ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY

DATA | EVIDENCE | DECISIONS

The RSS Accreditation Scheme – A guide for Accreditation Partners

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Section 1 – Information about the RSS Accreditation Scheme

Accreditation Partnership

In 2013, the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) carried out a major strategic review of its activities. One of the key outcomes of this in-depth review was the decision to cease offering the Society's own examinations after May 2017.

In place of RSS examinations we decided to develop a revised accreditation model, which would enhance our existing partnerships with educational institutions. This model allows us to accredit programmes in relation to a new set of standards for statistical education, initially at levels 6 and 7 of the national qualification framework[1].

In offering accreditation the RSS has two major objectives:

To introduce more flexibility in the benchmarks for accrediting qualifications. By developing a set of standards that programmes will need to meet, we aim to widen the potential scope of our accreditation beyond that of the current Graduate Diploma syllabus. The RSS will accredit only those programmes that deliver the skills and knowledge which will be required by students in their journey to become a Graduate Statistician, and which appropriately assess the student against these.

To build stronger partnerships with statistical education providers in the UK and abroad. We have already built good relationships with education providers but as a modern professional body, we recognise that there is an important role for the RSS in facilitating a dialogue between providers about new developments in statistical education and how they should best be delivered. Through this process we will ensure that our accreditation standards continue to reflect changing needs across a broad range of sectors of employment.

Accreditation will be the process through which the Royal Statistical Society works with education providers to ensure that programmes in statistics, and its allied disciplines, meet quality standards. We will work collaboratively with education providers to accredit, help develop the quality and increase the relevance of programmes to students.

Our new accreditation process is designed to be straightforward and aims to reduce the administrative burden associated with accreditation by encouraging providers to utilise their existing documentation when putting together an application, produced for QAA, Ofsted or their own internal monitoring.

[1] Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are grouped into levels, from entry level to level 8. Qualifications at the same level are at a similar level of difficulty, but the size and content of the qualifications can vary. Qualifications at Level 6 of the NQF equate to those at Level 6 of the European Credit Qualifications Framework (ECF) and Level 10 of the Scottish Credit and National Framework (SCQF).

Benefits of accreditation

As the RSS we have a responsibility to develop and maintain standards in educational qualifications for those individuals who wish to follow a career in Statistics and allied disciplines. The RSS Accreditation scheme is set to become an important benchmark for Higher Education programmes.

Becoming an RSS accredited partner will provide your institution and its students with a range of benefits. Through our Accreditation Scheme we will:

1. Recognise Excellence: Reflecting your institution's commitment to providing high quality, learning, teaching and assessment. Where approval has been granted for accreditation, Partners can use accredited logos on their websites, certificates, and publicity materials.
2. Increase the marketability of your programmes in a competitive market place: You will receive a listing on the RSS website with links out to your own site and we will also refer potential students to our list of accredited programmes.
3. Provide your students with a route to Society membership: All students on an accredited programme will be eligible for e-Student membership of the RSS, with the potential to progress along the professional pathway of RSS membership to Graduate Statistician and Chartered Statistician status.
4. Provide your students with a competitive edge in a challenging job market: The RSS brand is regarded as a mark of quality that is valued and understood by prospective students and employers. Accredited institutions can also nominate an exceptional graduate for our annual RSS prize[2].
5. Provide employers with an assurance of the level of technical skills and knowledge provided by a programme: Supporting your relationships with employers and helping to achieve employment outcomes for your graduates.
6. Invite you to take part in our Accreditation Advisory Board: Allowing your institution to take an active role in reviewing our educational standards and lobbying on issues within the remit of the Society.

Cost of Accreditation

The RSS will charge a one-off application fee for institutions applying for accreditation for the first time. Normally an application will be made by one faculty or department and will cover a range of programmes[3] being offered by that department. Institutions can submit any number of programmes to the RSS for accreditation.

In addition the RSS will charge an Assessment Fee, to cover the cost of assessing the initial application and site visit. The fee will be equivalent to the cost of the first year's accreditation fee. For institutions in the UK, this

[2] A department/faculty may nominate one prize-winner at postgraduate level and one at undergraduate level. Winners receive our Graduate Statistician (GradStat) membership free for one year and a prize-winner's certificate. Prize-winners may be listed on pass-lists and in degree congregation programmes as recipients of a 'Royal Statistical Society prize'.

[3] A programme is defined as a full or part-time course of study followed by an individual, the successful completion of which results in the assessment and award of certification at degree or Masters Level. In the case of postgraduate degrees, a programme will defined as a set of modules which make up that degree in a particular domain e.g. environmental statistics.

fee normally covers all expenses associated with the assessment and visit except for overnight accommodation for the assessment panel. Institutions will be required to book accommodation for the panel members in a suitable nearby hotel the evening before the site visit. An invoice for the assessment fee will be issued following receipt of a full application.

For overseas institutions applying for accreditation for programmes which will be delivered outside the UK, the travel (including an allowance for assessor's travelling time) and subsistence costs of assessors undertaking a visit will need to be met in full by the institution, in addition to the annual fee.

The fees for accreditation will be charged on an annual basis according to the number of programmes submitted, as agreed by the RSS. An invoice for the first year's fee will be issued following receipt of a full application. In subsequent years it will be charged on the anniversary of the award of accreditation. Please see the RSS website for up to date information on our current fee rates. The RSS reserves the right to increase fees in line with inflation during the accreditation period. Please note if your application is unsuccessful, the assessment fee is a non-returnable payment.

Our standards

The RSS accreditation process is relevant for those institutions offering programmes at Graduate and Masters level. The standards at Levels 6 and 7 relate to QAA benchmarks at that Level, but are designed to fit to a wide range of programmes, delivered in different ways.

Graduate Standards – Level 6 of the Qualifications Framework
Masters Standards – Level 7 of the Qualifications Framework

We are also in the process of developing Standards at Level 4/5 with a view to extending the Accreditation service to cover Foundation degree programmes, and joint Honours degrees which develop statistical knowledge and skills at this level.

Criteria for Partner Accreditation

There are six key areas against which an institution's programme for accreditation will be considered.

In awarding accreditation the RSS is seeking to ensure that a programme meets the RSS standards and that teaching, learning and assessment on the programme is of high quality and fulfils the needs of students and employers.

The table below outlines the criteria the RSS will use to assess applications, together with requirements to be met and provides suggested evidence which an institution may wish to submit in support of each criterion.

Area 1: Learning, research and practice		
Accreditation criteria	Requirement	Suggested evidence
Your programme adequately addresses the curriculum or competency requirements as outlined in our standards, and reflects best practice in teaching and assessment.	Your curriculum covers all core knowledge and skills as detailed in the RSS standard, and an appropriate balance of specialist content. Your teaching, learning and assessment strategy for the programme reflects good practice in statistics.	**Completed curriculum or competencies mapping document.** (For applications for multiple programmes, the institution may wish to submit more than one mapping document) **Programme/s handbook** **Curriculum, research, placement (if appropriate) and / or other handbooks** **Programme/s specification** **Module handbooks** (or module outlines if handbooks are not yet available). **Student satisfaction data** **Information on staff and student / graduate publications (where relevant)**
Students' outcomes are positive, in terms of programme completion and employment outcomes.	Destination data suggest that a high proportion of students go on to further study or to gain employment following their programme.	**Pass / fail rates for the programme/s** **Destination data for students on the programme/s** **Student satisfaction data** **Employer's views of the programme**

Area 2: Selection and entry		
Accreditation criteria	Requirement	Suggested evidence
An approach to recruitment which welcomes diversity and actively promotes your partnership with the RSS.	Clear recruitment criteria in place. An approach to recruitment which demonstrates positive action to encourage applications from under-represented groups. You will actively promote your accreditation partnership with RSS in your marketing materials.	**Recruitment policies and guidance** **Links to existing web pages, and promotional materials.** For those applying for accreditation for the first time you will need to provide information on how you intend to meet the requirements stated.
Area 3: Supporting Personal and Professional Development		
Accreditation criteria	Requirement	Suggested evidence
Students are supported during their programme towards further progression on to higher level programmes or into employment.	Students are given appropriate information about progression on to further learning and/or into employment. The benefits of membership of the RSS are provided to students and students are encouraged to take up student membership.	**Relevant sections of the programme or student handbook** **Evidence that students are provided with information about membership of the RSS and its benefits**
Area 4: Teaching		
Accreditation criteria	Requirement	Suggested evidence
Students have access to suitably qualified and experienced teaching staff; and a tutoring system that supports their personal and educational needs.	Staff teaching on the programme have appropriate qualifications and experience to deliver the programme content. Teaching on the programme is regularly reviewed to ensure it embeds best practice and delivers the best outcomes for students. A tutoring system is in place to support individual student needs.	**Brief biographies (or CVs)** for all staff who make a significant contribution to the programme/programme delivery and development. **A biography or CV for the Programme Director(s)** **Material/links for the student support/tutoring approach** **Student satisfaction data**
Area 5 : Resources		
Accreditation criteria	Requirement	Suggested evidence
Students have access to appropriate resources to support their studies.	Students' learning is appropriately supported regardless of their mode of study.	**Details of the key learning resources available to students**, such as texts/learning resources (print and

		online), appropriate software tools, and specific and general learning facilities. For distance learning programmes, you will need to demonstrate that students have appropriate access to the above resources, or equivalent.
Area 6 :Quality management		
Accreditation criteria	Requirement	Suggested evidence
A clear quality assurance framework in place at departmental and institutional level, and where appropriate, at inter-institutional level.	A clear quality assurance framework at departmental and institutional level, and where appropriate, at inter-institutional level. This framework is in active use and it involves the participation of students. You actively seek to improve the programme by identifying areas for improvement and responding accordingly.	Details of your quality assurance framework Copies of minutes of key programme committees meetings for the last year e.g. Board of Studies, Programme Board and its subgroups. Copies of the most recent report by your external examiner(s)/quality team, and any resulting action plan Copies of reports by external advisory boards or industry representatives. Hyperlinks to any externally commissioned or QAA reports which relate to the programme(s).

The RSS approach to Accreditation

Our accreditation regulations and process are overseen by the RSS Academic Accreditation Committee (AAC). AAC members are drawn from academic and practicing members of the RSS. The AAC is responsible for ensuring our standards for accreditation, as defined by the Professional Affairs Committee, are implemented appropriately and consistently across all programmes and education providers.

The AAC will be involved in approving all initial applications for accreditation, based on recommendations made by the assessors. They have oversight of the overall schedule of accreditation visit and review activity. They will receive visit reports on accredited programmes which will allow them to see how standards are being used in delivery and to highlight areas of good practice. The AAC will have a role in identifying areas for wider consultation with delivery partners, considering any proposed amendments to standards and identifying training needs for assessors.

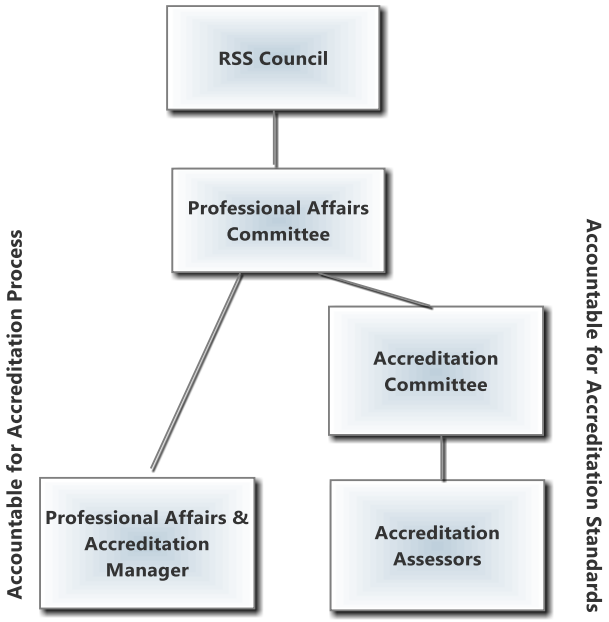


Figure 1: Governance of the RSS Accreditation Scheme

The Accreditation Process

Please refer to the relevant section of this guide for detailed information on the Accreditation process.

Section 2: Institutions wishing to apply for RSS accreditation for the first time, or whose previous accreditation has lapsed will follow this process.

Section 3: If your institution is currently accredited by the RSS, you will be subject to a fast-track accreditation process.

Additional information

Advertising and promoting your accredited programme

Where your provision has been successfully accredited by the RSS, you are required to use our logo in your advertising and promotional materials. Copies of our logo can be requested by emailing accreditation@rss.org.uk

Publication of accreditation reports

Our accreditation reports are not made publically available, however, you are free to quote from, or share our final report.

Withdrawal of accreditation

If, as a result of a visit, an institution is found to no longer meet the criteria for, or if any of the conditions of accreditation arising from a visit are not met, we will work with an institution to put in place an action plan to bring the programme back into compliance with our requirements. If the institution is unable to implement the action plan, then accreditation will be withdrawn for future cohorts of students.

Institutions are required to pay an annual partnership fee to cover the costs of providing scheduled review visits during the review cycle. See the information on "Cost of Accreditation". Failure to pay this fee will mean an institution is removed from the visit schedule and will have its accreditation withdrawn at the end of the same academic year in which the fees fell due.

Appeals

Appeals against an accreditation decision must be submitted in writing within two calendar months of a decision being communicated to you.

A £500 fee will be charged for an appeal to be heard. In the event that the appeal is upheld this fee will be refunded.

Section 2: Initial Accreditation

The Accreditation Process

Institutions wishing to apply for RSS accreditation for the first time, or whose previous accreditation has lapsed will follow this process. The Initial Accreditation process has 5 main stages, as outlined in detail below:

- Stage 1: Application and paper based review
- Stage 2: Visit Planning
- Stage 3: Visit Preparation
- Stage 4: The Visit
- Stage 5: Post-visit Report

Stage 1

Application

You need to register your interest in accreditation with the RSS by completing an Expression of Interest form (EOI) and e-mailing it to accreditation@rss.org.uk. Our Accreditation team will confirm receipt of your form and answer any questions you have about the process.

On receipt of your EOI, we will send you further details of our application process. You will be required to complete a self-evaluation questionnaire and a mapping document showing how the programme/s meets the accreditation criteria. The supporting evidence requested should be clearly indexed against the appropriate questions in the questionnaire. Where the specified evidence is not available you may provide alternative evidence.

Your application should then be submitted in electronic format, details of which will be provided at the time of application. On receipt of your application you will be invoiced for the Application Fee and the Assessment Fee (equivalent to cost of the first year of accreditation for the programme/s for which you are requesting accreditation). Please see our website for information on our current fee rates.

Your application will be evaluated independently by two Assessors who will act as reviewers, supported by the RSS office. If any aspect of your application requires clarification, we will contact you.

We will confirm the outcome of your application in writing. The outcome will be one of the following:

A) Your programme/s is awarded accreditation.

B) Your programme/s is awarded accreditation subject to the successful fulfillment of one or more conditions to be met within a specified timeframe.

C) Your programme/s cannot yet be accredited and you will need to re-apply for accreditation at a future date.

Where accreditation is granted we will confirm when this is due to start in line with any request to backdate your accreditation. We will also add your programme/s to our online database of accredited programmes.

Once you have received notification of accreditation, your programme/s will then be added to our schedule of visits. For newly Accredited institutions, this visit will take place in the first year of accreditation.

The answers you provide in the questionnaire will provide a framework for discussion during our visit. During the visit you will have the opportunity to support your application by evidencing good practice in programme delivery, and discussing in more detail future planned developments to your programme and any challenges you expect to face.

Stage 2

Planning the visit

All RSS Accreditation visits are scheduled to ensure they are convenient for both your institution and our accreditation team. At the end of the planning stage a visit date is set, the team undertaking the visit is confirmed and a timetable for the day is sent to you.

Approximately 4 months before the scheduled visit we will write to you to propose a potential timeframe in which the RSS team can undertake an Accreditation visit. You will be asked to reply with three potential dates in the proposed period, and confirm your key point(s) of contact with whom we can make final arrangements. You should ensure that key staff, students and other colleagues will be available on the proposed dates.

Confirming the visit

The visiting team will be agreed based on their availability for your proposed dates. We will confirm the visit date within 4 weeks of receiving your proposed dates. Our Assessors are drawn from RSS members with expertise in the delivery and review of programmes at all levels. We also take steps to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between Assessors and the institution being assessed. Assessors should not have worked for, or been contracted to, the institution they are inspecting, for a period of 5 years.

Stage 3

In the preparation stage for your visit, we may ask you to provide information to supplement that which you provided on initial application. This will include any revisions which ensure the information we have is up to date. All this information should be submitted to us at least 4 weeks prior to the visit date.

Deferring a visit

If you are unable to provide the paperwork required we may need to defer your visit and arrange an alternative date. If you need to defer a visit, we would ask you to provide as much advance notice as possible.

Planning the timetable for the day

We will provide you with a suggested timetable and agenda for the day for you to comment on and return to us at least 2 weeks before the agreed visit date. The agenda will highlight any specific areas that the visiting team would like to discuss based on the documentation that has been provided.

You will be expected to insert additional information into the agenda including: the name and details of your designated contact for the day; the names of people who the team will be meeting; and where these meetings will take place. In the event of multiple campus locations, please include clear instructions for the visiting team on where the meeting/s will take place.

Ideally you should allocate the team a single room for the duration of the visit, of sufficient size to accommodate the team and the participants. This will assist you in ensuring visits run to time. You should ensure that the visiting team is supplied with refreshments, as appropriate, throughout the day. You may wish to invite some of the participants to attend an informal lunch with the team.

Visit participants

One of our visiting team will act as a Team Leader and will take responsibility for Chairing meetings and ensuring all areas of importance to your application are covered on the day. We would expect the institution to ensure that those people who can provide further evidence in support of the application are available on the day.

Students or trainees

Our assessors will expect to meet with current students during the visit to gain greater insight into how the programme is delivered. A group of up to ten students should allow our Assessors to gather a range of views from individuals who reflect the current make-up of your cohort, including those studying at a distance, full and or part-time. Graduates of your programme can be invited to attend if numbers are low, but it is important that the team has access to current students to accurately assess the effectiveness of the current programme.

Staff

We would expect to meet staff who are responsible for, or have day to day management of the following:

- The overall programme objectives, design, delivery, staffing and the professional development of staff.
- The administration of the programme, including admissions and assessment of students
- Facilities, resource and budgets.

Using the visit to support quality assurance processes

You may wish to combine our accreditation process with your own quality assurance review. Where you do so, please ensure your paperwork and timetable for the day meets our requirements. We would also recommend that you provide our team with the same information as the internal panel.

Stage 4

The day of the visit

The team will arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the agreed start time at the venue agreed. You should arrange to meet them and take them to the room to be used for their meetings. They will be able to confirm the main areas of focus for discussion at the start of the day.

At the end of the day the team will require some time to discuss and agree their findings, an hour is usually sufficient. They will then feedback their provisional findings verbally. The feedback will include recommendations to further enhance the programme and any areas of best practice they have identified, or conditions they require to be met for the programme to retain its accreditation.

In the unusual event that the visit identifies additional information that might be needed to support accreditation, the team may request that these additional sources of information be provided after the meeting.

A draft of the final report will be sent to the institution for comment prior to consideration by the AAC/PAC.

Stage 5

The visit report

Following our visit, we will produce a report that summarises our findings. A draft report will be sent to you within **4 weeks** of the visit taking place.

You will then have **one week** to consider the report and advise us of any inaccuracies or to propose any minor wording changes you feel would help the clarify the points made.

The final report will be issued by the AAC/PAC within **six weeks** of the visit, provided there are no substantial issues that we are unable to resolve within the time period.

Responding to conditions and recommendations

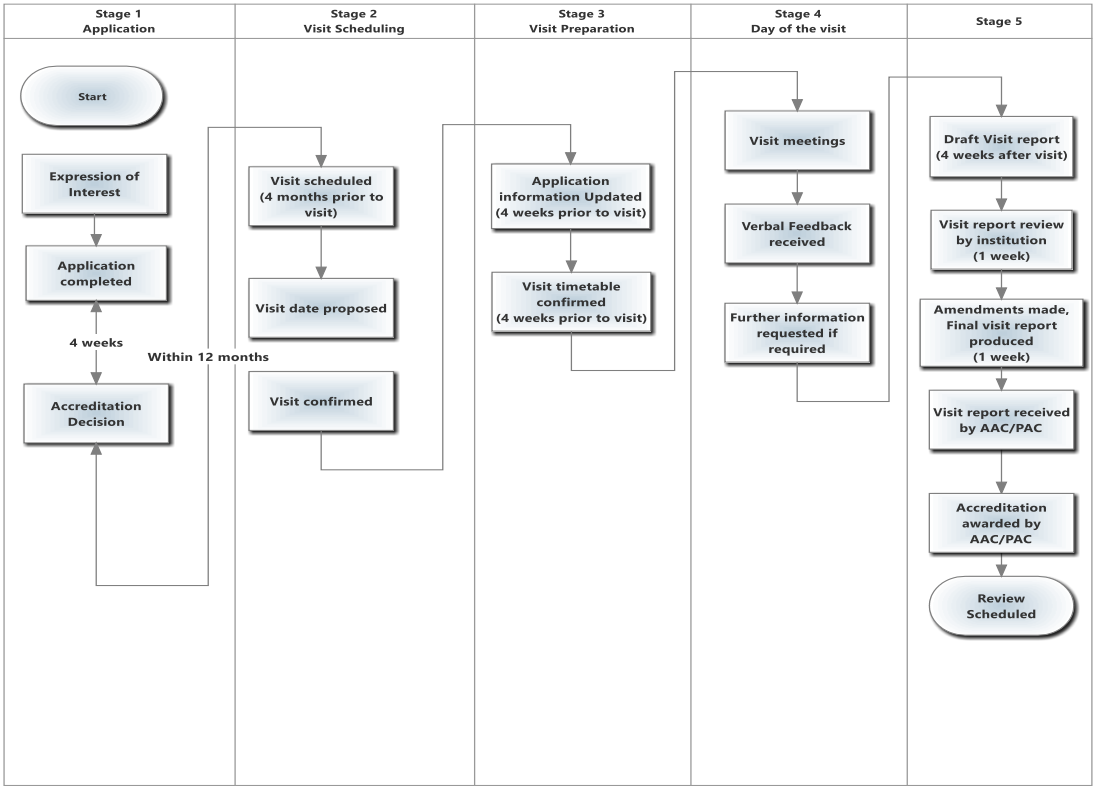
Any conditions or recommendations identified in the report will be time bound. We will ensure you have sufficient time, usually three months, to make any of the changes we are requesting. If you feel the timeframe given is insufficient, you may enter into a discussion with the Accreditation team to negotiate an appropriate extension.

We will request an update from you, by email, at the end of the agreed period. You should provide a brief commentary and any further evidence to support the actions you have taken. This will be sent to the Team Leader who led your accreditation visit to confirm any conditions have been met.

In the event the institution is unable to meet the conditions imposed, it may be necessary for accreditation to be withdrawn. Please see the section on "Withdrawal of Accreditation" for more details.

Accreditation is awarded for 5 years, provided there are only minor changes to the programme. We will need to be notified of all changes, minor or major within the 5 year period. For major changes we will need to discuss and decide on the impact these may have on your institution's accreditation status. After 5 years the institution will be invited to re-apply for accreditation, following a fast-track process. The RSS reserves the right to conduct an interim review visit within the 5 year period, where standards have changed or where conditions or recommendations were included in the initial visit report.

New Accreditation Process Overview



Section 3: Fast-track accreditation process

The Accreditation Process

If your institution is currently accredited by the RSS under its existing scheme, you will be subject to a fast-track accreditation process. This accreditation process has 5 main stages, as outlined below:

- Stage 1: Application and paper based review
- Stage 2: Visit Planning
- Stage 3: Visit Preparation
- Stage 4: The Visit
- Stage 5: Post-visit Report

Stage 1

Application

You will receive detailed information from us about the Society's new Accreditation service. If you wish to retain your accredited status, you will be asked to complete our self-evaluation questionnaire and complete a mapping document for each programme you wish to be considered for accreditation against our new standards. You will then be asked to submit your documents electronically.

Your application will be evaluated independently by two Assessors who will act as reviewers, supported by a member of RSS staff. If any aspect of your application requires clarification, we will contact you.

We will confirm the outcome of your application in writing. The outcome will be one of the following:

D) Your programme/s fully meets the criteria for accreditation; your accreditation will remain in place.

E) Your programme/s partially meets the criteria for accreditation, and would fully meet the criteria subject to successful fulfillment of one or more conditions, to be met within a specified timeframe.

Once you have received notification of accreditation, your programme/s will then be added to our schedule of visits to take place in the next twenty four months.

The answers you give in the questionnaire will provide a framework for discussion during our visit. During the visit you will have the opportunity to support your application by evidencing good practice in programme delivery, and discussing in more detail future planned developments to your programme and any challenges you expect to face.

Stage 2

Planning the visit

All RSS Accreditation visits are scheduled to ensure they are convenient for both your institution and our accreditation team. At the end of the planning stage a visit date is set, the team undertaking the visit is confirmed and a timetable for the day is sent to you.

Approximately 4 months before a scheduled visit we will write to you to propose a potential timeframe in which the RSS team can undertake an Accreditation visit. You will be asked to reply with three potential dates in the proposed period, and confirm your key point(s) of contact with whom we can make final arrangements. You should ensure that key staff, students and other colleagues will be available on the proposed dates.

Confirming the visit

The visiting team will be agreed based on their availability for your proposed dates. We will confirm the visit date within 4 weeks of receiving your proposed dates. Our Assessors are drawn from RSS members with expertise in the delivery and review of programmes at all levels. We also take steps to ensure that there is no conflict of interest between Assessors and the institution being assessed. Assessors should not have worked for, or been contracted to, the institution they are inspecting, for a period of 5 years.

Stage 3

In the preparation stage for your visit, we may ask you to provide information to supplement that which you provided to us in your questionnaire. This will include any revisions which ensure the information we have is up to date. All this information should be provided to us at least 4 weeks prior to the visit date.

Deferring a visit

If you are unable to provide the paperwork required, we may need to defer your visit and arrange an alternative date. If you need to defer a visit we would ask you to provide as much advance notice as possible.

Planning the timetable for the day

We will provide you with a suggested timetable and agenda for the day for you to comment on and return to us at least 2 weeks before the agreed visit date. The agenda will highlight any specific areas that the visiting team would like to discuss based on the documentation that has been provided.

You will be expected to insert additional information into the agenda including: the name and details of your designated contact for the day; the names of people who the team will be meeting; and where these meetings will take place. In the event of multiple campus locations, please include clear instructions for the visiting team on the location of your institution.

Ideally you should allocate the team a single room for the duration of the visit, of sufficient size to accommodate the team and the participants. This will assist you in ensuring visits run to time. You should ensure that the visiting team is supplied with refreshments, as appropriate, throughout the day. You may wish to invite some of the participants to attend an informal lunch with the team.

Visit participants

One of our visiting team will act as a Team Leader and will take responsibility for chairing meetings and ensuring all areas of importance to your application are covered on the day. To ensure we have the information we need to award approval, we would expect the institution to ensure that those people who can provide further evidence in support of their application are made available on the day.

Students or trainees

Our assessors will expect to meet with current students during the visit to gain greater insight into how the programme is delivered. A group of up to ten students should allow our Assessors to gather a range of views from individuals who reflect the current make-up of your cohort, including those studying at a distance, full and or part-time. Graduates of your programme can be invited to attend if numbers are low, but it is important the team has access to current students to accurately assess the effectiveness of the current programme.

Staff

We would expect to meet staff who are responsible for or who have day to day management of the following:

- The overall programme objectives, design, delivery, staffing and the professional development of staff.
- The administration of the programme, including admissions and assessment of students
- Facilities, resource and budgets.

Using the visit to support quality assurance processes

You may wish to combine our accreditation process with your own quality assurance review. Where you do so, please ensure your paperwork and timetable for the day meets our requirements. We would also recommend that you provide our team with the same information as the internal panel.

Stage 4

The day of the visit

The team will arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the agreed start time at the venue agreed. You should arrange to meet them and take them to the room to be used for their meetings. They will be able to confirm the main areas of focus for discussion at the start of the day.

At the end of the day the team will require some time to discuss and agree their findings, an hour is usually sufficient. They will then feedback their provisional findings verbally. The feedback will include recommendations to further enhance the programme and any areas of best practice they have identified, or conditions they require to be met for the programme to retain its accreditation.

In the unusual event that the visit identifies additional information that might be needed to support accreditation, the team may request that these additional sources of information be provided after the meeting.

A draft of final report will be sent to the institution for comment prior to consideration by the AAC/PAC.

Stage 5

The visit report

Following our visit, we will produce a report that summarises our findings. A draft report will be sent to you within **4 weeks** of the visit taking place.

You will then have **one week** to consider the report and advise us of any inaccuracies or to propose any minor wording changes you feel would help the clarify the points made.

The final report will be issued by the AAC/PAC within **six weeks** of the visit, provided there are no substantial issues that we are unable to resolve within the time period.

Responding to conditions and recommendations

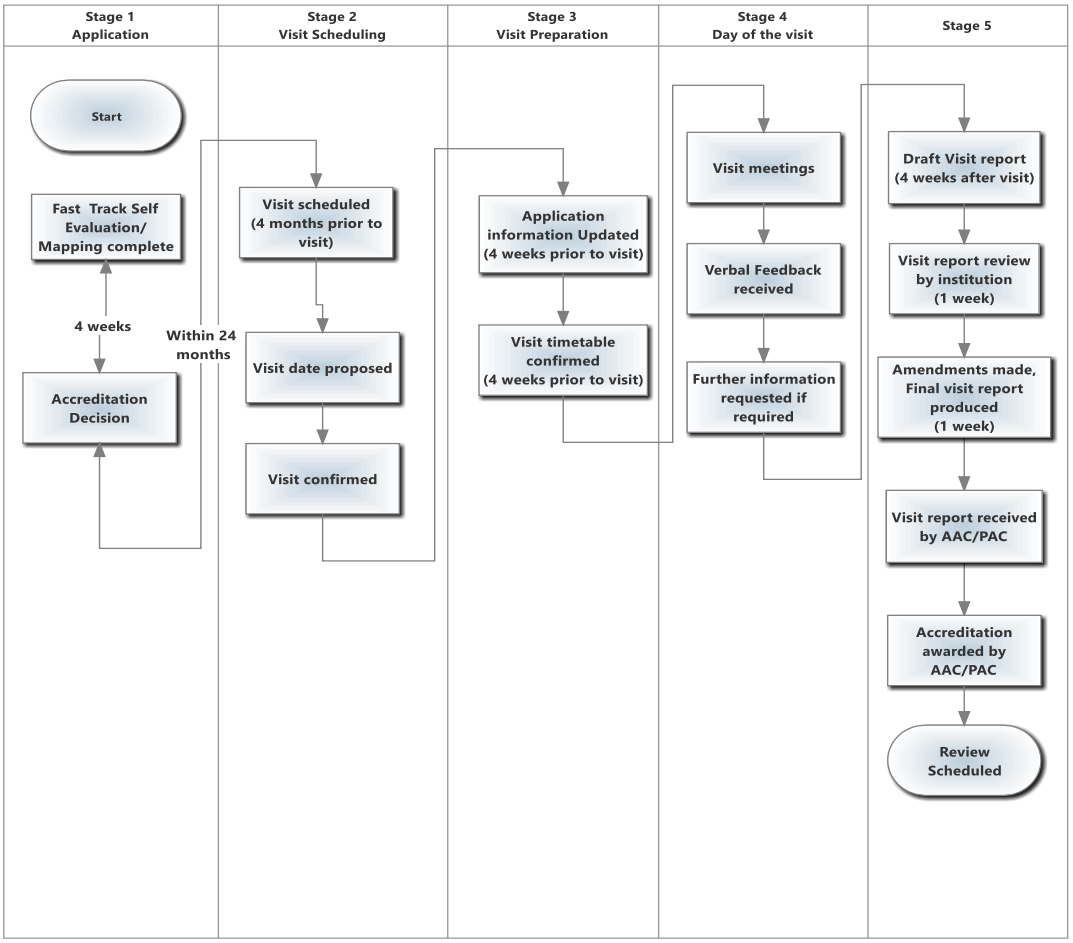
Any conditions or recommendations identified in the report will be time bound. We will ensure you have sufficient time, usually three months, to make any of the changes we are requesting. If you feel the timeframe given is insufficient you may enter into a discussion with the Accreditation team to negotiate an appropriate extension.

We will request an update from you, by e-mail, at the end of the agreed period. You should provide a brief commentary and any further evidence to support the actions you have taken. This will be sent to the Team Leader who led your accreditation visit to confirm any conditions have been met.

In the event the institution is unable to meet the conditions imposed it may be necessary for accreditation to be withdrawn. Please see the section on "Withdrawal of Accreditation" for more details.

Accreditation is awarded for 5 years, provided there are only minor changes to the programme. We will need to be notified of all changes, minor or major within the 5 year period. For major changes we will need to discuss and decide on the impact these may have on your institution's accreditation status. After 5 years the institution will be invited to re-apply for accreditation, following a fast track process. The RSS reserves the right to conduct an interim review visit, within the 5 year period where standards have changed or where conditions or recommendations were included in the initial visit report.

Fast Track Accreditation - Process Overview



Appendix 1

Expression of Interest for Accreditation

Name of applying institution:

Name and job title of lead contact:

Email address of lead contact:

Programme/s for which you are seeking Accreditation: (please list and state total number of programmes) *A programme is defined as a full or part-time course of study followed by an individual, the successful completion of which results in the assessment and award of certification at Degree or Masters Level. In the case of postgraduate degrees a programme will defined as a set of modules which make up that degree in a particular domain e.g. environmental statistics.*

Programme Title	*Average annual intake*	*New or existing programme*
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Date you expect to submit a full application to the Society

Application fee

The charge for submitting an application is £250 - this is a non-refundable cost.

Assessment fee

The charge for the assessment of the application and site visit will be equivalent to the cost of the first year's accreditation fee. This fee covers all expenses associated with the assessment and visit except for overnight accommodation for the assessment panel. Institutions will be required to book accommodation for the panel members in a suitable nearby hotel the evening before the site visit. An invoice for the assessment fee will be issued following receipt of a full application. An increased assessment fee to be agreed with the institution will normally be charged in circumstances where a visit will entail long distance travel for panel members (for example, visits to locations outside the UK).

Accreditation fees

The fees for accreditation will be charged on an annual basis according to the number of programmes submitted, and as agreed by the RSS. The RSS will consider the level of work required for the application, the number of students and the complexity of programmes and where relevant travel time required for visits in order to ensure, as far as possible, that costs are representative and equitable. The first year's fee will be invoiced following receipt of a full application, in subsequent years it will be charged on the anniversary of the award of accreditation. The table below provides our standard fee rates; the RSS reserves the right to increase fees in line with inflation during the accreditation period. **Please note, if your application is unsuccessful, the assessment fee is a non-returnable payment.**

Programmes	Cost per year
1-5	£2,000
6-10	£2,500
10+	£3,000

Declaration:

I confirm I would like to proceed with this formal expression of interest and that I am duly authorised to act on behalf of the institution named above. I understand that there is an annual charge to pay, over a period of five years, or length of accreditation awarded.

Name:
Signed:
Date:

Please return your form to accreditation@rss.org.uk