications received after the deadline and applications without the fee payment will not be considered until the next round of submissions and until full submission, with payment, is received.

P 4.5 Application fees for initial accreditation are non-refundable. No refunds will be given. Assessments will only be undertaken once payment has been received. If an application for accreditation is successful an invoice for continuing accreditation will be issued at the next invoice point, which is normally 1st October each year.

P 4.6 Continuing accreditation or eligibility to apply or reapply for accreditation is conditional on payment of the correct accreditation fee and adherence to the Standard Conditions. The annual accreditation fee for continuing accreditation is published on the AfN website and is normally revised on 1st April each year. No refunds will be given. The annual accreditation fee applies to the financial year 1st April-31st March. Invoices are normally payable by 1st October each year for that financial year. Continuing accreditation is conditional on this payment being received by the given deadline.

P 4.7 Failure to pay the annual accreditation fee will result in AfN accreditation being WITHDRAWN from the programme(s). In the event of failure to pay, the programme(s) will be removed from AfN's listing of accredited programmes with immediate effect and all logos, property and marks used by the institution/ university to indicate the programme(s) accreditation status shall be removed by the institution immediately. All communications to students, prospective students, stakeholders and the public regarding the withdrawal of the programme's accredited status shall be approved by AfN and issued promptly.

P 4.8 At present there is no additional fee for periodic reaccreditation of a programme with continuing accreditation. Continuing accreditation is conditional on periodic reaccreditation (usually every five years), payment of the annual accreditation fee and compliance with the provisions for annual monitoring. Should periodic reaccreditation occur during the normal invoice point for the annual accreditation fee, the fee must be paid in order for periodic reaccreditation to be completed

P 4.9 Should accreditation cease, be deferred, withdrawn or rejected at initial accreditation, during continuing accreditation or as a result of periodic reaccreditation, no refunds of fees paid will be given. Accreditation will cease, be deferred, withdrawn or rejected at the date given by the committee and will not be influenced by overpayment of fees.

Internal Resolution and Appeals

P 5.1 The Accreditation Committee distinguishes between complaints and appeals. Complaints regarding services provided by AfN or actions AfN has taken must be made using AfN complaints procedure. This section sets out the procedures for consideration of an internal resolution and appeal by a higher education provider against a decision of the Accreditation Committee made under items 1.9 and 2.10 only.

P 5.2 An internal resolution or appeal can be lodged on either or both of the following grounds;

- a. **Procedure**; that the relevant procedures for accreditation were not followed.
- b. **Evidence**; that evidence submitted as part of the application process was not fairly or properly assessed against the published criteria, or there is evidence that was in existence at the time the application for accreditation was made, which, had it been made available, would have influenced the outcome and in relation to which, there is a good reason for it not having been provided in at the time the application was made.

P 5.3 New evidence which was not in existence at the time the application was made is not grounds for internal resolution and appeal. Neither is disagreement with a fair and proper decision of Accreditation Committee.

P 5.4 If a higher education provider wishes to clarify either the decision of the Accreditation Committee made under items 1.9 and 2.10 or the process or timescale for Internal Resolution or Appeals, they are encouraged to contact the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education).

Internal Resolution

P 6.1 Where possible, resolution of appeals should be attempted first through internal resolution. If a higher education provider wishes to resolve an appeal through internal resolution, they must do so by making an application for internal resolution in writing to the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) within four weeks of receipt of the AfN's notification of the outcome of their application for accreditation or reaccreditation.

P 6.2 In its application for internal resolution, the provider must set out clearly in writing the reason it wishes to challenge the decision(s) of Accreditation Committee. The provider should

provide evidence to substantiate its request for an informal resolution, based on the information it submitted as part of its application and to evidence its claim for failure under P5.2a (Procedure) and/ or P5.2b (Evidence). (The 'higher education provider's evidence.')

P 6.3 All communication regarding the internal resolution should be sent to AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education). If the grounds for internal resolution includes failure of the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education), then communication regarding the internal resolution should be sent to the Chief Executive. A higher education provider seeking an internal resolution must nominate a contact person for liaison with AfN. All AfN correspondence regarding the internal resolution will be made to the nominated contact person. The AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will act as clerk to the internal resolution, unless grounds for appeal includes failure of the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education), then the clerk to the internal resolution will be the Chief Executive (or his or her appointed representative.)

P 6.4 Within fifteen working days of receipt of the higher education provider's evidence for internal resolution, the evidence will be circulated to Accreditation Committee along with;

- The higher education provider's original application for accreditation or reaccreditation and associated evidence, and any further evidence submitted as part of the assessment/ decision making process.
- Reports from Assessors.
- Minutes of Accreditation Committee relating to the higher education provider
- Letters and correspondence, including emails, from AfN to the higher education provider relating to the application.
- Any other relevant documents, such a chronology of events/ decisions.

P 6.5 On the basis of evidence available to them, Accreditation Committee will decide either to;

- a. uphold their original decision
- b. amend their decision in light of the higher education provider's evidence. The full range of decisions (items P1.9 and P2.10) will remain available to the committee.

P 6.6 In order to seek to resolve the matter as swiftly as possible internal resolution will be undertaken via email/ teleconference and Accreditation Committee asked to make a decision within fifteen working days of the higher education provider's evidence and associated information being circulated to them by the clerk to the internal resolution.

P 6.7 The outcome of the Accreditation Committee's internal resolution will be communicated to the higher education provider within seven working days of the Accreditation Committee reaching its decision. Should the higher education provider disagree with the outcome of the Accreditation Committee internal resolution, the higher education provider may lodge an appeal. During the period of internal resolution, an accredited programme will continue to be accredited, and an unaccredited programme will continue to be unaccredited, until after the decision of Accreditation Committee has been communicated to the higher education provider.

Appeal

P 7.1 A higher education provider may appeal a decision of Accreditation Committee by making an application for appeal in writing to the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) within four weeks of receipt of the AfN's notification of the outcome of their application for accreditation, reaccreditation or internal resolution.

P 7.2 In its application for appeal, the provider must set out clearly in writing the reason it wishes to challenge the decision(s) of Accreditation Committee. The provider should provide evidence to substantiate its request for an appeal, based on the information it submitted as part of its application and to evidence its claim for failure under P5.2a (Procedure) and/ or P5.2b (Evidence).

P 7.3 An appeal deposit (£2000) is required as part of the application for appeal. If an appeal is upheld in full the appeal deposit will be reimbursed. If the appeal is not upheld in full the appeal deposit will be not be reimbursed. If the appeal is successful in part, up to 50% of the appeal deposit will be reimbursed, the remainder will be retained by AfN.

P 7.4 All communication regarding the appeal should be sent to AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education). If the grounds for appeal includes failure of the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education), then communication regarding the appeal should be sent to the Chief Executive. A higher education provider making an appeal must nominate a contact person for liaison with AfN and attend the appeal. All AfN correspondence regarding the appeal will be made to the nominated contact person.

P 7.5 The AfN Honorary Secretary (or his or her appointed representative) will convene an Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel will consist of;

- A member of AfN Council, who will be the chair
- A Registered Nutritionist, who will be the vice-chair
- One Accreditation Assessor unconnected with the application

The Panel will be quorate with two members. At least one Panel member will have experience of quality assurance within an AfN Accredited programme. Appointments to the Panel will have due regard for AfN policy on declaration and management of conflicts of interest and none of the Panel shall have had any operational involvement in the application under appeal. The AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education) will act as clerk to the Panel, unless grounds for appeal includes failure of the AfN Quality Assurance Manager (Education), then the clerk to the Panel will be the Chief Executive (or his or her appointed representative.)

P 7.6 The higher education provider will be notified of the Panel membership within six weeks of submitting an application for appeal, so as to raise any concerns with regards to conflict of interest. Objections to Panel membership, with evidence, must be made within ten working days of notification to the clerk to the Panel. The Honorary Secretary (or his or her appointed representative) will take into account evidence provided by the higher education provider and adjust the membership of the Panel accordingly. The decision of the Honorary Secretary (or his or her appointed representative) will be final.

P 7.7 Within fifteen working days of confirmation of the Panel's membership (item P7.6 above) the higher education provider's application and evidence for appeal will be circulated by the Panel clerk to the Panel along with;

- The higher education provider's original application for accreditation or reaccreditation and associated evidence, and any further evidence submitted as part of the assessment/ decision making process.
- Reports from internal resolution
- Reports from Assessors.
- Letters and correspondence, including emails, from AfN to the higher education provider relating to the application.
- Minutes of Accreditation Committee relating to the higher education provider
- Any other relevant documents, such a chronology of events/ decisions.

P 7.8 All documents to be considered by the Panel will also be sent to the higher education provider's nominated contact.

P 7.9 Should the Panel request further information on receipt of the evidence, such requests should be made to the Panel clerk. Additional information provided by the higher education provider and/or Panel clerk must be circulated to all members of the Panel and the higher education provider's nominated contact. Additional information may not include evidence that was not in existence at the time the original application for accreditation/ reaccreditation was

made, unless it relates to reports from internal resolution; reports from Assessors; letters and correspondence, including emails, from AfN to the higher education provider relating to the application; minutes of Accreditation Committee relating to the higher education provider or other relevant documents, such a chronology of events/ decisions.

P.7.10 The date of the appeal will be decided by the Panel clerk in consultation with the Panel members and the higher education provider.

P 7.11 The Panel will meet in private to consider the appeal and agree questions or clarifications it wishes to ask of the higher education provider. The higher education provider's nominated contact person for liaison will be given an opportunity to attend the Panel alone and briefly (in no more than ten minutes) present the provider's appeal to the Panel and to then answer questions from the Panel. The higher education provider may nominate one observer to observe the higher education provider's nominated contact person presentation to the Panel and subsequent questions. The higher education provider's observer may not answer questions from the Panel or present to the Panel. No other person may be present at the appeal unless called upon by the Chair of the Panel. No additional information may be tabled on the day.

P 7.12 The Panel will meet in private to consider its decision. During the period of appeal an accredited programme will continue to be accredited, and an unaccredited programme will continue to be unaccredited, until after the decision of Panel has been communicated to the higher education provider.

P 7.13 On the basis of evidence available to them, the Panel will decide either to;

- a. uphold the appeal in full or in or part, and amend the decision of Accreditation Committee in light of the higher education provider's evidence. The full range of decisions (items P1.9 and P2.10) will remain available to the Panel.
- b. reject the appeal in full or in part.

P 7.14. The decision of the Panel will be will be communicated to the higher education provider within fifteen working days of the Panel meeting. The Panel's decision is final.