

Guidance for Interim Advanced Accreditation

The Royal Society of Biology encourages new programmes, where students have yet to graduate, to apply for accreditation. Under these circumstances, the accreditation process is likely to include a review of programme documentation and a site visit before the first cohort of students graduate. The Royal Society may grant interim accreditation pending first cohort graduation, with full accreditation status awarded afterwards, if appropriate.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) with relevant programmes should contact the Accreditation Team in advance of their application, to discuss potential pathways to gaining accredited status, and application charges.

The decision process for interim accreditation is likely to involve the following steps:

- Submission of all relevant stage one documentation, as detailed in Appendix A of the Accreditation Handbook.
- Review of documentation by the Accreditation Assessment Panel, and completion of an interim accreditation stage one report:

If assessors feel there is a substantial gap between the proposed outcomes for the programme and those required for accreditation, this will be communicated to the HEI. At this point, the HEI may choose to implement any suggested changes and resubmit for interim accreditation; or apply for full accreditation following the graduation of the first cohort of students; or withdraw their application. Any reapplication will incur additional costs for assessors' time and effort, but consideration will be given to the initial review that had already been conducted.

If assessors feel the course demonstrates the potential to meet the required outcomes, a site visit will be scheduled.

- The Accreditation Assessment Panel will conduct the site visit, as detailed in Appendix C of the Accreditation Handbook.
- Following the site visit, the assessment panel will complete an interim accreditation stage two report, highlighting the final steps for the programme in question:

If the site visit highlights aspects of the programme that do not achieve the outcomes for accreditation, these will be communicated to the HEI. At this point, the HEI may choose to implement any suggested changes and resubmit for interim accreditation; or apply for full accreditation following the graduation of the first cohort of students; or withdraw their application.

Any reapplication will incur additional costs for assessors' time and effort, but consideration will be given to the initial review that had already been conducted.

If the assessment panel is satisfied that the required outcomes for accreditation will be achieved, they can recommend to the Royal Society of Biology Council that the programme should be awarded interim accreditation.

Following the award of interim accreditation, the HEI must complete an annual report declaring any changes implemented since the initial stage one review, until the first cohort of students graduate.

In order to gain full accreditation, documentation should be provided to assure the assessors that the graduate learning outcomes are being achieved, and that any recommendations made by the assessment panel for improving the programme are being acted upon.

Once the first cohort of students has graduated, and if the assessment panel is satisfied that the programme meets the requirements for accreditation, it can recommend to the Royal Society of Biology Council that full accreditation status should be awarded.

Should the assessment panel conclude that there is insufficient evidence to award full accreditation, the programme will continue with the status of interim accreditation, until sufficient evidence is submitted.

Interim accreditation will be awarded for a period of five years; if there is insufficient evidence that the programme meets the requirements for full accreditation at the end of that period, interim accreditation status will be withdrawn.

Accredited status will be awarded for a period of five years from the date of the ratification of full accredited status by the Royal Society of Biology Council.

The timeframe for the stage one assessment is estimated to be similar to those applying for full accreditation. We expect the timeframe for the second stage of the assessment, the site visit and ratification by Council, would be subject to the nature and number of programmes submitted for interim accreditation.

Guidelines for publicity following award of Interim Accreditation

Following achievement of interim accreditation, the HEI will be entitled to:

- Use the Royal Society of Biology's name and logo on all printed and digital materials, including the HEI's website, relating to programmes awarded with interim accreditation
- Use the Royal Society of Biology's name and logo on the UCAS website where the HEI's name appears in relation to the interim accredited degree
- Use the Society's name and logo on all other marketing materials relating to the interim accredited programme(s), following permission from the Royal Society of Biology
- Use the following statement on the HEI's website in relation to the interim accredited programme(s):

This programme has been awarded interim accreditation by the Royal Society of Biology. Degree accreditation by the Royal Society of Biology acknowledges academic excellence in the biosciences, and highlights degrees that educate the research and development leaders and innovators of the future. The accreditation criteria require evidence that graduates have met defined learning outcomes, including gaining substantial research experience. Following a successful demonstration to the Society that these graduate attributes have been attained, and graduation of the first cohort of students from the programme, the programme may be awarded full accreditation.

Institutions must not imply that award of full accreditation of any programme is guaranteed following receipt of interim accreditation.

Participating HEIs must not imply that other establishments, yet to achieve accreditation or interim accreditation, are not offering relevant, high-quality programmes when making reference to the Degree Accreditation Programme in external literature.

The Royal Society of Biology reserves the right to request removal of its name and logo and all trademarks, including its logo, from printed or digital materials or publications at any time.