

Edinburgh Group Terms of Reference: as at 8 January 2016

Intention

Representing a range of professional bodies, and related interests, it is mutually agreed that the established Edinburgh Group (the Group) will continue to develop the work and principles as initially ratified by the integrated suite of Accreditation documentation prepared in 2003. The Group's intention is to encourage a continuing common approach towards the development, monitoring, and promotion of historic environment conservation accreditation schemes for individual practitioners on a pan-professional basis. In doing so, the Group will acknowledge the wider conservation context and related initiatives likely to occur in the sector. The Council on Training in Architectural Conservation (COTAC) will enable and facilitate the Group.

Participation

The Group will be inclusive of all relevant professional institutes and bodies that administer conservation accreditation schemes across the British Isles. It will also accept future representation from other bodies that devise and promote a related accreditation scheme in accordance with the Group's principles and approach.

As at November 2015, Edinburgh Group participation will include representation from:

- Architects Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC)
- Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
- Conservation Accreditation Register for Engineers (CARE)
- Engineers Ireland (EI)
- Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC)
- Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland (RIAS)
- Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- Royal Society of Architects in Wales (RSAW)
- Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)
- The Institute of Conservation (ICON)

- The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI)

Attached at Annex A is a list of Participating Key Client Interests, and Interested Parties previously represented at Group meetings. Those listed will be invited to participate in Group meetings. Individual Professional Observers, with a specific interest in accreditation developments, will also be encouraged to participate.

Group Principles

The underlying principle will be to help assure commissioning clients that accredited practitioners will have been determined “competent” to practice in conservation work and activities in their own discipline. This competence should be in accordance with the published ‘1993 ICOMOS Education and Training Guidelines’ and the ‘2013 ICOMOS CIF Capacity Building’ intentions; and through the peer-review processes of their respective accreditation scheme. In appropriate official grant-aided circumstances the accredited practitioners’ assessment schemes and procedures should also be in accordance with the official UK Home Countries Protocol dated (*?? February 2016*) [Attached as the February 2012 Draft at Annex B]

In pursuing the Group’s principles, it will operate with a pan-professional uniformity across the range of historic environment accreditation schemes to assist in:

- Enabling the various professional institutes and bodies address their disciplines’ accreditation needs
- Helping ensure a consistency in the approach, the standards used, and the defined outcomes of initial applications and subsequent re-accreditations
- Refining and monitoring the dependability of the various assessment processes
- Maintaining transparency and accountability in the processes
- Increasing the number of practitioners eligible for accreditation
- Maintaining a formal method of approach relative to deferral/refusal
- Monitoring the introduction and development of structured support CPD programmes
- Encouraging the creation of a pan-professional data-base of all accredited individuals
- Promoting the endorsed lists of accredited practitioners.

Complaints

Whilst the collective Group aims to promote a mutual influence and direction across the range of accreditation schemes on offer, each participating profession and body will maintain its own approach to ensure appropriate professional standards are upheld; that effective monitoring of their scheme is pursued; and that practitioners operate ethically in accordance with their profession or body's Code of Conduct. Each will also be responsible for dealing with any associated appeals and complaints involved in upholding the quality and relevance of their scheme.

COTAC CPD Support

In support of the Group, COTAC will maintain and deliver its on-line 5-Unit www.understandingconservation.org support website. This site will continue to provide a level of structured CPD support to assist in the personal development of practitioners to help them gain accredited status. This site will be supported by additional conservation knowledge, learning materials, and other initiatives delivered through the www.cotac.org.uk website. Both websites, and related COTAC programmes, will incorporate, and link across, the framework of the 14 1993 ICOMOS '*Education and Training Guidelines*': 5a) – 5n) [See: <http://www.icomos.org/en/support-us/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/187-guidelines-for-education-and-training-in-the-conservation-of-monuments-ensembles-and-sites>], and the 2013 ICOMOS CIF International Training Committee '*Principles for Capacity Building through Education and Training in Safeguarding and Integrated Conservation of Cultural Heritage*' intentions.

[See: http://cif.icomos.org/pdf_docs/CIF%20Meetings/Guidelines/ICOMOS_CIF_PrinciplesCapacity_EN_20130930.pdf]

In an integrated approach, COTAC's CPD web-based activities and delivery programmes will fall into two categories: -

- Support for practitioners and others to become 'Aware of' historic environment conservation matters
- Support for more advanced practitioner 'Skilled in' CPD needs following accreditation.

Annex A: Related Body Interests in Edinburgh Group Activities

Participating Key Client Interest Bodies

Regular Participating Key Client Interests Bodies in the Group will continue to include representation from:

- Cadw
- Church of England (CoE)
- Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltach (DAHG)
- English Heritage (EH)
- Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
- Historic England (HE)
- Historic Environment Scotland (HES)
- Historic Royal Palaces (HRP)
- National Trust (NT)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (DOENIEA)
- Office of Public Works (OPW)

Previous Participating Bodies

Previously, participating bodies attending Edinburgh Group meetings have included:

- Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)
- Building Research Establishment (BRE)
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
- Chartered Institution of Building Service Engineers (CIBSE)
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA)
- Conservation Course Directors Forum (CCDF)
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)
- University College Dublin (UCD)
- University of East London (UCL)
- Centre for Conservation Studies University of York (CCS)

Annex B: Draft Home Countries Protocol as at February 2012

Criteria against which (*Historic Environment*) Accreditation Schemes would be considered by the four (*UK*) Home Countries

Accreditation of individuals rather than companies or practices.

The skills of a practice are only the combined skills of its individual members, and as individuals move, the skills of the practice will vary.

Eligibility of all suitably qualified and experienced professionals to gain accreditation.

Schemes should be open to all members of the relevant professional discipline.

Assessment of a verifiable record of work carried out.

Accreditation needs to be a measure of experience and competence, so assessment cannot be based simply on a statement of philosophy or principles.

Assessment by suitably experienced, impartial assessors against agreed criteria.

Peer assessment, together with reassessment on a regular basis (say every 5 years) to ensure that accreditation indicates current competence.

The use of the *ICOMOS Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites*.

These are agreed as the basis of assessment of candidates' experience.

An ethical and linked disciplinary framework to ensure that standards are observed and maintained.

There needs to be a way in which proper account is taken of examples of competence falling below the standards required by accreditation.

(The Original Protocol text, tabled as a joint paper by HS/EH to the Edinburgh Group in February 2012, is intended to be formally ratified by the Heritage Bodies' Chief Executives Group (HBCEG) at their first meeting, anticipated early in 2016)