



Realise: The new APM Accredited Training Provider Standard

Introduction

The Association for Project Management (APM) training provider accreditation is essential for those wishing to deliver APM Qualifications. A new standard has been introduced that all Accredited Providers (APs) must attain. This new standard ensures that APM's network of accredited training providers reflects the high standards required to deliver APM

Qualifications, and are trusted within the project profession and by individuals who seek training and development.

This case study focuses on how one of the association's APs, Realise, a training provider, successfully completed the APM accreditation process against the new standard.

About Realise

Realise is an independent UK-based training provider that has been delivering work-based learning and training programmes for over 35 years. Experienced sector-specific trainers deliver training across a range of industries and have a long history in the apprenticeship, adult learning and vocational training market. Every year around 10,000 learners benefit from apprenticeships and adult education programmes.

Accreditation overview

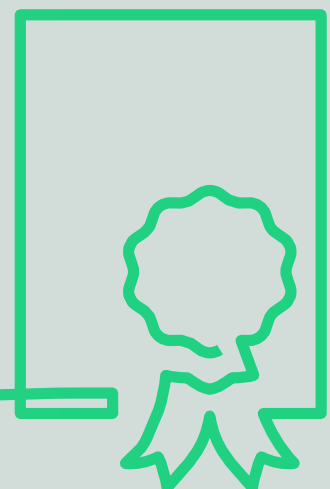
The APM Accredited Training Provider Standard proves APs can deliver training for APM qualifications to a high standard. This ensures candidates receive the right knowledge while studying towards their exam. APs share best practices and advice with their candidates, providing them with the tools for success.

The key changes of the new standard:

- The new standard emphasises the end-to-end journey for learners pursuing an APM qualification, with a strong focus on effectively adopting continual improvement.

- APM digital badges are awarded per qualification, enabling immediate validation and offering transparency for clients regarding the significance of this trust mark.
- A Gold standard is set for APs outperforming the accreditation metrics, highlighting exceptional performance. Training providers are evaluated on six areas to maintain accreditation per qualification: meeting 30-day payment terms, ensuring website and qualification status accuracy, correct use of the APM digital badge, effective communication, adhering to the APM reasonable adjustments policy, minimising candidate malpractice, and keeping APM informed about changes in delivery personnel or course content and attendance at events like the AP bulletin and Train the Trainer sessions is also required.

Providers are monitored against benchmarks for pass rates and learner experience. Accredited providers must be within -5% of the national benchmark pass rate, while the Gold standard requires +5% above it. For learner satisfaction, accredited providers need at least a 70% rating and under 3% candidate complaints. The Gold standard demands at least an 80% satisfaction rating and complaints below 2%.



Initial thoughts on the new accreditation standard

Owen Piddock, Programme Manager at Realise, is responsible for the organisation's curriculum development and performance of high-level leadership programmes in project and operational management.

Sharing his experience of the new accreditation process, he said: "I liked having clear goals to reach and having stretch goals in the Gold standard. Having things like the pass rate was nice, as it enables us to use this with employers when it crops up in tenders for business.

"At first, it was daunting to produce all the information required for the new standard. However, when you take a step back at what is needed such as policies, processes and procedures, these are documents that we should already have. It's a matter of consolidating and liaising with the right people in the business, gaining access and being aware of its contents, or at least have steps in place to make sure this information is transparent."

Accreditation is the basis that details the quality of an organisation's capabilities. At Realise, this serves a simple function to ensure the trainers deliver effective and approved training.



It's useful to have a published clear goal for us all to work towards. For example, because we know what our candidates need to achieve. My specialist trainers have a clear framework of how to support the learners to reach that standard and it sets out what we need to know as a business.

Owen Piddock,
Programme Manager, Realise

Completing the accreditation process

Being organised was highlighted as a key factor in streamlining the submission process. This includes ensuring the administrative tasks surrounding the documentation are complete, and understanding the roles and responsibilities within the organisation. Owen explained: "Being a larger training provider, the longest part of the submission process was to locate the different places where the information was held, and to make sure that was the most up-to-date version."

"The questions themselves were very straightforward. The main thing was making sure that I had everything that I needed, and ensuring everything was understandable and labelled clearly so that someone external could comprehend our documents."

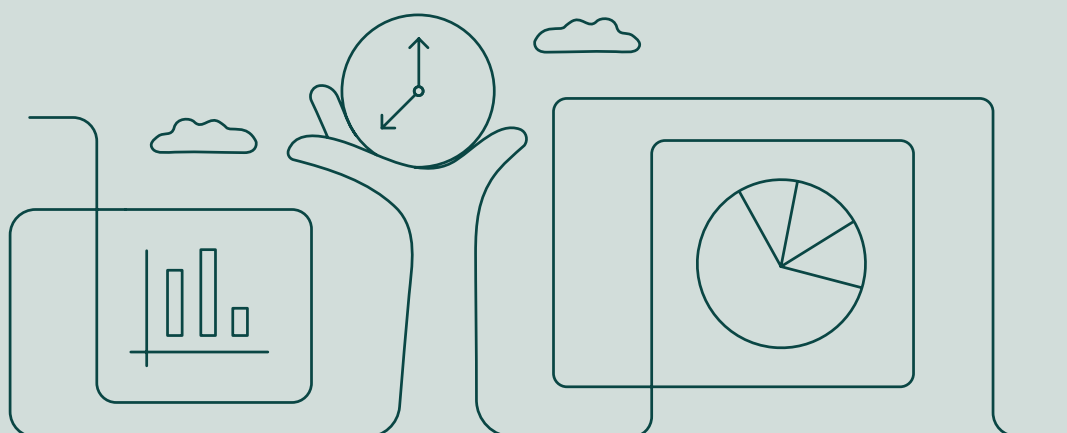
"I was working on and off the submission for a couple of weeks and so it did feel quite lengthy. A lot of that had to do with this being my first time fully managing the process. When we're due for re-accreditation I know what we're looking for and it will be a very straightforward exercise in just collating all the information. A lot of the information that we've included may not need changing or may have been slightly updated, meaning there might be some slight amendments, but from that point of

view, very straightforward. If anything, I probably had spent a bit too long on it."

"Looking at my process, I'd fill out the sections that I could, identify the sections where I needed to contact colleagues, mark those to revisit during the week and I'll put a slot in my diary to do that alongside where in the submission it needed to be assigned to. Even though the process felt longer than anticipated, the actual activity itself (of entering the information) didn't take long at all."

APM has made sure that support is readily available for APs who need it. This is especially important for helping APs who are unfamiliar with aspects of the new process, as Owen attested: "Everything that I needed help with I got a swift and helpful response. They wanted to give me as much information as possible to make sure that I understood or that the issue that I was having was resolved."

"I reached out to APM when I was not sure how to present something in the document or for clarification on a question. If I had an issue, I could pick up the phone and speak to them (APM). If I emailed I got a response pretty much the same day, if not within a day or two. So certainly, whilst the issues were still fresh in my mind I could action them. It was a very nice process, to be honest."



Final thoughts

- Being an accredited training provider with APM is not just a tick-box exercise. It proves competence, credibility, and demonstrates that an AP is equipped to deliver a qualification. Accreditation adds weight to services and gives learners confidence that they're investing in a reputable and reliable provider.

Owen stated: "Accreditation enhances what we offer to those employers and to those people who come and do their apprenticeships with us. It's not simply a matter of paying a fee and declaring ourselves accredited. Instead, it involves meeting the same standards and requirements as other accredited providers, ensuring a level playing field and that we have undergone thorough scrutiny and validation by APM."

- The new accreditation includes as much detail as possible to ensure the breadth and depth of all training providers are acceptable. As the only chartered institute of the project profession, APM is accountable and must have transparency over learner care, operational practices and criteria of knowledge.

"Everything APM is requesting is relevant. There was nothing in there that I think to myself, why do you want to know that? As a professional body, APM should want to know about how we look after learners, how we protect their information, their data, and what things we have in place for that. It also gives us confidence to know APM have overseen our practices.

- The accreditation represents competence, credibility and quality. Employers and individuals can now easily identify the capability of an approved training provider, with the new APM digital badges. This demonstrates that they are equipped to deliver the qualification. The newly introduced Gold standard is a way to demonstrate learner success against a defined benchmark.

Owen expressed: "The accreditation adds weight to our services, giving learners confidence that they are investing in a reputable and reliable provider. It's good for learners and employers so that they know that they can come to us, they can trust in us as a provider to deliver this qualification to that high standard."



Owen's advice to anyone considering APM training provider accreditation

- Allow the time to talk to the relevant departments to retrieve the required information.
- Make use of the support available from APM – Don't hesitate to contact their team if there are any issues. It doesn't matter how big or small the question is.
- Keep track of the documents used for the current application. Being aware of the status of materials will make the process quicker for re-accreditation.

"It is a bit daunting if it's your first time managing the entire process, or if you're coming off the old standard onto the new standard because they're asking for a lot of examples. But for most organisations going through that process, it will be something that you'll have in some way shape or form already.

"I've worked with some smaller providers in the past. They may not have some of the policies formalised that are requested as part of the accreditation. But I'm confident any provider would be able to provide insight into their policies and process, as requested in the accreditation documents."



Because when projects
succeed, society benefits

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