



RCN Accreditation Unit

Code of Practice 2009

The Code of Practice exists to lay down principles of good practice to inform and guide the work of the RCN Accreditation Unit (RCN AU) in its relationship with anyone seeking accreditation for learning and training initiatives.

It is informed by (inter alia) the NMC Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2008) *The Code Standards of conduct, performance and ethics for nurses and midwives*. London NMC, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) 2001 *Code of Practice – quality and standards in Higher Education* (currently being updated – some sections now available at <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice>) and the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries (ABPI) code of Practice (2008), and the Association of British Healthcare Industries (ABHI) Code of practice (2009) and other relevant Health and Social care codes of practice

Terms of Reference

- All those seeking accreditation, or working on behalf of the RCN AU are required to comply with this Code of Practice.
- If there are any changes to RCN local or national policy the RCN AU reserves the right to terminate accreditation; every effort will be made to continue accreditation until the current accreditation period ends.

The document is presented in three parts:

1. The RCN AU's commitment to its users
2. What the RCN AU expects from the people and organisations who use its service.
3. General guidance

Part One - Our commitment to you.

The RCN has a responsibility to promote the science of nursing in line with its charter. A key purpose of the RCN Accreditation Unit is to support nurses and the wider health and social care family to be competent in practice, develop further skills and competence and to promote excellence in nursing and the wider health and social care family.

Values

The RCN Accreditation Unit is guided by a defined set of values, which characterise its relationship with clients and responses to them. These values encompass courtesy, respect, professionalism, accountability and efficiency, clear and transparent communications, the valuing of diversity and ensuring equal opportunities in its dealings.

Material submitted for accreditation must:

- fit with RCN corporate strategy, equal opportunities and diversity, safety and ethical stance

- be patient/client and nursing and social health care focused and where possible be evidence-based
- avoid bias
- meet RCN AU designated standards

In its processes the RCN AU endeavours to

- be responsive, open, fair, honest and accountable for its decisions
- ensure that, accreditation ultimately adds benefit to its end-users, that is patients/clients/users
- periodically evaluate the maintenance and development of the professional standards/competencies used for assessment
- design, approve, supervise and review the assessment strategies which underpin the processes of accreditation
- be consistent in the implementation of rigorous assessment practices which ensure that the professional standard for everything that is accredited is set and maintained at the appropriate level, and that all applications are properly measured against this
- ensure that information and guidance on accreditation is clear, accurate and consistent, and accessible to all staff, applicants and reviewers
- require assessors/reviewers to declare any personal interest, involvement or relationship with any organisation or practitioner seeking accreditation
- ensure that assessment decisions are recorded and documented accurately and backed up electronically as appropriate, with due regard to data protection and confidentiality
- ensure effective mechanisms to deal with breaches of accreditation criteria and the resolution of appeals against any decisions

All staff associated with the Accreditation Unit strive to:

- respect the rights and dignity of all persons with whom there is contact
- respect the confidentiality of all information obtained during the accreditation process
- identify and communicate areas of potential conflict of interest promptly

Accreditation Unit staff will not:

- use their position for financial or personal gain
- give or receive gifts which may be perceived as influencing the RCN Accreditation Unit's decisions

Part Two - Your commitment to us

Signing an RCN Accreditation Unit application form for accreditation signifies acceptance of this Code of Practice. It is required that:

- i. A named individual be responsible for implementing the requirements for accreditation.
- i. Applicants for accreditation are responsible for ensuring good practice and must not engage in plagiarism, collusion, cheating, impersonation or using inadmissible material including that downloaded from electronic sources including the Internet.
- ii. Any individuals sponsored by a company should make that clear on any application for accreditation.
- iii. Any reviewer who acts as a reviewer or attends to evaluate events on behalf of the RCN AU should identify themselves to the organisers of the event, and must not use their position for personal gain.

Part Three - General Guidance

All applications for accreditation must adhere to the current NMC code of conduct, and the current Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries (ABPI) code of Practice.

Use of RCN Trademarks

- i. The person or organisation seeking **accreditation** must ensure that no RCN certificate, logo or report is used in a misleading manner. Please note that the initials '**RCN**', the words, '**Royal College of Nursing**', and the RCN '**hands**' logo are all registered trademarks and may not be used without written consent from the RCN Accreditation Unit.
- ii. The person or organisation granted accreditation only refers to RCN accreditation in documents, brochures or promotional materials in compliance with the terms and conditions of accreditation.
- iii. Once the accreditation period has finished all reference to RCN accreditation and the RCN trademarks must be removed from all documents, brochures website and promotional materials

Copyright

Where previously published material is used and distributed as part of an event, course or resource, it is entirely the responsibility of the person or organisation seeking accreditation to comply with copyright legislation. The person or organisation must confirm in writing to the RCN Accreditation Unit that official permission to reproduce material has been received.

Diversity and Health and Safety

The RCN aspires to be a world-class champion of diversity, equality and human rights. We therefore have an expectation that the services we accredit demonstrably share that commitment.

It is our expectation that providers of education and related services to ensure that they do not unlawfully discriminate either directly or indirectly against individuals or groups on the grounds of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity or nationality, religion, faith or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic status. All venues must meet official Health and Safety standards.

Confidentiality

All staff of the RCN AU and those acting for them, and all users or potential users of accreditation processes should treat any information or relevant documentation as confidential. It is incumbent on all participants in all aspects of accreditation to disclose where there is any interest or potential conflict of interest between themselves and any application for accreditation. All materials remain the copyright of the original provider.

Data Protection

Organisations seeking accreditation must operate policies congruent with the Data Protection Act 1998.

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