

Submitting a Programme for Accreditation

A complete guide for providers

CPD Standards Board
www.cpdstandardsboard.com

This document covers everything to do with submitting a programme to the CPD Standards Board for assessment. It explains what to send, how to send it, how your submission is assessed, how long it takes, and what happens next.

It deals only with submission. How you may use your accreditation once granted is covered in a separate document, which you receive on approval.

Read this before you prepare your submission. Most delays are caused by incomplete or badly packaged material rather than by problems with content.

1. Definitions

Programme. The unit we assess and accredit. A programme is a single, self-contained piece of structured learning with its own outcomes. It may be a course, a workshop, a webinar, an event, a module or a podcast series.

Contact hours. Time a participant spends actively engaged in learning. This includes taught content, exercises, facilitated discussion, assessment and question time. It excludes breaks, meals, travel, networking and unstructured social time.

Credits. CPD credits are allocated at two per hour of content, based on your stated contact hours. A six hour programme is allocated a maximum of twelve.

Assessment. The review your programme undergoes. Assessment always happens. Accreditation happens only if the programme passes.

2. Before you submit

You must be registered as a provider. Registration and your first submission can be completed together.

Your programme must be finished. We assess completed material. We do not review drafts, comment on outlines, or look at work in progress.

We do not offer consultancy. We cannot tell you what to include, how to structure your content, or how to improve your chances of passing. This is deliberate. We assess programmes independently, and advising you on the design of something we then assess would compromise that. If your programme does not meet the standard, the assessment report tells you exactly what needs correcting, and that is where you receive detailed feedback.

Payment does not guarantee accreditation. The fee covers assessment. Programmes that do not meet the standard are not accredited.

3. What counts as one programme

Each programme is submitted and assessed separately. Deciding where one ends and another begins is usually obvious, but not always.

Submit as **one programme** where the material is delivered as a single experience with one set of outcomes and one certificate, even if it runs across several days or several modules.

Submit as **separate programmes** where each part has its own outcomes, can be taken independently, is sold separately, or results in its own certificate.

If you are unsure, tell us how the material is delivered and sold and we will tell you how to submit it. Getting this wrong in either direction wastes your time and ours.

Foundation, advanced, refresher and masterclass versions of a programme are always separate submissions, even where they share material.

4. What to send: core requirements

These apply to every submission, whatever the format.

The complete programme content. Everything a participant sees, hears or works through. Slides, workbooks, handouts, exercises, case studies, scripts, digital modules, assessments and any reading you set. Partial submissions and representative samples cannot be assessed. If a participant encounters it, we need it.

Facilitator or trainer notes. How each section is delivered, and roughly how long it runs. This matters most where delivery is discussion-led or exercise-heavy and the slides alone say little. Thin notes are one of the most common reasons a submission comes back, because an assessor cannot judge content without knowing how it is taught.

Stated learning outcomes. What a participant will know or be able to do on completion. Write them as outcomes rather than topics covered.

Intended audience and prerequisites. Who it is for, the level of experience assumed, and any prior knowledge or qualifications required.

Duration and contact hours. Total length, broken down into contact hours as defined in section 1. This figure sets your credit allocation, so state it accurately.

Programme title, exactly as you want it accredited. The title you submit is the title recorded and printed on certificates. Check the spelling before you send it.

Delivery language, if the programme is delivered in a language other than English. See section 7.

Evidence of professional registration, where the content is medical or clinical. See section 9.

5. Additional requirements by format

Classroom and live in-person. Room plans, materials lists and equipment requirements are not needed. Do include anything participants are given on the day, including exercise briefs and handouts issued separately from the main pack.

Live online. Send the slides and notes as you would for a classroom programme, plus anything delivered through chat, breakout instructions, polls or shared documents.

Self-paced e-learning. Give us working access rather than exported files wherever possible, so an assessor sees what a participant sees. See section 6.

Webinars and masterclasses. For recorded sessions, send the recording or a working link. For live sessions, send the slides, the facilitator notes and a recording of a previous delivery if one exists. Where a session is largely unscripted, the notes need to carry more detail than usual.

Events, conferences and seminars. Send the full agenda with timings, the content of each session, and speaker notes or abstracts for each contributor. Sessions that are networking, meals, breaks or entertainment should be marked as such and excluded from your contact hours. Where speakers are external, we still need their content.

Podcasts and audio. Send the episodes or working links, plus a transcript or a detailed outline for each. Tell us whether the accreditation is intended to cover a series or individual episodes, and how a listener demonstrates completion.

6. Access for hosted and online material

Where your programme sits on a platform, provide login credentials rather than exports.

Credentials must be:

- Valid for at least thirty days from the date of submission
- Able to reach the complete programme, not a preview, sample or trial version
- Free of progress gates and time delays, or accompanied by instructions for bypassing them

Tell us if any content unlocks only on completion of an earlier section, and how an assessor should get to it.

If access genuinely cannot be granted, export the full content in a readable format and tell us why. Exports are accepted but they show us less, and where an export leaves an assessor unable to judge how the programme works, we will ask for access.

7. Language

Submissions must be in English.

If you deliver in another language you may submit an English version of the materials for assessment. Tell us which language the programme is actually delivered in.

Accreditation applies to the version we assess. If you are accredited on an English submission and then deliver in another language, the delivered version is not covered by that accreditation and must be submitted separately.

8. Evidence and sources

Where your programme relies on a researcher, theory, model, statistic or study, name it clearly enough that an assessor can check it. That means the name of the person or the study, and enough detail to find it.

Claims should rest on established, credible sources. The following cause problems:

- Statistics given with no source, or attributed only to "research shows"
- Models referred to by an informal name, so an assessor cannot identify what is being taught
- Findings that have been superseded, withdrawn, or have failed to replicate
- Frameworks presented as established science where no evidence base exists
- Claims attributed to a named researcher who did not make them, or whose work says something different

Where you are knowingly teaching a contested or disputed model, say so in the materials and explain the state of the debate. That is treated as a strength. What causes a problem is presenting a contested position as settled.

Where a claim is your own professional judgement or experience rather than a research finding, present it as such. Experience is legitimate content. It just needs to be labelled honestly.

9. Medical and clinical content

Programmes covering medical or clinical subject matter must be designed by, or delivered under the direct supervision of, a professional registered with a recognised healthcare regulator. In the United Kingdom that means bodies such as the GMC, GDC, NMC or HCPC. Elsewhere it means the equivalent regulator in the country of practice.

Send with your submission:

- The name of the registered professional
- The regulator they are registered with
- Their registration number
- Confirmation of whether they designed the programme, supervise its delivery, or both

You must tell us if that registration lapses, is suspended or is withdrawn during the accreditation period. Accreditation granted on the basis of a registration that no longer exists ends when the registration ended.

10. Ownership and third-party material

By submitting, you confirm that you own the content or hold the rights to use and deliver it.

Where your materials reproduce third-party content, you must have permission and it must be attributed. This includes diagrams, models, photographs, assessment instruments, questionnaires, extended quotations and excerpts from published work.

Licensed instruments and proprietary models frequently carry conditions on who may deliver them and how. Check yours before submitting.

We do not verify your licences. We will, however, raise material that appears to be used without permission, and we will not accredit a programme while that question is unresolved.

11. Confidentiality

Your materials are treated as confidential.

They are seen by the assessor handling your submission and by our internal team where a second opinion or an appeal requires it. They are not shared with other providers, published, or used for any purpose other than assessing your programme.

We retain submitted materials for the duration of your accreditation and for a period afterwards, so that renewals can be compared against what was originally assessed and so that we can answer questions about a past decision.

If you require a non-disclosure agreement, tell us before you submit.

12. What not to send

Leave out marketing brochures, pricing, testimonials, delegate feedback, company profiles, staff biographies beyond section 9, and evidence of accreditation held elsewhere.

None of it is assessed. It makes submissions larger and slower to review.

13. How your submission is assessed

Your programme is assigned to an assessor who reviews it against five criteria.

Factual accuracy. Whether the claims and information presented are correct and current. Assessors check named sources, statistics and factual assertions. Errors of fact, out of date figures and misattributed research are the most common reason programmes do not pass.

Coherence. Whether the programme is logically structured and progresses in a way that supports the outcomes you have stated. A programme can be accurate throughout and still fail here if the content does not build, or if the stated outcomes are not actually delivered by the material.

Evidence base. Whether models, frameworks and assertions are grounded in established sources rather than asserted. See section 8.

Professional suitability. Whether the content is appropriate for a professional audience, and whether it risks giving delegates incorrect or unsafe guidance in their field. The threshold is higher for content that carries consequences if applied wrongly.

Use of terminology. Whether technical terms, regulatory references and professional language are used accurately and consistently. Terms used loosely, or interchangeably when they mean different things, are raised.

We do not assess instructional design, visual presentation, branding, production quality or commercial appeal. Provided your content is accurate, coherent and suitable for professional development, how you choose to present and deliver it is your decision.

14. What happens during assessment

You will receive confirmation when your submission is received and when it is assigned.

If material is missing we will come back to you before assessment begins. If a question arises during assessment that can be resolved quickly, the assessor may put it to you rather than fail the submission on it.

You do not need to do anything else while a submission is under review.

15. Timescales

Allow up to ten working days from submission to outcome. Some are faster. That cannot be guaranteed, and it is not a service commitment.

The clock starts when we hold a complete submission, not when you pay. If material is missing, the ten days runs from the point we have everything.

Large submissions, event programmes with many contributors, and material requiring specialist review may take longer. We will tell you if that applies to yours.

16. Outcomes

If your programme passes, it is accredited for twelve months and allocated a maximum credit value based on its contact hours. You will receive confirmation, access to the certificate portal, the accreditation logo, and our guidance on how the accreditation may be used. Read that guidance before you publish anything referring to your accreditation.

If it does not pass, you receive a report identifying precisely what needs correcting and why. You may revise and resubmit up to twice within thirty days of the report at no additional charge. Each resubmission is reviewed to confirm the points raised have been addressed.

If a programme has not passed after two resubmissions, the content requires more substantial revision before it can be reconsidered. You may submit it again as a new submission once that work is done.

17. Withdrawing a submission

You may withdraw a submission at any point before the outcome is issued. Tell us in writing.

Assessment fees are not refunded once assessment has begun.

18. Renewal submissions

Accreditation lasts twelve months. We will contact you before it expires.

Where your content has not substantially changed, renewal is straightforward and you confirm that the programme remains as assessed.

Where content has substantially changed, the programme is reassessed and you submit it as you would a new programme, following this document. Substantial change means new or materially revised content, a change in outcomes, or a change in duration that alters the credit allocation. Correcting a typo, updating a date or refreshing a design is not substantial change.

If you are unsure which applies, tell us what has changed and we will tell you.

19. Common reasons submissions come back

- Slides submitted without facilitator notes, so content cannot be judged in context
 - Sample or partial content rather than the complete programme
 - Contact hours not stated, or stated inclusive of breaks and meals
 - Statistics and research claims with no attributable source
 - Models named informally, so the assessor cannot identify what is taught
 - Login credentials that expire, or that reach only part of a course
 - Event agendas without the content of individual sessions
 - Clinical or medical content with no evidence of professional registration
 - Several distinct courses submitted as a single programme
 - Marketing material sent in place of course material
-

20. Final checklist

Confirm you have all of the following before you submit.

- The complete programme content, in full
 - Facilitator or trainer notes covering every section
 - Stated learning outcomes, written as outcomes
 - Intended audience and prerequisites
 - Total duration, broken into contact hours, excluding breaks
 - The programme title exactly as you want it accredited
 - Sources named for every research claim, model and statistic
 - Working access valid thirty days, for anything hosted online
 - Transcripts or outlines for video and audio content
 - Evidence of professional registration, if the content is clinical or medical
 - Confirmation that you hold the rights to all material included
-

21. Questions

If you are unsure whether your submission is complete, ask before you send it. We cannot advise on the design or quality of your content, but we can always tell you whether you have sent us everything we need.

CPD Standards Board

www.cpdstandardsboard.com