

LSHTM Academic Manual 2023-24

Chapter 4: Accreditation

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Annual Review of the Academic Manual

The LSHTM Academic Manual was introduced in 2019-20 bringing together all the academic regulations and procedures which constitute LSHTM's framework for quality and standards for credit-bearing taught provision, research degrees and special programmes. The Academic Manual consists of 11 Chapters all of which are reviewed annually and published as separate documents on LSHTM website together with a summary of amendments. With the exception of most minor editorial changes (e.g. typos, formatting and spelling or grammatical corrections), all revisions and amendments are noted and approved by Senate before the start of each academic year.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Accreditation is the official recognition awarded by an external professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB) as the result of institutions meeting specific standards or criteria. The functions of accreditors may encompass:

- recognition of the quality of a module
- recognition of the quality of a programme, part of a programme, or set of programmes

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- recognition of the quality of a Faculty
- accreditation of programmes for professional entry
- accreditation of the quality of an institution

4.1.2 The purpose of this chapter is:

- to support the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) and its Faculties in their preparations for seeking or renewing accreditation;
- to enable an appropriate institutional overview to be maintained of any accreditation by an external body that is being sought in LSHTM's name;
- to ensure no reputational risk is incurred during the accreditation process;
- to outline a procedure for approval of accreditation that may vary depending on the requirements of the accreditors themselves.

4.1.3 This chapter applies to all institutional provision leading to an award of LSHTM (under the aegis of the University of London) and to Faculties/programmes/modules for which accreditation by external bodies is being sought or renewed, including those involving collaborative provision. This includes instances where accreditation is being sought for a module, programme, Faculty or for the entire institution.

4.1.4 Peer review through accreditation supplements LSHTM's own mechanisms for monitoring and review of its programmes. It draws upon and contributes to the related processes detailed in other chapters of the LSHTM Academic Manual, including [Chapter 3, Programme & Module Management, Monitoring and Review](#) and [Chapter 5, External Expertise](#).

Principles

4.1.5 An institutional overview of accreditation is maintained. The Faculty takes internal ownership and leadership of accreditation exercises, especially for Faculty/programme/module level accreditation. Nonetheless, the legal entity being accredited is LSHTM and the provision being accredited leads to awards of LSHTM (under the aegis of the University of London).

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4.1.6 Whether a programme is accredited, and by whom, constitutes 'material information' about the programme for current and prospective students, in the context of consumer protection law. LSHTM has a legal responsibility to provide clear and accurate information to students about the accreditation status of its programmes.

4.2 External Accreditors Relevant to LSHTM

4.2.1 The following PSRBs accredit provision at LSHTM:

- [Advance HE \(formerly Higher Education Academy\)](#)
- [Association for Nutrition](#) (AfN)
- [Economic and Social Research Council](#) (ESRC)
- [Royal College of Pathologists](#)
- [Royal College of Physicians](#)
- [Royal Statistical Society](#) (RSS)

4.2.2 For full details of the programmes accredited by these bodies, please see the [Accreditation Register](#).

4.3 Accreditation Approval Procedure

4.3.1 The accreditation process usually involves sending documents to an accreditor and then undergoing review and audit (including an institutional visit and an accreditation event) and responding to any conditions set by the accreditor within a timeframe detailed in the report resulting from the review.

4.3.2 All published programme documentation must make clear the accreditation is still subject to approval until written confirmation from the accreditor has been received in writing by LSHTM and the Quality & Academic Standards office (QAS) has been informed.

4.3.3 Throughout the accreditation approval process, advice is available from the following areas:

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- For Faculty/programme/module accreditation, the chair of the relevant Faculty Postgraduate Taught Committee (FPGTC) will be the point of contact for advice on the strategic and educational implications of accreditation. For institutional accreditation, the Pro-Director of Education as the Chair of the Senate Postgraduate Taught Committee (SPGTC) will provide advice on strategy and education.
- QAS is the primary source of guidance on the procedure itself, including advice on preparing accreditation submissions and the signing off process.

4.3.4 To accredit a programme or module, the following stages will normally apply (though the procedure should be adapted according to the requirements of the accreditor concerned):

Stage 1 Strategic Approval

4.3.5 In order to avoid reputational risk, all proposals to seek accreditation should obtain preliminary strategic approval by the Dean of Faculty before the preparation of any accreditation documentation. This preliminary approval ensures that proposed accreditation has the backing of LSHTM and that institutional overview of accreditation is maintained.

4.3.6 For Faculty/programme/module accreditation, the procedure for accreditation will usually be initiated at a Faculty level where accreditation will be discussed with the relevant Dean of Faculty to ensure that it is consistent with the Faculty's strategy. Once the Dean approves the proposed accreditation and agrees to proceed, the proposed accreditation will then be brought to FPGTC for further scrutiny. FPGTC will then decide whether to approve the proposed accreditation for further development.

4.3.7 For institutional accreditation, any proposed accreditation should be discussed with the Dean of Faculty and the Pro-Director (Education) as the Chair of SPGTC, who will raise the proposed accreditation with the Executive Team, to ensure that the proposal to seek accreditation has been approved on an institutional level.

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4.3.8 At this stage, the Dean of Faculty (for Faculty/programme/module accreditation) or Pro-Director of Education (for institutional accreditation) will appoint a lead academic to coordinate the accreditation approval process, who should seek advice and guidance from QAS.

Stage 2 Preparation and Submission of Accreditation Documentation

4.3.9 The lead academic will be responsible for preparing the accreditation submission, including drafting the submission and assembling the supporting evidence base. This may entail timely requests for information from other relevant stakeholders (marketing, recruitment, Finance, Registry, Programme Administration Office, Library & Archives Service, University of London Worldwide etc.).

4.3.10 Accreditors often have different practices with regard to format (paper or online submission etc.).

4.3.11 The lead academic should discuss the proposed accreditation and the specific requirements of the accreditor with their Taught Programme Director.

4.3.12 Programmes and modules seeking accreditation must consider any requirements of the relevant external body in their curriculum content and design, and make those requirements clear when preparing the documentation for submission. This will usually include a detailed mapping of the accreditor's requirements against programme or module content and learning outcomes.

4.3.13 For Faculty/programme/module accreditation, accreditation documents must be reviewed and approved by FPGTC prior to submission to the accreditor. The Committee may require final amendments to the documentation before its dispatch, as a condition of approval of the submission. Once the documentation has been approved by FPGTC, the approval will be noted at the following committees:

- For programme/module level accreditation, the Programme and Module Review Committee will note the impact of accreditation on the

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programmes involved, especially in regard to amendments to programme and module specifications. The proposed accreditation will then be noted through the governance structure to Senate.

- Faculty level accreditation will be noted at SPGTC and then subsequently at Senate.

4.3.14 For institutional accreditation, SPGTC will review and approve accreditation documents. The Committee may require final amendments to the documentation before its dispatch, as a condition of approval of the submission. Once the documentation has been approved by SPGTC, the approval will be noted at Senate.

4.3.15 The Taught Programme Director, as representative of the Faculty, is responsible for providing accurate and timely information to LSHTM staff and secretaries of Committees (FPGTC and SPGTC) about upcoming accreditation exercises.

4.3.16 Following approval by the FPGTC, a copy of the final version of the key accreditation documents will be provided to QAS who will check the accuracy of any institutional-level information before returning the accreditation documentation to the academic lead for submission.

4.3.17 Following the approval of the accreditation submission by FPGTC/SPGTC, the academic lead (on behalf of the Faculty for Faculty/programme/module accreditation and on behalf of LSHTM for institutional accreditation) is responsible for the delivery of the accreditation submission to the accreditor, ensuring that these communications are copied to qualityteam@lshtm.ac.uk.

Stage 3 Accreditation Visit

4.3.18 Usually, accreditors will wish to visit LSHTM to undertake a review before accrediting the institution.

4.3.19 Where an accreditation visit is required, arrangements are primarily the responsibility of the Faculty in liaison with QAS. A member of QAS will

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attend to support with questions on institutional quality management issues.

4.3.20 A number of accreditors expect to meet various members of LSHTM staff, for example a member of the Executive Team and/or the Head of Quality & Academic Standards. Where this is likely to be a requirement, Faculties are asked to give as much prior notice as possible, and to provide a copy of the key accreditation documentation at least ten working days prior to the visit to relevant staff.

Stage 4 Accreditation Event

4.3.21 The documentation and panel membership requirements for the accreditation event will be as determined by the type of accreditation being sought and the requirements of the accreditors themselves. QAS will work with the Faculty and the accreditor to incorporate these elements into the accreditation event.

4.3.22 If accreditation being sought during a programme's development, the accreditation event may be held concurrently with the validation event. Likewise, if reaccreditation coincides with a programme's periodic review the accreditation and periodic review events may be held together. However the accreditation event should be understood as a distinct event in its own right.

4.3.23 Following the accreditation event, the academic lead (on behalf of the Faculty for Faculty/programme/module accreditation or LSHTM for institutional accreditation) is responsible for coordinating and drafting a response to the accreditation report, and for planning actions in response to any recommendations made by the accreditor. The completed response and action plan will be submitted to FPGTC (for Faculty/programme/module accreditation) or SPGTC (for institutional accreditation) for consideration and approval before despatch.

4.3.24 A Quality & Academic Standards Officer will ensure that the outcomes of all accreditation events are communicated to relevant stakeholders applications and are recorded on the Accreditation Register.

4.4 Monitoring and Renewing Accreditation

- 4.4.1 The Quality & Academic Standards office monitors the Accreditation Register and notes when re-accreditation is due for renewal. To maintain accreditation, LSHTM will need to undergo review at the end of the period of accreditation. Any documentation required for re-accreditation will follow the procedure outlined in section 4.3.
- 4.4.2 Students and members of staff should use the Accreditation Register to determine when accreditation may expire. In particular Communications & Engagement should consult the register to ensure that accreditation due to expire is not advertised to students.
- 4.4.3 Accreditation status will also appear on programme specifications, highlighting if accreditation is expected to expire mid-academic year.
- 4.4.4 Should the accreditor require them, interim and annual reports will be submitted to the Faculty Postgraduate Taught Committee (for Faculty/programme/module accreditation) and Senate Postgraduate Taught Committee (for institutional accreditation) for consideration and approval before submission to the accreditor by the Faculty. These communications will be copied to qualityteam@lsh.ac.uk.