



INSTITUTE OF
PARALEGALS

Setting Standards. Promoting Professionalism.

IOP ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL
APPROVAL GUIDANCE NOTES

OVERVIEW

The IoP Approval Programme recognises the alignment of organisations who wish to have qualifications or training programmes approved as being a suitable standard for the Paralegal profession. This is defined in terms of our standards.

For Academic and Vocational Approval, only courses and modules which have a significant element of law and paralegal practice which can be mapped to the IoP Paralegal Standards will receive approval. Courses and course delivery will also be evaluated to identify how they support the development of the Paralegal Profession.

BENEFITS OF IOP APPROVAL

- Helps students choose the best academic or vocational education in support of their career choice
- IoP Approved Courses are aligned to the IoP Professional Standards
- The right to say that the relevant qualification(s) are Approved by the Institute
- A Certificate of Approval
- Use of the Institute's 'Approved' Logo on your website and marketing material
- A listing on the Institute's website under the Education and Training Network
- Mention in 'The Paralegal' e-newsletter once a year
- The opportunity to have 'The Paralegal' monthly e-newsletter provided to your students and staff free of charge
- The opportunity to offer Institute membership to your students with staff included at a discounted rate.
- Membership of the Professional Paralegal Register to be included in the IoP membership fee.
- The ability to apply for use of the Professional Paralegal Register logo on your website (fee payable to the PPR)
- To help promote your successful Approval, you will be invited to submit a profile based on your application to be publicised through IoP channels.

Process

1. Initial discussion- then sent an application form
2. Completing the application form- supported by copies of course syllabus and materials
3. Assessment stage- the Approval assessor will assess your application - the extent to which it aligns to IoP standards and wider professional development
4. May be approved or amendments required. If rejected - you can re-submit

5. Annual renewal - on the 1st and second anniversary of your approval - you will be sent a renewal notice and invoice and asked to confirm that the standards have been maintained. On, the third anniversary, you will be invited to go through a re-assessment.
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APPLICATION PROCESS

Stage 1 – Initial discussion

Once you have registered your interest with IoP in applying for Academic or Vocational Approval you will be contacted to discuss your needs and the nature of your application. Upon agreement that you wish to apply for Approval you will be sent an application form.

Stage 2 – Completing your application

To complete your application, you should answer the questions on the form as fully as possible. The assessor allocated to review your submission will look for alignment with the IoP Standards. Your application should be supported by copies of relevant course materials.

Stage 3 – The Assessment

- a) Your completed application form will be sent to an approvals assessor who will assess your application by reviewing the extent to which the IoP Standards are covered in the objectives and course material for your programme and the extent to which they support the development of the Paralegal profession.
- b) A site visit will normally be arranged to enable the assessor to clarify any outstanding issues.

Stage 4 – Assessment decision

Once your assessor has reviewed your application they will be in a position to confirm your approval or to ask for further information.

Should your application be deemed by the assessor not to meet the standards of IoP Approval you will be provided with the assessors' report plus advice on areas that require development within your course or module to meet the standards of the approval.

If your application is rejected, you may make a re-submission which will be treated in all respects as a new submission.

Stage 5 – Annual renewal

On the first and second anniversary of your approval you will be sent a renewal notice and an invoice and will be asked to confirm that the standards recognised through your initial assessment have been maintained. On the third anniversary of your assessment you will be invited to go through a full re-assessment.

Assessment Criteria

Assessors are looking to see the extent to which courses and modules run by academic institutions or organisations have a significant paralegal practice component which can be mapped to the IoP Standards. The nature of the evidence provided by the academic institution or organised in support of its application and the way in which it is presented is likely to be different in each application, but as well as alignment to the IoP Standards assessors will be looking at how the development of the Paralegal profession is supported by the programme.

A summary of the IoP Standards are given overleaf.

SUMMARY OF COMPETENCY STANDARDS

Section 1 – Core Competencies

- C1 Communication
- C2 Workload Management
- C3 Writing and Drafting
- C4 Prepare Files for Legal Matters
- C5 Practical Legal Research
- C6 Establish Case Files
- C7 Conclude Legal Matters

Section 2 – Technical Competencies

- T1 Advocacy
- T2 Plan and Cost Legal Work
- T3 Application of Legal Expertise

Section 3 - Behavioural Competencies

- B1 Client Relations
- B2 Professional Conduct
- B3 Self-awareness and development
- B4 Comply with legal, organizational and Regulatory requirements in the provision of legal services

GUIDANCE N COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION

Section 1 – Your details

Please complete all parts of this section, including the details of the main contact during the assessment process and the name of the institution/organisation and course/module title to be approved. The course/module title will be the name which appears on the certificate of IoP Approval.

Section 2 – Background

In this section you should provide background and context to your application which will help the assessor understand the course or module you wish to have approved. This should include a profile of your institution/organisation and if appropriate, the faculty department within which the course or module is delivered. You should outline the nature and structure of your institution including governance, aims and policies related to your application.

You must explain how the course or module operates including identifying supporting staff, external suppliers, external accreditations, auditing and evaluation and quality control.

You must also provide information identifying the Paralegal expertise of staff involved in the delivery of the course/module which is to be approved. This will normally be in the form of CVs. The academic and support staff associated with the management and delivery of the programme should be appropriate to the learning outcomes to be achieved.

You also need to provide simple statements indicating how the course programme supports the development of the Paralegal Profession. You must indicate why you choose IoP as an approval partner. The assessor will expect an indication of your organisation's commitment to the work of IoP and how your organisation's alignment with the IoP Standards is helping to educate future potential Paralegals.

Section 3 – Evidence map

Indicate where you believe your course/module maps to the IoP Standards. Please identify where within the course materials the evidence of this can be found, or indicate if the alignment is achieved through assessment. Assessors will look for a significant Paralegal component which can be mapped to the IoP Standards, but comprehensive coverage of every area is not expected.

The only mandatory alignment to the standards are C1, C3, T3 and B2.

PRICING

IoP Approval will last for three years. An initial assessment fee is paid when your assessment begins. Two further equal payments are paid annually on the anniversary of your initial approval. The renewal is subject to signed confirmation that you have maintained the standards of your initial approval. If, for any reason during the three year cycle, IoP has reason to believe these standards have not been maintained, it reserves the right to re-assess your application. At the end of the three year cycle you will be required to undergo another full assessment.

Should your initial assessment not meet the criteria, subsequent applications will be treated as new submissions in each case.

Organisations based outside the UK seeking approval will be required to pay additional Assessor costs for any site visits as follows:

- All subsistence from departure airport
- Return flight costs
- Transport to and from airports
- Hotel (of reasonable standard)
- Assessor fees incurred for time required over and above that allowed for in a standard UK application assessment.

Travel and hotel may be booked by the Assessor if necessary, but will normally be arranged by the applicant organisation.

The IoP will endeavor to keep costs to a minimum and where appropriate, alternate arrangements for site approval will be investigated.

TYPES OF APPROVAL AVAILABLE

The IoP Approval scheme offers two streams of approval:

Academic Approval

Academic Approval is designed to help students and professionals choose the best academic education in support of their professional project management career. Academic Approval identifies courses and modules which are aligned to the IoP Standards.

Corporate Approval

Many organisations wish to demonstrate to their customers, suppliers and employees that they are committed to the highest standards of professional development. Corporate Approval assesses an organisation's professional development scheme, providing confidence to all stakeholders of its dedication to developing paralegal professionals.

Please contact us for further information on this Approval Process. Fees are calculated upon request.

Further details

If you have any questions that these guidance notes have not addressed please contact: info@theiop.org