



FMC Manual Professional Standards and Self-Regulatory Framework

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Part 1: The FMC Accreditation Framework

Introduction

This document describes the requirements and process for gaining and renewing FMC accreditation as a family mediator. FMC accreditation is designed to be the standard qualification for family mediators in England and Wales.

1. Title and eligibility

The designation **FMC Accredited Family Mediator** (FMCA) is awarded to family mediators who have (a) passed the assessments on an FMC-approved initial training course, (b) completed the post-training requirements, and (c) passed the final assessment of professional competence. Requirements (b) and (c) are summarised below. Accreditation is for a period of three years, after which an application must be made for renewal that demonstrates that the mediator satisfies the conditions in section 3.

Award of FMCA status requires mediators to have basic competence in children and financial issues and to be able to undertake all-issues mediation (this requirement will not be applied to children-only or property and finance-only mediators who qualified under previous schemes). Post-FMCA, mediators may choose to specialise in one or other area or undertake all-issues mediation, provided the FMC Code of Practice is followed. Some specialist areas of mediation – for instance relating to direct consultation with children or child abduction – will require additional training and qualifications.

To conduct legal aid work and family mediation voucher scheme work solo, mediators must hold FMCA status.

Mediators with FMCA status are authorised family mediators for the purposes of the Family Procedure Rules and are qualified to conduct mediation information and assessment meetings (MIAMs).

The Law Society's family mediator accreditation scheme applies the same standards as those required for FMCA. Subject to agreement by the FMC Family Mediation Standards Board (FMSB), Law Society accredited family mediators will automatically qualify for FMCA status.

FMCA family mediators may use the letters 'FMCA' or designation 'FMC Accredited Family Mediator' and any trademark which may be agreed for the use of FMCA mediators.

Retaining FMCA status is subject to:

- remaining in membership of an FMC member organisation
- practising in accordance with the FMC Code of Practice
- meeting the requirements to renew accreditation (these are explained in section 3)
- maintaining registration with the FMC.

2. Requirements for gaining FMC accreditation

2.1 Registration

In order to register with the FMC, mediators must meet the requirements as set out in this document and the FMC Code of Practice, comply with the FMC's administrative requirements, have met the FMC's good standing requirement and represent themselves fairly.

2.2 Good Standing Requirement

Mediators registered with the FMC must be of good standing.

This can be shown by providing evidence of good standing from a regulatory body which has been recognised by the FMC or through the FMSB's own Good Standing process which requires the absence of or satisfactory explanations for any offences or penalties specified below:

- Has been convicted in the United Kingdom of any offence or been convicted elsewhere of any offence which, if committed in any part of the United Kingdom, would constitute an offence (unless spent);
- Has been disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 (CDDA);
- Has been erased, removed or struck off a register of professionals, whether on a temporary or permanent basis;
- Has had any disciplinary sanction imposed by a Family Mediation Council Membership Organisation;
- Is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim bankruptcy restrictions order in England and Wales or an order to like effect made elsewhere;
- Has been refused professional indemnity insurance;
- Any ongoing proceedings that may lead to one of the consequences set out above.

In addition, mediators must disclose any other circumstances that they believe may be relevant to their Good Standing as a family mediator, for instance if they have been responsible for, been privy to, contributed to or facilitated any serious misconduct or mismanagement (whether unlawful or not) in the course of carrying on a professional activity, or discharging any functions relating to any office or employment.

2.3 Post-training requirements and restrictions

Mediators who wish to gain FMC accreditation will need to do so within three years of completing initial training. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended to up to five years with endorsement from the mediator's Professional Practice Consultant (PPC) or otherwise in accordance with the FMC's extension policy. Mediators who have not gained accreditation within this period will need to undertake further training as advised by the FMC.

Between completing training and becoming eligible for accredited status, mediators will need to do the following (and keep the relevant records and commentaries for the final assessment as detailed in appendix 1):

- Have at least ten hours one-to-one, principally face-to-face support from their PPC, with sessions recorded in a log countersigned by the PPC. This includes the PPC contact

outlined below, but does not include (a) any time spent co-mediating with the PPC or observing the PPC mediate, or (b) the normal four hours per year of PPC contact expected of all mediators.

- Have (as the first of these sessions) a post-training review with the PPC. This may be organised by the provider of the initial training or by the mediator independently. The PPC will review the mediator's readiness to mediate and, if necessary, agree additional measures for gaining experience before starting to mediate.
- Before acting as a sole or lead mediator or representing themselves to the public as a family mediator (and see a. under 'Until mediators gain FMCA status' below), register with the FMC as working towards accreditation (this will normally be done via one of the FMC member organisations).
- Before starting to mediate, **either** observes **or** co-mediates in a mediation session conducted by an FMCA mediator, and produces an evaluative account of the session.
- For their first case as a sole or lead mediator, (a) have a pre-case discussion with their PPC before starting to mediate or to assess clients' suitability for mediation, and (b) hold a post-case review with their PPC. In the pre-case discussion, the PPC will, if necessary, identify any additional support that the mediator needs before starting the first session.
- Have at least one mediation session observed by their PPC (which must not be a session co-mediated with the PPC). This must be within two years of completing initial training and ideally should be near the beginning of the post-training period. More than one observation is encouraged, including observation of an initial assessment /consultation meeting. The PPC's written feedback on a minimum of one session needs to be included in the materials submitted for assessment.

If circumstances make it particularly difficult for a mediator to be observed by their registered PPC, the mediator may be observed by another PPC or Family Mediation Council Accredited (FMCA) mediator with three years post accreditation experience, with the agreement of and approval by the mediator's registered PPC.

- Take a minimum of three cases through to completion. These will need to be written up for assessment.
- Comply with the requirements for continuing professional development and ongoing PPC support (as applicable to FMCAs).
- Attend a Child-Inclusive Mediation (CIM) Awareness and Understanding Course. This should be a minimum of one day long and provided by either an FMC approved foundation course provider, or an FMC approved CIM provider. The purpose of this is to ensure that all family mediators can explain the principles, purpose and the basic process of CIM to parents as they should routinely detail this in initial assessment meetings.

While this one-day course will not be assessed, it must take account of the competencies listed in Part 6.5 under the following sections:

A3 Understanding and Application of the Process

B4 Performance Skills: Working with Parents and Carers

Until mediators gain FMCA status, they will need to:

- (a) Represent themselves appropriately to the public: a suggested format is '(Mediator) has completed initial training and is registered with the Family Mediation Council as working towards fully qualified status as a family mediator. S/he is supported by (PPC) as his/her Professional Practice Consultant.'
- (b) Enlist PPC or qualified colleague support if any elements of any case are beyond their capability.
- (c) Have any mediation outcome documentation, including memoranda of understanding and open financial statements, approved by their PPCs before being sent to their clients.
- (d) Have any court forms relating to their clients signed by their PPC.

2.4 Assessment of professional competence

Award of FMCA status is made following an assessment of a portfolio of work assembled from the period between completion of training and application (as described in section 2.3). The portfolio, which should normally be submitted in electronic form using widely-available software, must demonstrate that the mediator meets the FMC professional competence standards at a level that must be at least 'competent' and should show elements of progressing to 'proficient' (see appendix 3 for an explanation of these levels). The material required in the portfolio is detailed in appendix 1.

Completed portfolios must be sent to the FMC (via the office handling the administration of assessments) with the current application fee, which covers one assessment. Following submission, an initial examination of the portfolio will be made to ensure that it is clearly and legibly presented and includes the materials required in the outline above. Incomplete or incomprehensible portfolios will be returned to the mediator for amendment. An additional administrative fee may be payable for resubmission.

Portfolios that are deemed to be complete will be allocated to an assessor for formal assessment to the FMC professional competence standards. Assessors will be allocated to avoid conflicts of interest; where an assessor suspects that a conflict exists, s/he will discuss the matter with the scheme's chief assessor before proceeding with the assessment.

The assessor will make a rigorous and unbiased assessment of the portfolio to the professional standards. Any standards that are not met at the 'competent' level, or any failure to meet the portfolio requirements, will be clearly identified by the assessor, who will make one of three decisions:

- A. The mediator meets the required standards and is eligible for accreditation ('approved').

- B. Additional work is required on the portfolio that can reasonably be completed within six months, such as the addition of further explanations or an additional case-commentary ('accepted subject to additional work').
- C. Substantial work is required that is not likely to be feasible to complete within six months, typically because the work submitted falls substantially short of the professional competence standards or none of the cases are suitable ('competence not yet proven').

Assessors may make further enquiries if the portfolio suggests that the work submitted is not that of the mediator, or other forms of impropriety or plagiarism are suspected.

Portfolios will be moderated through examination by the scheme's Chief Assessor or by an experienced assessor nominated by him or her. Portfolios that appear to be borderline will be examined in depth and discussed with the first assessor. Assessors may also contact the mediator for further explanations.

Mediators will normally be informed of the assessment decision within six weeks of submitting the portfolio. If the portfolio is deemed not yet proven or is accepted subject to additional work, the reasons for this will be communicated clearly and precisely. In either case mediators will be encouraged to resubmit at the appropriate point (and where to discuss their portfolio with their PPC).

The Family Mediation Standards Board may examine a sample of portfolios as a check that the overall process is operating consistently and to the required standard. This does not constitute an additional assessment and will not delay assessment decisions being communicated to mediators.

2.5 Appeals against assessment decisions

Mediators who believe that their portfolio has been wrongly deemed 'not proven' or requiring additional work may make an appeal to the FMC, stating clearly the grounds for the appeal. Mediators are strongly encouraged to discuss potential appeals with their PPC, and will need to explain the reason if the PPC is not supporting the appeal. Mediators and PPCs are encouraged to each make a short, written statement in support of the appeal (no more than 500 words), but no material will be accepted for addition to the portfolio.

Appeals must be made within three months of the assessment result. A fee is payable for an appeal; it will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

The FMC will investigate where there are valid grounds for the appeal. Acceptable grounds include the use of criteria that do not reflect the professional standards or code of practice, or the guidance set out in the published portfolio requirements; the criteria have been interpreted incorrectly; and the assessors have missed or misinterpreted material included in the portfolio.

When an appeal is approved to go forward, the portfolio will be re-examined by an assessor who has not previously been involved in its assessment. The assessor will have sight of the original assessment decision and the appeal submission, unless there are overriding reasons relating to the nature of the appeal that the reassessment should be carried out without knowledge of one or both. The decision on appeal will be final.

2.6 Award of FMCA status

The FMC Family Mediation Standards Board will be notified of the names of all mediators who have passed the assessment process. FMC Accredited Family Mediator status will be awarded provided that the mediator is in current membership of an FMC member body and is not in breach of the Code of Practice.

3. Renewing accreditation

3.1 General requirements

Accreditation is held for a period of three years following successful assessment or renewal. At the end of the three-year period, the mediator will need to make an application for renewal if s/he wishes to retain accreditation (mediators who are granted FMCA based on existing approvals may initially be asked to reapply after a shorter or longer period in order to avoid all renewal dates occurring in the same month).

The basic requirements for reaccreditation are (a) an adequate record of continuing development; (b) adequate dialogue with a Professional Practice Consultant; and (c) a minimum level of practice. Mediators must also be in current membership of one of the FMC member organisations, and not have had their accreditation revoked under the disciplinary process. Details of these requirements are given below, and a reapplication form, on which all applications for reaccreditation must be made, will be provided by the FMC.

3.2 Continuing development

The mediator must provide a completed continuing development record (as included with the reapplication form), which demonstrates that adequate steps have been undertaken to keep up-to-date and maintain the ability to practise competently. The record needs to describe (briefly) the activities that were carried out, why these were undertaken (i.e. their relevance to practice), and the benefits to clients and to practice that were gained.

The mediator should demonstrate keeping up-to-date with the following, as relevant to his or her practice:

- Changes in family law
- Changes in pensions, benefits and personal taxation
- Developments in family mediation practice and theory
- Safeguarding knowledge and skills, to include domestic and child abuse
- Developments in children's issues, the impact of parental conflict, available resources and support services
- Issues of diversity & inclusivity

Development activities may of course cover other areas such as acquiring new skills, learning about particular aspects in greater depth, gaining knowledge of complementary fields, and advancing practice and theory.

Continuing development can be achieved through a wide range of means, including accredited and non-accredited courses and conferences, practice-based activities such as co-mediation, observation and action-based learning, on-line learning and research, reading, research, and higher education programmes. There are no restrictions on the kind of activities that can count, but it is important that they are relevant to the mediator's practice, result in relevant learning and benefits, and taken together provide an adequate level of updating. There are no requirements for development activities to total to a particular number of hours, although for guidance it is unlikely that less than ten hours per year engaged in specific development activity will be sufficient. Development should be timely, for instance when changes in family law are announced mediators will be expected to update themselves sufficiently quickly so that they are able to continue to provide accurate information to clients. Activities would normally be expected to be spread across the three-year period (if the period includes a substantial career break or other period of absence from practice, the mediator will need to explain how s/he has ensured that s/he is sufficiently up-to-date on returning to practice).

The mediator is encouraged to discuss development activities with their PPC. However, the activities that are chosen and undertaken are the responsibility of the mediator, and do not need to be endorsed by the PPC. Mediators are strongly advised to record and evaluate activities as they take place rather than waiting until the point of reapplication.

3.3 Professional Practice Consultants

The mediator must provide a record of adequate support from a PPC. This will normally not be less than four hours per year, at least two of which must be individual face-to-face sessions (the remaining hours can be remote or through a small-group session, but not a lecture or seminar). It is the responsibility of mediators to ensure that their PPC support is sufficient for the needs of their practice; this may require more than four hours of contact per year.

The PPC must endorse the application as (to the best of their knowledge) a true and fair record of the mediator's development activities, PPC contact and hours of practice, and sign a statement to the effect that there is no reason under the FMC Code of Practice or the rules governing award of FMCA that the mediator should not be accredited.

3.4 Minimum hours of practice

A minimum level of practice is expected in order for the mediator to maintain his or her face-to-face mediation skills. This should normally be not less than fifteen hours per year of direct mediation, excluding information and assessment meetings or work involved in preparation and recording.

3.5 Levels of activity below the recommended minima

If the levels of PPC contact or mediation are below those stated above or there are any years with little or no continuing development activity, the mediator should provide an explanation and if relevant a proposed action plan to ensure that an acceptable level of competence is maintained. Other than where there is a valid reason such as maternity or paternity leave, illness, bereavement, or a planned career break, activity below the recommended minimum will be followed up; mediators should note that it is their responsibility to find the minimum level of work.

Levels of activity should match each other, so that for instance while PPC support and development activities will not be compulsory during a break from work, the mediator should show how s/he has ensured that s/he is sufficiently prepared and up-to-date before starting to practise again.

3.6 Late and insufficient applications

Applications can be accepted up to six months after the end of the three-year period, provided that there is a reasonable explanation for the lateness (for instance illness, bereavement or other unforeseen circumstances). Mediators who know that they will be away or indisposed when accreditation expires should reapply in good time to meet the deadline. Mediators on extended periods of leave may apply before or during the period of leave; the FMSB will ensure that mediators who have a valid reason for not practising are not disadvantaged if their reaccreditation date falls within the period of leave.

Late applications will not result in an extended period of accreditation, so if for instance accreditation expires on 31st January 2025 but the application is not made until 31st March, the new period of accreditation will run to 31st January 2028. Late applications after the six-month period, or any applications that are late without good cause, will be treated as if accreditation has lapsed.

Where an application does not meet the requirements set out above, the FMSB can ask for additional information, ask the mediator to propose an action plan that will result in the requirements being met (see section 3.7 below), or, following unsuccessful recourse to these measures, refuse to reaccredit. The timescale for resolving matters relating to insufficient applications will normally be a maximum of six months, after which accreditation will lapse. This period will be extended if delays are caused by matters beyond the control of the mediator.

The FMSB will ensure that the above allowances are not abused, for instance by mediators who deliberately submit an application that is both late and weak.

3.7 Lapsed accreditation and action plans

Accreditation will lapse if an application has not been received by the due date, a late application is received without adequate explanation, or the application is insufficient and the relevant matters remain unresolved. Mediators may of course choose not to reapply either to take an extended career break or because they no longer expect to practise as a family mediator.

Mediators who wish to reapply after their accreditation has lapsed for a shorter or longer period will need to put forward an action plan that will bring them to the required level of competence to practise at a proficient level. In developing the action plan, the mediator should refer to the FMC professional standards and code of practice, as well as (for mediators who have been out of practice for a substantial period) the current training requirements. The contents of the action plan will depend on individual circumstances and could vary for instance from essential updating and additional PPC support, through to substantial retraining and/or reassessment. The FMSB will want to see that the action plan is credible in terms of when the mediator last practised and the level (if any) of updating that has been maintained. The FMSB may negotiate changes to the action plan if necessary. Following approval of the action plan, the FMSB may reaccredit either immediately or when evidence has been produced that some or all of the agreed actions have been carried out.

Mediators who have been out of practice for a significant length of time and who have not maintained a sufficient level of ongoing development should be aware that they may need to undergo full retraining and reassessment.

3.8 Appeals against refusal to reaccredit

Mediators who are refused reaccreditation after making a valid and complete reaccreditation application may appeal to the FMC, clearly stating the grounds for the appeal. Mediators are strongly encouraged to discuss potential appeals with their PPC, and will need to explain the reason if the PPC is not supporting the appeal. Mediators and PPCs are encouraged to each make a short, written statement in support of the appeal (no more than 500 words). A fee is payable for an appeal; it will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

When an appeal is approved to go forward, the FMC FMSB will convene an appeals panel that has not been involved in the decision to refuse accreditation. The panel will examine the decision-making process leading to the withdrawal or refusal of accreditation. The decision on appeal will be final.

Mediators who have had membership of a MO terminated should note that a successful appeal against refusal of accreditation will not automatically require that MO to reinstate their membership.

Appendix 1- Portfolio contents

Portfolios must include the following:

An application form, which includes:

- The mediator's contact details and the name(s) of any practice(s) or service(s) with which the mediator works.
- The FMC membership organisation that the mediator is a member of or registered with.
- The name and contact details of the mediator's PPC (and any previous PPCs if relevant, together with the dates for which those PPCs were engaged).
- A declaration signed by the mediator confirming that:
 - a) there are no past, current or known future reasons why the mediator should not be practising as a family mediator
 - b) the materials contained in the portfolio are his or her own work.
 - c) the mediator will comply with and practise in accordance with the FMC Code of Practice
 - d) the mediator accepts that the assessment decision made by the FMC is final, subject to the appeals process detailed in this document.

A contents page for the portfolio.

A standard format for this will be required by the FMC, which will include a grid for cross-referencing portfolio contents to the professional standards.

A statement from the mediator's PPC that:

- confirms the accuracy of the mediator's log of the PPC sessions
- confirms the case commentaries submitted in the portfolio are authentic, that the mediator has taken the lead in them, and that the mediator has obtained permission from the clients to use them
- endorses the mediator's competence to practise independently to the requirements of the FMC professional competence standards
- confirms that the material submitted is entirely the mediator's own work.

In addition, if the PPC has not observed the mediator, the PPC should include the following additional information within their Registered PPC's statement in support:

- the specific circumstances which lead to the decision to use a substitute (e.g. geography, diary issues etc.);
- the basis on which the Registered PPC thinks they have sufficient knowledge of the mediator to make their statement in support; and
- confirmation that the Registered PPC has discussed the observation notes and mediator's feedback with the mediator candidate.

Observation of a mediation session by the mediator

An account reflecting on and evaluating a mediation session by a FMCA, observed by the mediator, must be included in the portfolio.

Observation of the mediator by the PPC

The PPC's feedback for the observed mediation session must be submitted, accompanied by an account by the mediator that:

- sets the context for the session (if it is not part of one of the case commentaries below);
- reflects on the mediator's approach in the session; and
- responds constructively to any points raised by the PPC.

If circumstances made it particularly difficult for a mediator to be observed by their registered PPC and the mediator was observed by a another PPC or FMCA with three years post accreditation experience, with the agreement of and approval by the mediator's registered PPC, the mediator's response should also specifically address areas for development identified by the substitute and how these can be addressed in their practice or through future supervision with their Registered PPC.

Number and Type of Case Commentaries

Either three or four case commentaries (see below) are required in which the mediator has taken the substantive lead, and in all but one case full or extensive agreement has been secured. Cases must have started not later than two years before the date of submission of the portfolio (in exceptional circumstances a further year can be granted with the approval of the mediator's PPC or in accordance with FMC guidance and policy that may be issued from time to time).

If **three** cases are submitted this must include at least

- one case that is an "all issues" mediation,
- one that addresses property and finance
- one that addresses children's arrangements.

Two of the three cases must include memoranda of understanding and open financial statements.

If an "all issues" case is not being submitted, the alternative is to submit **four** cases, consisting of:

- two "property and finance" cases
- two "children only" cases.

Where four cases are submitted, both "property and finance" cases must include memoranda of understanding and open financial statements and at least one of the "children only" cases must include a memorandum or outcome statement.

If the mediator submits four case commentaries rather than three, the mediator **must** include in the reflective account either a reflection on one or more "all issues" mediation/s the mediator has undertaken (but not concluded) or, if none have been undertaken, reflection on the issues that do need to be addressed in an "all issues" case. The mediator would be expected to demonstrate an

understanding of the issues that arise when dealing with both children and financial issues together.

One of the case commentaries submitted by a mediator as part of their portfolio may be in relation to a case where mediation did not complete, but where, as a minimum:

- some or partial agreement has been reached on some issues;
- there has been more than one session; and
- in financial cases, substantial disclosure has been achieved.

If a mediator submits such a case, the mediator must include in their case commentary:

- an explanation of why the case did not complete;
- a statement explaining whether, on reflection, the mediator would have done anything differently and why; and
- any actual or draft summaries of sessions that have been completed and
- any actual or draft Interim Confidential Summary of Proposals/Open Financial Statement I or parenting plans if drafted.

Mediators must still ensure that **all** of the competencies are demonstrated in their portfolio.

Where proposals have been reached, but one or both clients have indicated that they do not wish to receive final outcome documentation, provided that this is for one of the case commentaries only, the mediator may draft a Confidential Summary of Proposals for the purpose of supporting the case commentary, as if the mediator had been requested to do so by the client. It should be made clear on the face of the document and within the portfolio that the summary has been prepared for this purpose only.

All case commentaries

The case commentaries must show evidence of successful, high-quality mediation that demonstrates the ability to mediate cases through to completion, including both financial and children's issues, showing use of the full range of mediation skills identified in the professional standards and portfolio guidance.

The cases must include at least two examples of initial consultations or assessment meetings.

Each commentary must include a brief background to the case and a summarised account of the process of each mediation session, including the mediator's reflection on his or her interventions. At least one case – which should normally be an “all-issues” case - must include a complete set of case notes, session records and correspondence. If no “all issues” cases are submitted, full records must be provided for one of the financial cases. Case commentaries must be anonymised, and permission obtained from the clients to use them. A template will be provided for this purpose.

The mediator can make reference to additional cases, to demonstrate that the professional competence standards have been met.

Reflective account

A reflective account must be submitted (typically 1,500-2,000 words) drawing on the mediator's practice experience. The account should where possible include reflection on cases that did not go to completion and what was learned from them. The account must include evidence of managing high conflict cases. The mediator must demonstrate a real sense of the work undertaken, highlighting key achievements, skills and knowledge gained since completing mediation training and any evidence that the mediator wishes to highlight to assessors that is not covered elsewhere within the portfolio. Inclusion of references to mediation reading and theory are likely to enhance the account.

Case study questions

A set of case-study questions are available at (web site to be added). The mediator will need to select three of the current five cases and answer the questions on them. When reflecting on these questions applicants should, wherever possible, draw on similar or related case examples from their own practice to include in their answers. The suggested response length is 200–400 words per question.

The questions are not intended to elicit a single 'right answer', but are instead designed to enable the mediator to show that proper consideration has been given to the situations described, drawing on knowledge and practice experience. The answers allow understanding to be demonstrated relevant to the professional standards that may not be apparent from cases handled to date.

Personal development planning and review

This includes (a) a personal development record covering the period since completing initial training, outlining learning experiences (including learning from practice) and the learning and development gained, and (b) a plan for the mediator's future development post-accreditation. The record should be in the same format as provided for reaccreditation.

Appendix 2 - The FMC professional competence standards for family mediation

Introduction

These standards apply to the work of family mediators generally, with specific application to assessment for accreditation. They are designed to apply across the contexts in which family mediators work – e.g. voluntary sector, private practice, law firms, sole practitioner, co-mediation etc. They aim to avoid assumptions that limit the context in which they can be applied (or make them hostage to changes in regulations, funding regimes, etc.).

Note that the term ‘participants’ is used to denote the mediation clients rather than being inclusive of the mediator or anyone else who may be involved in the mediation.

A. Theoretical underpinnings

A1 Understand and draw on theories-in-use that inform the practice of mediation

These include:

- *theories concerning the impact of separation, loss and conflict on families and individuals*
- *theories of child development and the impact of separation and other family changes on children and young people*
- *theories of conflict, co-operation and competition*
- *theories of communication and engagement*
- *key processes for resolving family disputes.*

A2 Understand the ethical basis and key principles of family mediation

This includes:

- *key principles of mediation including independence of the mediator, ‘without prejudice’, child focus, fairness, voluntariness, client competence, confidentiality and its limits, impartiality and neutrality, and participant self-determination within the relevant legal framework*
- *the impact of the mediator’s personal beliefs, values and style*
- *distinguishing between the process of mediation and employing other forms of intervention.*

A3 Understand the key methods and techniques employed in family mediation

These include:

- *different types of intervention and when it is appropriate to use them*
- *methods that enhance communication in the mediation process*
- *techniques for dealing with conflict, power imbalance and impasse*
- *ways of bringing the perspective of children and young people into the mediation process*

B. Professionalism and ethics

This section applies as relevant throughout the mediator's work.

B1 Work within legal and professional guidelines and the limits of personal capability

This includes:

- *working in accordance with the Family Mediation Council's Code of Practice and with the procedures of the organisation(s) of which the mediator is a member*
- *operating within the law and following any legal requirements and processes*
- *only undertaking work that is within the mediator's competence and capacity, seeking guidance or recommending alternative sources of support where necessary.*

B2 Maintain the ability to practise competently and ethically

This includes:

- *maintaining an adequate and up-to-date understanding of legislation, policy developments, research and practice relating to the field of family mediation*
- *maintaining an adequate level of support from a Professional Practice Consultant (PPC)*
- *taking responsibility for personal learning and development, including identifying areas for development, acting to meet learning objectives, and learning from practice.*

B3 Respect the needs and individuality of participants

This includes:

- *maintaining sensitivity to the needs of individual participants*
- *acting in accordance with the principles of equality and diversity*
- *responding to and addressing cultural and gender issues effectively and sensitively*
- *taking into account, and acting with sensitivity towards, any issues of mental health, learning disability or other potential barriers to participation in mediation.*

B4 Balance the need for confidentiality with that for safeguarding

This includes:

- *applying and upholding the principle of confidentiality and respecting the privileged nature of family mediation, other than where there are overriding and ethically sound reasons to do otherwise*
- *responding appropriately and effectively to any domestic abuse, safeguarding or child protection issues.*

B5 Act with integrity and fairness

This includes:

- *acting in an even-handed manner*
- *acting with openness, transparency and integrity*

C. Mediation practice

C1 Explain mediation to participants

This includes:

- *being clear about the difference between an initial consultation or assessment meeting and a mediation session*
- *explaining the principles, potential and limitations of mediation*
- *explaining the different methods of mediation that are available and how they would work*
- *explaining CIM and the child's rights perspective to parents/carers, discussing ways in which children and young people can be listened to and encouraged to offer their perspectives and suggestions and to giving active encouragement to parents/carers to provide such an opportunity for the child*
- *explaining that the principles of CIM are consistent with the fundamental principles of mediation*

C2 Assess the suitability of mediation for participants

This includes:

- *assessing, initially and on an ongoing basis, suitability for mediation in respect of (a) the dispute, (b) the participants, and (c) all the circumstances of the case*
- *helping the participants to decide on the appropriateness of mediation for their situation*
- *signposting participants to complementary or alternative services where appropriate*
- *ensuring that participants are aware of their right to seek independent legal advice.*

C3 Check eligibility for financial support

This involves identifying any public or other funding that is available and, where appropriate, carrying out and recording accurate financial checks for eligibility.

C4 Assess and respond to domestic abuse and child or other safeguarding issues

This includes:

- *screening effectively with each participant separately for domestic abuse or harm to themselves, children or others*
- *identifying any potential for unreported domestic abuse or harm*

- *providing appropriate information on sources of assistance and protection from harm, including emergency remedies*
- *notifying appropriate outside agencies, and the mediator's PPC, where necessary.*

C5 Provide relevant information about services and options available to participants

This includes, at the level appropriate to the participant and the situation:

- *providing information about family law and its processes*
- *providing unbiased information about other relevant means of family dispute resolution*
- *providing information about sources of assistance for parents, children and families*
- *maintaining (and explaining to the participant) the distinction between information and advice.*

C6 Establish the environment, agenda and ground rules for mediation

This includes:

- *setting up mediation as appropriate for participants' needs*
- *creating a safe and neutral environment for mediation*
- *identifying and agreeing the issues that will form the agenda for discussion*
- *establishing the principle of balanced participation, and agreeing how this balance will be maintained throughout the process*
- *clarifying issues of, and limits to, confidentiality.*

C7 Use effective skills and interventions during the mediation process

These include things such as:

- *using different types of question appropriately*
- *using relevant listening, communication and mediation skills to aid mutual understanding and rapport, help participants to move forward and to overcome blocks in progress*
- *facilitating participants' lateral thinking, problem solving and option development.*

Further guidance on the skills that will be looked for during assessment are provided in the portfolio guidance document.

C8 Maintain progress towards resolving issues

This includes:

- *managing the discussion of matters in a way that facilitates effective progress*
- *managing effective financial disclosure*
- *recognising and dealing effectively with impasse*

- *managing strong emotions and conflict sufficiently to allow the mediation process to move forward*
- *managing power imbalances to avoid detriment to either participant.*

C9 Produce an appropriate and agreed outcome statement

This includes:

- *ensuring that all mediated outcomes follow a clear rationale, are reality-tested, and are approved by both participants*
- *using appropriate language and drafting formats*
- *ensuring congruence between ‘without prejudice’ mediation summaries and open financial statements*
- *ensuring that only appropriately open facts are included in open financial statements*
- *drafting financial settlements that are capable of legal implementation and accord with current legislation*
- *setting out any matters that have not been resolved.*

C10 Record decisions and maintain participant files

This includes recording, at the appropriate points in the process:

- *the assessment as to the suitability of mediation*
- *participants’ agreement to mediation*
- *any ground rules that are established*
- *the location, timetable and practicalities of mediation*
- *details and outcomes of each session, including any proposed actions (for participants and the mediator) and matters to be taken forward to the next session.*

C11 Review individual cases and overall practice

This includes:

- *identifying any significant personal learning points from cases*
- *initiating case discussions with PPCs*
- *contributing as needed to reviews of individual cases and to overall service provision.*

Appendix 3 - The level required at the point of assessment

The assessors will be looking for a level of performance that is at least 'competent' as indicated below, but also shows development towards the 'proficient' level. The table can also be used as an aid to tracking development, for instance in PPC discussions.

	Knowledge	Standard of work	Autonomy	Coping with complexity	Perception of context
Novice	Minimal, or 'textbook' knowledge without	Unlikely to be satisfactory unless closely supervised	Needs close supervision or instruction	Little or no conception of dealing with complexity	Tends to see actions in isolation
Advanced Beginner	Working knowledge of key aspects of practice	Straightforward tasks likely to be completed to an acceptable standard	Able to achieve some steps using own judgement, but supervision needed for overall task	Appreciates complex situations but only able to achieve partial resolution	Sees actions as a series of steps
Competent	Good working knowledge of practice and key principles	Fit for purpose, knowing when to seek support for more complex issues	Able to achieve most tasks using own judgement, referring to PPC/qualified colleagues for support where needed	Copes with complex situations through deliberate analysis and planning	Sees actions at least partly in terms of longer-term goals
Proficient	Depth of understanding of practice and underlying principles	Fully acceptable standard achieved routinely	Able to take full responsibility for own work	Deals with complex situations holistically, decision-making more confident	Sees overall 'picture' and how individual actions fit within it
Expert	Authoritative knowledge of underlying principles and deep tacit understanding of practice	Excellence achieved with relative ease	Able to take responsibility for going beyond existing standards and creating own interpretations	Holistic grasp of complex situations, moves between intuitive and analytical approaches with ease	Sees overall 'picture' and alternative approaches; vision of what may be possible

Adapted from the Dreyfus model of skill acquisition: see Dreyfus, H & Dreyfus, S (1986) Mind over Machine.

New York: Free Press.

Appendix 4 -

Family mediators who have trained or gained accreditation outside England and Wales

1 Family mediators who have trained outside England and Wales

Family mediators who have trained outside England and Wales on courses that have not been approved by the FMC will be considered on an individual basis. Mediators wishing to have these courses considered as fulfilling all or part of the requirements for initial training will need to provide the following:

- The names of the training provider and course tutors, and if relevant the validating body.
- The dates of the course.
- Full details of the course content and duration, the teaching and practice methods used, and how it was assessed. If this is not in an official course document, it needs to be endorsed by the course tutor.
- Any certificate or proof of completion from the course.

The FMSB can decide to accept the course as covering the initial training requirements; accept the course but require evidence of additional learning to make up any deficiencies (which could be provided by a suitable conversion course, short course or other forms of learning, depending on what gaps need to be covered); or reject the course as providing insufficient coverage of family mediation as represented by the FMC Professional Standards and Code of Practice. Courses will normally be rejected if the FMSB considers that the gap between the course content and the FMC's requirements is too large to be made up by easily-available training or other sources of learning.

Mediators whose training has been approved as acceptable, with or without additional learning, will need to register as working towards FMCA, and complete within three years of their training. Where additional learning has been asked for, this needs to be demonstrated and approved by the mediator's PPC before the portfolio can be submitted for assessment.

The FMSB will keep a register of its decisions under this measure and ensure that applicants from the same programme, or with the same family mediation qualification, are treated consistently.

The FMSB will be particularly mindful of (a) applicants' knowledge of family law, welfare benefits, family support provisions and other relevant matters as they relate to England and Wales, and (b) for applicants who do not have English as a first language, the need for an appropriate level of spoken and written English (or Welsh for practising exclusively in Wales). Unless the mediator is proposing to work exclusively with a community whose native language is not English or Welsh, this latter needs to be at a native or near-native level (CEFR level C2).

If more than occasional applications are received from the same course or qualification that is provided outside England and Wales and is conducted in English or Welsh, the FMSB should encourage the provider to gain FMC approval for it through the normal processes.

2 Family mediators who have accreditation from outside of England and Wales

The FMSB will consider applications individually at the point of registration. Applicants should normally demonstrate the above practising requirements, including the stipulated level of PPC support, along with adequate initial training as indicated in measure 1. Initial training does not need to be recent provided that the applicant can provide evidence of having kept up-to-date.

The FMSB will apply the same considerations about language and the English and Welsh context as in measure 1, and will also record decisions with a view to maintaining consistency.

The FMSB will work towards establishing mutual recognition processes for schemes outside of England and Wales, with a conversion requirement specific to each scheme.

Part 2: Initial Training and Course Approval

Introduction

This document sets out the requirements and process for FMC approval of initial training courses for family mediators. Section 1 covers the minimum requirements for courses, and Section 2 the process for approval. These requirements come into force on 1st January 2015.

1. Minimum requirements for family mediation initial training courses to be approved by the FMC

These are the minimum requirements that all family mediation courses, including those run by FMC member organisations, need to comply with in order to enable mediators to be approved as eligible to progress to accreditation. Providers seeking course approval will need to provide details that demonstrate how their courses meet these requirements, as detailed under each section below.

1.1 The provider

There is no restriction on the type of organisation that can provide family mediation training, provided that the minimum requirements set out in this document are met.

Applications can be accepted from providers in England and Wales, as well as from outside of England and Wales for courses run in English or Welsh. Non-England and Wales providers who intend or expect that some of their course participants will want to practise in England or Wales are encouraged to gain FMC approval for their courses.

Providers will need to provide details of their legal status, contact details and where applicable registered office; whether the organisation is part of a parent organisation or group, or if it is applying as a consortium, details of the members of the consortium; the person responsible for the application to whom correspondence is to be addressed; and the person with authority to authorise the application.

Providers will need to demonstrate that they have adequate resources and financial capacity to meet the above requirements, including ongoing support for participants as described in section 1.6.

Providers will need to include brief details of previous family mediation courses that they have run and (where applicable) which organisation these have been approved by. Providers without previous experience of running family mediation courses should include details of similar courses that they have run or are currently running.

1.2 Entry to courses

Entrants to courses must be registered with the FMC as a student.

Entrants to courses should demonstrate:

- The ability to work at graduate level, either through possession of a degree or equivalent-level professional qualification, or experience of work in a role that requires an equivalent level of thinking and application.
- The ability to understand and use an adequate level of written and spoken English (or Welsh for courses in the Welsh language). Providers should note that unless the mediator is proposing to work exclusively with a community whose native language is not English or Welsh, this will need to be at a native or near-native level at the point of accreditation (CEFR level C2).
- The ability to work with conflicts and manage interpersonal relationships at a professional level, gained either through typically two or three years' experience as a professional dealing with families, or a similar amount of time as a mediator or non-adversarial dispute resolution practitioner in another field.

Providers will need to show how they are applying, or intend to apply, these principles to course admission. In particular they should demonstrate how they will operate fair and equitable access, while ensuring that potential participants are adequately prepared for the course.

Providers must provide accurate information to prospective course participants. In addition to information about the course, this includes accurate information about the process post-training to gain accreditation (FMCA) via the FMC or Law Society, including the implications in terms of the level and cost of Professional Practice Consultant support that will be required.

1.3 Level of course

Family mediation courses should reflect as a minimum the requirements for level 5 as described in the level descriptors of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, Framework for Higher Education Qualifications or Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales. Providers may choose to pitch their courses at a higher level provided that the other requirements stated here are adhered to. Courses may optionally be validated or credit-rated by a university or recognised awarding body, but this is not currently a requirement for FMC approval.

Providers will need to include a summary of learning objectives and course content that accords with the minimum level requirement and supports participants to demonstrate learning outcomes in accordance with 1.4 below.

1.4 Course content

Providers should refer to the FMC Professional Competence Standards and the Code of Practice in developing their course content and assessment criteria. The Competence Standards are geared to a level of practice some time after training, but courses should cover the principles, knowledge, techniques and skills stated or implied in the Standards, including applying them in a simulated environment. Providers should note that the Standards include pre-mediation information and assessment, and initial training must now cover these areas as separate MIAMs training will cease after the end of 2014.

Courses must cover knowledge of children and property/finance aspects, and ensure that participants can carry out a simulated all-issues mediation and produce outcome statements relating to both children and property/finance.

Courses must cover the delivery of mediation online as well as physically in person.

Courses must provide an adequate opportunity for skills development through role-play and other relevant techniques. Each participant must play the role of the mediator several times over the duration of the course and be provided with adequate feedback, such that s/he has a fair and adequate opportunity to demonstrate the relevant learning outcomes.

1.5 Duration and teaching methods

The minimum requirements for initial training courses are:

- At least 60 hours of contact time, excluding time spent on reading or other private study, completion of assignments and preparation for assessment. This must be spread over a minimum of eight days with sufficient intervening periods to enable reflection, private study and preparation for assessment. Up to half the contact time may be substituted by structured on-line or distance learning supported by adequate one-to-one or small group tutor support. A variety of teaching methods must be used so that participants have an opportunity to learn the required principles and theory, reflect on and discuss principles and approaches, apply theory to practice, and develop the relevant skills.
- At least 30 hours of the above time to be spent on skills development, generally through role-play exercises as described in section A4 above.
- Courses must run with sufficient participants to support adequate skills development. Normally this will mean a minimum of six participants on any course.

Providers will need to include a summary of the course programme or programmes that are expected to be used, demonstrating how they meet the above requirements. Providers should note that there is a large amount of content to cover, including development and assessment of skills. A 60-hour course will need to be carefully designed, with good use of the intervening periods for remote study, to ensure that participants have a fair opportunity to reach the required standards.

1.6 Assessment

All the key areas of the FMC Professional Competence Standards must be assessed at a level appropriate for a classroom/simulated environment, with all needing to be demonstrated to a satisfactory standard for the course to be passed. Participants must be adequately proficient in handling both children and property/finance matters to pass the course.

The provider must use assessment methods that are valid and sufficient for the learning outcomes to be assessed, operate assessment in a way that is robust and consistent, and avoid placing barriers in the way of participants that do not reflect the criteria being assessed. Assessment must include observation of each participant undertaking the role of the mediator in a simulated situation, as well as written exercises that as a minimum require drafting of a memorandum of understanding.

Formal assessment must either be carried out or moderated by a person who has not been involved in training the participant who is being assessed. If assessment is carried out by the trainer, moderation must include detailed sampling of every participant's work.

Where a participant fails to meet the standard required to pass the course, the provider must provide support to enable the participant to retake the relevant assessment(s) on at least one further occasion. This support can include advice to gain additional training or experience if this is necessary. Providers must act in participants' interests by providing fair and unbiased information and advice that is geared to giving participants the best chance to pass the assessment. Providers' obligations under this requirement can cease twelve months after the end of the course.

Providers will need to include a summary of the assessment methods and tasks that are proposed, including how assessments will be moderated.

1.7 Staffing

At least 80% of the course must be taught by core trainers who (a) are FMC or Law Society accredited family mediators and (b) who either have a teaching or training qualification at a minimum of England and Wales level 4, or have previously acted as a core trainer on at least two comparable mediation courses. The same requirements apply to assessors.

All courses must (a) involve a minimum of two trainers and (b) have a maximum ratio of six participants per trainer for all practical exercises. Staffing must take account of the requirement for independent assessment or moderation described in section 1.6.

Providers will need to include details of each of the core trainers and the assessors that they propose to use, demonstrating how the above criteria are met.

1.8 Certification

Participants who have passed all the course assessments will be issued with a certificate stating their achievement.

Any other records, for instance confirming attendance or providing credit for partial achievement, will be clearly distinguished from full certificates and include a statement to the effect that they do not represent completion of initial training as required by the Family Mediation Council.

1.9 Post-training review with a Professional Practice Consultant

Before proceeding towards accreditation with the Family Mediation Council, it is a requirement that all mediators must have a post-training review with an FMC-approved Professional Practice Consultant (PPC). Providers may optionally wish to (a) aid participants who have not already done so to find a PPC, and (b) to include the cost of this review in the course fee. Providers must be clear in their literature whether this service is included or whether participants need to arrange their own PPC support.

Providers should ensure that participants are aware of the requirement to register with the FMC, normally through one of the FMC member organisations, before acting as a sole or lead mediator or representing themselves to the public as a family mediator.

2. Course approval

2.1 Requirement for course approval

Approval from the Family Mediation Council is needed for courses to be accepted as providing the initial training needed for family mediators to start working towards FMC accreditation.

Approval will be normally for a period of three years, after which reapproval will be needed as described in section 2.4 below. All current courses pre-dating this procedure will need to be submitted via the initial approval process as described below. Exceptionally, approval can be for a shorter period after which stated conditions must be met. Reapproval will also be required if the legal entity of the provider changes.

2.2 Responsibilities and conflicts of interest

Course approval is the responsibility of the FMC Family Mediation Standards Board (FMSB), either directly or via delegated authority to a course approval panel or executive. No person involved in considering an application for course approval or reapproval may be, or have been within the last three years, a trustee, board member, employee, trainer or assessor of the organisation submitting the application.

2.3 Initial approval

The intending course provider must submit an application that describes how the minimum requirements detailed in section 1 will be met. Providers will be encouraged to discuss their application with a person appointed by the FMSB before submitting it.

On receiving an application, the FMSB will appoint two reviewers within a period of ten working days. Reviewers must be independent of the provider submitting the course; this will include not having acted as a trainer or in a similar capacity for the provider organisation within three years of the submission date. The reviewers will examine the application and make recommendations within a further ten working days. The reviewers may make one of the following recommendations:

- The course is approved
- The course is approved subject to minor conditions being met
- The course is not approved
- More information is needed before a recommendation can be made.

In the case of non-approval, the reviewers must make clear which requirements have not been met and make recommendations for bringing the application to a satisfactory standard. Reasons for non-approval must be endorsed by the FMSB and communicated to the applicant.

The FMSB will communicate its decision to the applicant within ten working days of receiving the report from the reviewers. Where further information is requested, the applicant may provide this directly to the reviewers.

Applicants who have not been successful in their first application will normally be encouraged to address the points that resulted in rejection and resubmit their application.

The FMSB will consider appeals on the basis that the reasons given for rejection were not in accordance with the requirements stated in this document. On appeal, the application will be

treated as a new application and sent to two further reviewers under the procedure described above. The FMSB's decision following appeal will be final.

Following approval, the applicant undertakes to provide access to all course and assessment materials (including web-based materials and platforms), training and assessment sessions, assessed work, trainers and participants should the FMSB wish to conduct an inspection. The FMSB will give at least ten working days' notice before making any inspection.

The FMSB may set fees for course approval, resubmissions of unsuccessful applications, and appeals. The appeals fee will be refunded if the appeal is successful.

2.4 Re-approval

Reapplications must be made in sufficient time to enable any planned courses to run before approval expires. Reapplications cannot be made more than 42 months after the date of the original approval.

Reapplications should focus on any changes that have been made or are proposed since the original application, including changes to staffing. They should also be accompanied by:

- A concise report on the provision that has taken place since the last approval, including any changes that have been made as a result of learning by the course team
- The success rates achieved by participants
- The names of participants on each course
- Feedback from course participants on each course.

The procedure for handling reapplications will be the same as that for initial applications. Re-approval will normally be for a period of three years.

Where re-approval is required within any three-year approval period because of a change in legal entity, the applicant should initially provide details of the new organisation together with a summary of the material changes that this entails. The FMSB will decide whether a full reapplication is required at this stage.

Part 3: Requirements for assessors for FMC Accreditation

Introduction

This document sets out the basic requirements for assessors for FMC Accreditation (FMCA). Equivalent requirements will apply to Law Society assessors for family mediation accreditation, with different arrangements for oversight. The FMC and the Law Society will work towards a common pool of assessors with, wherever sensible and feasible, common training and updating.

Definition and essential requirements

FMCA assessors are appointed by the FMC Family Mediation Standards Board (FMSB) to carry out the final assessment of candidates for FMCA status. The assessment role is at present limited to examining documentary evidence provided by the candidate and his or her PPC as well as where needed questioning candidates; it does not extend to observing them mediate.

The basic role of the assessor is to examine the evidence that the candidate has put forward and assess it against the requirements for FMCA, as expressed in the FMCA document and associated portfolio guidance. Assessors are also involved in re-examining evidence on appeal, and may be asked to assist with moderating assessments and providing feedback to PPCs individually or jointly on their contribution to candidates' evidence.

Appointment, training and updating of assessors

The FMSB is responsible for appointing a Chief Assessor who also acts as the scheme's moderator, and for appointing assessors in conjunction with the Chief Assessor. Assessors must be recruited from across the family mediation community and appointed on an open and fair basis according to criteria determined by the FMSB. The minimum requirements for assessors are that they:

- hold FMCA status
- have been practising continuously as a family mediator for at least three years
- currently act, or have acted for at least two years, as a PPC
- have current membership of an FMC MO
- are supported by their PPC in becoming an assessor.

Assessors must be provided with adequate training to enable them to carry out their role to an acceptable standard. Initial training may take the form of a one-day course, one-to-one mentoring, or distance learning followed by discussion. Training must cover:

- The basic principles of work-based assessment, including validity, robustness, consistency, authenticity of evidence, fairness, and accessibility.
- The requirements of the FMCA scheme and their implications for assessment.
- Interpreting the FMC professional competence standards and assessing against them to the required level.
- Applying the FMC Code of Practice to assessed work.

- Practicalities of assessing portfolios.
- Resources and support for undertaking the role.
- Ongoing professional requirements as an assessor.

Following initial training, the assessor will be provided with one-to-one support by the Chief Assessor (or another experienced assessor nominated by him or her) to help in assessing his or her first portfolio(s). The Chief Assessor will sign off the new assessor when s/he is ready to assess unaided. Trainee assessors who are not signed off after co-assessing three portfolios and believe that they are ready to assess unaided may ask for a second opinion for their next portfolio, which will be considered by the FMSB along with that of the Chief Assessor. Beyond this, continued support towards signing off as an assessor will be at the FMSB's discretion.

Assessors must keep up-to-date with any changes in the FMCA scheme and in recommended assessment practice. Updates may be provided in the form of meetings, short courses or briefing sessions, electronic or paper-based materials, or online conferences. The FMSB will provide, and assessors are responsible for reading and if necessary, gaining clarification on, details of changes to the scheme.

In addition to updating requirements specifically for assessors, all assessors must remain accredited (FMCA) including meeting the minimum requirements for practice as a family mediator and for contact with their own PPC.

Oversight of assessors

The FMSB is responsible for the competence and conduct of assessors, via the FMCA Chief Assessor.

The main means of oversight is via examining assessed portfolios along with the assessment decisions. The Chief Assessor (or his or her nominee) will carry out a brief second check of all portfolios, and examine any that appear to be borderline in greater depth. Borderline portfolios, and those where there appear to have been problems with the assessment, will be discussed with the first assessor. Assessors may also ask the Chief Assessor to check interpretations or specific points. The FMSB will also examine a sample of portfolios as a check that the overall process is operating consistently and to the required standard. This does not constitute an additional assessment and will not delay assessment decisions being communicated to mediators.

Assessors who appear to be having difficulties with assessment will be offered additional support. The FMSB reserves the right not to use the services of any assessor who is consistently requires a high level of monitoring, who repeatedly fails to follow the FMCA scheme requirements, or who causes unnecessary delays in the assessment process.

Part 4: Common requirements for Professional Practice Consultancy

Introduction

This document sets out the basic requirements for Professional Practice Consultancy and the training, registration and oversight of Professional Practice Consultants when the revised system of accreditation comes into operation in 2015. The training of PPCs is the responsibility of individual FMC member organisations (MOs), while registration and oversight is the responsibility of the FMC Family Mediation Standards Board (FMSB).

Definition and essential requirements

Professional Practice Consultancy is a relationship of support and oversight between a Professional Practice Consultant (PPC), who must be an experienced, FMC-accredited and currently practising family mediator, and another family mediator who may be FMC accredited, registered as working towards accreditation ('registered'), or neither accredited nor registered. Family mediators are required to have a specified minimum level of initial and ongoing PPC support as a condition of registration and accreditation.

The PPC's role includes acting as a mentor and sounding-board for the mediator. It also involves maintaining oversight of the mediator's work insofar as is possible within the stipulated minimum requirement for PPC contact. While it is not a policing role, the PPC must draw the mediator's attention to any matters that may lead to contravention of the FMC Code of Practice, and, should the mediator continue to contravene the Code in spite of the PPC's advice and warnings, to reporting such contraventions to the FMSB for consideration under its complaints and disciplinary procedures. PPCs are also encouraged to discuss with their mediators (and, if necessary to arrive at a decision on acceptability, raise with the FMSB) any issues which, while they do not directly contravene the Code, could be considered borderline in terms of good practice.

PPCs must act confidentially, and in line with data protection requirements, in relation to their mediators and to any information they are privy to about mediation clients, while making clear that there are limits to confidentiality where there is risk of harm, money laundering, serious breach of the Code of Practice, or where directed to reveal information by a Court.

PPCs cannot be held responsible for any failings in the mediator's work unless they result from a clearly substantiated neglect of these duties. MOs should note that PPCs cannot be considered sufficiently independent to carry out a formal investigation of a complaint against a mediator whom they support and supervise.

Where a mediator voluntarily changes his or her PPC, the new PPC must contact the outgoing one to check the reason for end of the previous PPC relationship and acquaint him/herself with any practice issues or concerns on the part of the previous PPC.

PPCs also have additional duties in relation to mediators who are registered as working towards FMC accreditation (FMCA), including supporting portfolio development, observing mediation, approving documentation, and signing Court forms. These are detailed in the accreditation framework document.

PPCs must act in accordance with the FMC PPC Code of Practice and the Guidelines for PPCs.

Recruitment and registration of PPCs

Each MO is responsible for providing PPC training courses and recruiting mediators to them. MOs must recruit on an open and fair basis. Each MO may set its own criteria for accepting course participants, subject to ensuring that the criteria used do not discriminate on any of the grounds excluded by current employment legislation and require as a minimum that potential PPCs:

- hold FMCA status
- have been practising continuously as a family mediator for at least three years
- have current membership of an FMC MO
- are supported by their own PPC in training as a PPC.

Mediators who successfully complete the required PPC training (see below) must apply to the FMC to be placed on the register of PPCs. Once registered, PPCs are recognised by all MOs and eligible to work with members of any MO.

PPCs are engaged by business entities (including sole practitioners) to work with individual mediators or groups of mediators. A PPC must not work as such with a mediator, firm or service when a conflict exists that may inhibit the PPC from providing impartial advice and support, or from acting appropriately in the case of mediators deviating from the FMC Code of Practice. This includes but is not limited to situations where the mediator has a close personal relationship with the PPC, or is in another economic relationship with the firm or service that would allow it to place undue pressure on the PPC.

PPCs must re-register every three years to practise as PPCs, normally at the point when they renew their FMC accreditation.

Training and updating of PPCs

MOs may provide PPC training individually or jointly. Initial PPC training must consist of at least 15 guided learning hours and be delivered in a way that includes time for questioning, clarification and discussion between participants (whether face-to-face or remotely). Courses must provide up-to-date coverage of the following topics:

- The role and responsibilities of the PPC, both in relation to general practice and in relation to accreditation, reaccreditation, and complaints
- Implications of the FMC Code of Practice, professional competence standards, and complaints procedure in relation to the PPC role
- Understanding and applying the FMC PPC Code of Practice and guidance
- Approaches and practicalities for professional practice consultancy
- Balancing supporting aspects of the role with the need to maintain professional standards and public protection
- Potential conflicts within the PPC role and matters that the PPC cannot take responsibility for
- Resources and support for undertaking the role
- Contracting and insurance
- Ongoing professional requirements as a PPC.

The course must include an assessment of each participant's understanding of the topics covered, which must be passed before the participant can be registered as a PPC. The format of this assessment is open to providers; it could for instance take the form of short written answers, response to case-studies, or an online or multiple-choice test. If the assessment is conducted verbally, the provider will need to keep a record of the discussion signed by the trainer and the participant; if operated remotely, the provider must ensure that the prospective PPC's identity is authenticated, for instance by having the test witnessed by his or her PPC or administered by a responsible and impartial person.

To retain PPC status, a mediator must:

- Retain FMCA Status
- Undertake 5 hours of CPD that is directly relevant to their role as PPCs per year which (over a three-year period) should include:
 - Supervision theory and practice by PPC
 - Understanding the FMC standards framework
 - Supporting consultees in practice
 - Supporting consultees in particular areas e.g. CIM, portfolio building, legal aid contracts, where relevant
- Act as a PPC for at least four hours per year (the equivalent of supporting one mediator) which may be averaged over three years.
- Have the support of their own PPC to continue holding this status.
- Apply to renew their status every three years in the form specified by the FMSB.

Oversight of PPCs and the professional practice consultancy process

The FMSB will establish a line of responsibility to a named person or a panel for overseeing the activity of PPCs registered with it. This responsibility includes:

- Maintaining the register of PPCs and making it available to all MOs.
- Monitoring that PPCs are meeting the ongoing requirements to practise as a PPC.
- Responding to and investigating complaints about PPCs.

- Deselecting PPCs found to be in neglect of their responsibilities, via a fair and consistent process with possibility of appeal.

PPCs must re-register every three years, normally at the same time that they renew their FMC accreditation. In addition to the ongoing requirements for FMCA, they will need to demonstrate the following:

- Compliance with the minimum updating requirements for PPCs stated above (PPC development activities should be added to the form for continuing development, and commented on in the same way).
- Evidence of at least twelve hours of PPC activity, equivalent to acting as a PPC to one mediator, over the three years. The MO may ask to see summary records of this activity.
- Confirmation from their own PPC that s/he still supports their continuing in the PPC role.

Where PPCs fail to meet these requirements, they will normally need to attend a refresher course (or full PPC course if a refresher is unavailable) provided by a MO.

Each MO must maintain a register that ensures that each member who practises as a family mediator (whether or not accredited or registered as working towards accreditation) has a current PPC, and provide this to the FMC. Where a member's PPC changes, the MO should ensure that the new PPC contacts the previous PPC to check the reason for end of the previous PPC relationship and acquaint him /herself with any practice issues or concerns on the part of the previous PPC.

Part 5: Complaints and disciplinary processes and withdrawal of accreditation

1. All FMC Registered Mediators are required to have in place and follow a complaints process which meets the FMC's [Minimum Requirements](#).
2. If a complainant is not satisfied with the mediator's response, they may make a complaint to the FMSB if:
 - a. the mediator complained about is an FMC Registered mediator; and
 - b. they are a client or former client or the FMC Registered Mediator, they are an FMC Registered Mediator themselves, or the FMSB determines they are a qualifying third party; and
 - c. the mediator's complaints process has been exhausted within the last three months and
 - d. the complaint alleges breach of the FMC professional standards (e.g. Code of Practice, PPC Code of Practice, FMC Standards Framework); and
 - e. the mediator's own complaints process has been exhausted or is otherwise not engaging with the complaint.
3. The FMSB's complaints process is set out [here](#). There is no fee for making a complaint.
4. In the event of relevant criminal proceedings ongoing in parallel to the complaint where the FMSB deems an urgent interim decision is necessary, the timeframes set out in the complaints process may be shortened by the FMSB.
5. The FMSB may determine a complaint or a complainant to be vexatious at any time, and in these circumstances will not proceed with its complaints process.
6. If a complaint is upheld by the FMSB's Complaints Panels, it may decide to take disciplinary measures regarding the mediator concerned. This may include a requirement for further training, attachment of conditions to the terms under which the mediator can practise whilst on the FMC Register, suspension or removal of Family Mediation Council Accreditation, and/or suspension or removal from the FMC Register.
7. The Complaints Panel may make recommendations for the mediator whether or not a complaint is upheld.
8. The Complaints and Appeals Panels will consult the FMSB's Indicative Outcomes for Disciplinary Matters and any guidance published when considering disciplinary measures.
9. The process includes the potential for an appeal to be made against the FMSB's decision.
 - a. A complainant or mediator may appeal on the following grounds:
 - i. That the FMSB's Complaints Panel did not take in to account relevant evidence or did not give sufficient weight to that evidence.

- ii. That the correct process was not followed by the FMSB's Complaints Panel.
- b. A mediator may also appeal on the grounds that any disciplinary action taken was not in proportion to the nature of the misconduct.
- c. Where an appeal against an unsuccessful complaint is upheld (meaning the original complaint is upheld), the Appeals Panel may take disciplinary measures as set out in paragraph 5 above (as for the initial Complaints Decision).
- d. Where an appeal against a disciplinary decision is made, the Appeals Panel or Disciplinary Appeals Panel may consider taking disciplinary measures as set out in paragraph 5 above. A decision by the Appeals Panel or Disciplinary Appeals panel may be the same as or different to that reached by the Complaints Panel and Appeals Panel respectively.

10. The FMSB will keep a record of complaints.

11. The FMSB will keep a record of disciplinary measures, which as regulatory information may be shared with the mediators' PPC, FMC Membership Organisations and members of the public at the FMSB's discretion.

12. A mediator's PPC and FMC Membership Organisation are not involved in the investigation or consideration of a complaint as it is their role to support their consultee/member.

Part 6 – Child-Inclusive Mediation

Introduction

Child-Inclusive Mediation (CIM) provides opportunities for children and young people to have their voices heard directly during the process of mediation, to help them feel respected and listened to and, at their request, to assist parents or carers to receive, understand and take account of the child's messages regarding decisions and arrangements for the child to be made by their parents.

All mediators should explain to parents/carers at initial information and assessment meetings, as well as subsequently, that children and young people aged 10 and above should be offered the opportunity to have a conversation with a professionally qualified mediator or child consultant in which they are invited to give their perspectives in order that parents may take account of those perspectives in any decisions and arrangements that are being made for them.

Section 6.6.1 of the FMC Code of Practice embodies Article 12 of the UNCRC 1989, which gives all children the right to express their views in all matters affecting them in accordance with their age and maturity. In this jurisdiction, all children of 10 and over should have the opportunity to be consulted if they wish, when decisions and arrangements are being made that affect them.

Younger children (including younger siblings and other children of the family) should not be excluded from having a similar opportunity for CIM, since they are equally important members of the family.

Exceptions include where there are safeguarding concerns or where a child has learning difficulties or mental illness which would make CIM inappropriate.

Mediators should remember the following principles apply:

Voluntary participation: The child or young person participates voluntarily, with the informed consent and support of both parents (or those holding parental responsibility (PR)). Child-Inclusive Mediation cannot be ordered by the courts. Mediators must ensure that they have invited the child to participate and that it is for the child to choose whether they accept any invitation.

Confidentiality: Conversations with a child or young person in the course of mediation are confidential and are not reportable to the court or to third parties except a) where there are safeguarding/child protection concerns or b) where, in exceptional circumstances, the law (or a court) imposes an overriding obligation of disclosure upon the mediator or c) where the child or young person requests the mediator to share specific messages with their parents/carers. Mediators must ensure that they have explained confidentiality (including in relation to safeguarding from harm) in an age-appropriate manner and have checked as far as is possible and practicable that the child has understood.

Impartiality and Neutrality as to outcome: The mediator must remain impartial in a meeting with a child or young person and must remain neutral as to the outcome of the mediation. The mediator does not represent the child or act as the child's advocate.

Decisions remain with the child's parents (or others holding PR): Children and young people may make requests and offer suggestions, but they are not asked, or given power, to make choices or decisions.

In order to see children in mediation, a mediator must meet the requirements in 6.2 below for carrying out CIM practice. If a mediator is not CIM trained, the mediator must make arrangements with an FMC-registered CIM practitioner or other suitable appropriate, qualified and competent professional who meets the requirements as may be laid down by the FMC from time to time.

Qualifications, Training and Practice Requirements for CIM-recognised mediators

6.1 Requirements for a family mediator to apply for CIM Training

A Mediator may apply for training in CIM provided the mediator:

- a) is currently registered with the FMC as a fully-accredited mediator; and
- b) has attended a one-day CIM Awareness and Understanding Course run by an FMC-approved foundation or CIM course provider (as detailed in Part 1, section 2.1); and
- c) provide his or her PPC's written support for their application, with any further confirmation that may be requested by the trainers.

6.2 Requirements for CIM practice

FMCA mediators may undertake CIM provided that they are registered to do so with the FMC. FMCA Mediators may register with the FMC to undertake CIM provided that they:

- a) have attended an FMC-approved CIM training course and been assessed by the trainers as having attained the competencies required for CIM practice;
- b) have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place for carrying out CIM;
- c) have an enhanced DBS check (with an children's barred list check where the mediator is eligible), to disclose the certificate to the FMSB, to sign up to the DBS update service and to give permission to the FMSB to check the update service. This applies to those newly registering as a child-inclusive mediator from 1 October 2024, and to those who are already registered as a child-inclusive mediator from 28 April 2025.
- d) have a PPC trained in CIM for consultation and discussion of their CIM practice. This PPC may be separate from and additional to their registered PPC, if the PPC is not CIM trained and practising;
- e) have met any other requirements as may be laid down by the FMC from time to time.

6.3 Ongoing requirements for CIM trained mediators

CIM trained mediators must continue to meet the following requirements in addition to the required professional development hours specified for continued recognition as an FMCA mediator or PPC. CIM trained mediators should:

- a) Complete the equivalent of at least 10 hours CIM specific professional development every 3 years, 5 hours of which should normally be by attending a course advertised as suitable for CIM professional development. The remaining 5 hours professional development can be

acquired in a number of ways, according to what a Mediator decides is most appropriate for their own development. This could include:

- Attending further training courses advertised as suitable for CIM specific professional development which are designed to further develop and update skills and knowledge in aspects of Child- Inclusive Mediation.
 - Attending training courses that will enhance their skills and knowledge to consult and engage with children at different stages of development and with different needs.
 - Specific reading or study to expand theoretical, legal or practical knowledge relevant to CIM.
 - Attendance at conference workshops or lectures relevant to the theory or practice of CIM.
 - Developing, writing or delivering new material relevant to CIM for example delivering a workshop or lecture on aspects relevant to CIM or writing and publishing an article;
- b) Have at least 3 CIM cases over 3 years. These should be discussed in supervision with their PPCs who will confirm for registration purposes whether the requirement has been met. If this is not possible, then mediators should attend refresher training in CIM to ensure their practice is up to date. Such training can be counted towards their specific CIM professional development requirement; and
- c) Continue to ensure they have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place; and
- d) Ensure they each have a PPC who continues to be an FMC CIM-registered mediator her/himself.

6.4 Facilities and Conduct of Child-Inclusive Mediation

When conducting Child- Inclusive Mediation:

- a) The mediator should have access to suitable rooms and facilities for meetings with young people and children, where children are safe at all times and can feel comfortable and at ease.
- b) The mediator should consider, where possible and appropriate, having a co-mediator or colleague who would be available to take part in a meeting with a child or young person, or be nearby, for safety and safeguarding purposes.
- c) Each parent/carer should first attend an initial information and assessment meeting that includes assessment of and screening for domestic abuse and child protection issues and safeguarding concerns.
- d) The mediator should check whether any other professional(s) is/are involved with the child or family, either currently or previously.
- e) Before a child or young person is invited to take part directly in mediation, parents should have committed to the mediation process by signing an Agreement to Mediate. The mediator should discuss the objectives and possible options with each parent/carer both separately in the assessment meetings and then together in a joint mediation meeting (or shuttle if this has been judged appropriate), to explore the appropriateness of the child's direct involvement and how best to conduct the CIM for the benefit of the child. If a child has a parent or carer who is not a participant in the mediation, consideration needs to be given to consulting with this person as well.

- f) The mediator's role and that of any colleague mediator/child consultant who will see the child must be clarified with and accepted by both parents/carers. Confidentiality and its limits should be explained carefully and understood by all concerned. Both parents/carers need to understand and accept the principles and objectives of involving their children directly. They should sign an agreement confirming their consent and their willingness to receive messages or feedback that the child requests the mediator to give them. The agreement should include an undertaking that the parent/carer has not briefed, and will not brief, the child beforehand on what the child should or should not say to the mediator or child consultant, nor question the child or young person afterwards as to what the child or young person actually did, or did not, say.
- g) Mediators should offer a range of options for CIM (e.g. one mediator or two, siblings together as well as separately). The child's involvement, structure of meetings and time-scale should be planned carefully with parents/carers to maximise the benefits and minimise any potential difficulties.
- h) It must be made clear to children and young people themselves that they are free to accept or decline the invitation to meet the Mediator or child consultant. They may respond directly if they wish, or via a parent or carer.
- i) Mediators must have careful regard to time-scales for children and young people, arranging dates and scheduling follow-up meetings with parents/carers and, if needed, with the children, to avoid delay and ensure that children are kept informed.
- j) Mediators should offer and arrange ongoing support and further meetings with the child or young person as appropriate, as CIM is a process, rather than a one-off meeting.
- k) Mediators must ensure that they have checked with any child or young person the content of any message or feedback the child or young person wishes shared with their parents and keep a professional record of their meetings with children and young people, but they should not provide reports, written notes or written feedback to parents (or to anyone else). Mediators should give verbal feedback only to parents/carers, without giving any additional information, interpretations or comments beyond what the child or young person has specifically requested the mediator to convey.

6.5 Competencies for Child-Inclusive Mediators

This section sets out the competencies required of FMCA mediators who wish to train, qualify and practice in CIM as part of a dispute resolution process. Training Providers must ensure that their programmes allow delegates to be assessed against these competencies. They fall into two categories which are further divided into sub sections.

A1 THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

CIM Mediators must have knowledge of:

- i. Relevant theoretical frameworks such as
 - a) Family systems theory and working with sibling groups
 - b) Attachment theory
 - c) Child development theory (physical, cognitive, moral development)
 - d) Risks and resilience theory
- ii. Core Research into the effects of divorce and separation on children, the significance of their involvement in decision-making and models of CIM Practice

iii.	The potential effect of power imbalance between parents and children in CIM Practice
iv.	The range of communication and behaviours that may result from culture, age, gender, ability, additional needs, racial or religious diversity and how to respond to these
A2 LEGAL KNOWLEDGE	
CIM Mediators must have knowledge of:	
i.	Relevant law and legislation in private law children's matters
ii.	Relevant legislation in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the child and young person's right to be heard (including Art. 12 UNCRC) b) equality and inclusion c) the rights of children and young people
iii.	The legislation and statutory requirements relating to: safeguarding and 'Working Together'; principles and practice in relation to Domestic Abuse/Violence
A3 UNDERSTANDING AND APPLICATION OF PROCESS	
CIM Mediators must have an understanding of:	
i.	The Definition, Principles and Requirements of CIM as set out in the introduction to Part 6 of the Standards Framework
ii.	The CIM process including a range of practice models to include when CIM may and may not be appropriate
iii.	The location of mediation and CIM within Dispute Resolution and its relationship with other family justice agencies e.g. CAFCASS/guardian ad litem/children's services/child psychotherapists and other agencies and professionals
iv.	The principles and practice of anti-discrimination and inclusion for working with children and young people and the relevant policies relating to this
v.	The procedures and documents required for the recording of issues related to children's and young people's views
vi.	The principle of confidentiality and its application in relation to younger and older children, the parents and the mediator
vii.	The principles and practice of safeguarding and the need to protect children from harm

B1 PERFORMANCE SKILLS: working with parents /carers

CIM Mediators must be able to demonstrate an ability to:

- i. Explain the process of CIM to parents, including the principles of confidentiality and any exceptions to this as regards safeguarding concerns, identify indicators and contra-indicators, and consider the appropriateness of CIM with parents, in the light of information shared by parents, including any safeguarding concerns

ii.	Identify an appropriate model, and plan and agree a structure with parents, taking into account the child's or young person's needs
iii.	Obtain the informed consent of parents in accordance with the principles set out in the introduction to Part 6 of the Standards Framework
iv.	Work in partnership with a co-mediator or other professionals as appropriate
v.	Following a meeting with a child or young person, refocus parents on co-operative decision-making, considering any feedback from their children
vi.	Consider with parents, and if necessary, provide further feedback and support to children and young people, regarding parental responses or decisions made
B2 PERFORMANCE SKILLS: meeting with children / young people CIM Mediators must be able to demonstrate an ability to:	
i.	Identify and plan for the most appropriate approach to work directly with the child, young person and sibling groups
ii.	Engage empathically with the child or young person, create a safe, friendly environment and utilise the most appropriate means to create an age-appropriate relationship, including the use of books, toys and other resources
iii.	Explain the CIM process to children sensitively and appropriately including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) providing age-appropriate explanations of principles of confidentiality, privacy and any exceptions b) explaining the options for giving feedback to their parents c) negotiating and agreeing what will be part of the feedback process d) obtaining the informed consent of the child / young person
iv.	Communicate with a child or young person, actively listen to their views, respond appropriately and have an awareness of the potential impact on the child
v.	Work with diverse needs to take account of any factors concerning cultural background, age, gender, ability, racial or religious considerations
vi.	Provide age-appropriate information to children and young people where appropriate in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the effects of family separation, transition and change b) sources of help and support c) signposting to other resources
vii.	Support children and young people to consider what they want their parents to hear and understand, and think about possible outcomes
viii.	Explore with children and young people any concerns about feedback to their parents and assist them to consider the ways in which a difficult message can be communicated while ensuring that they are aware of their right to confidentiality (except in relation to harm)
ix.	Support the child or young person to decide the feedback they want to give and undertake to ensure that this is given without interpretation

- | |
|--|
| x. Support the child or young person to communicate with their parents in person where appropriate |
|--|

6.6 & 6.7 Minimum requirements for CIM Training Providers

- 6.6. The minimum requirements set out here must be met and the course must be approved by the FMC.
- 6.7 The FMSB, on behalf of the FMC, will determine the form and process for applications for course approval and will publish this from time to time.

6.8 Level of Course

Courses should reflect, as a minimum, the requirements for level 5 as described in the level descriptors of the Qualifications and Credit Framework, Framework for Higher Education Qualifications or Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales. Courses may be validated or credit rated by a university or other recognised awarding body, but this is not a requirement for FMC approval.

6.9 Course content

- a) When developing their course content and assessment criteria applicant providers should refer to the relevant provisions in this document, the CIM competencies and the FMC Code of Practice.
- b) Training in CIM is open to mediators who already hold FMCA status. Therefore, in planning course content and assessment criteria, applicant providers should ensure that the course is pitched to a level commensurate with the fact that attending practitioners will have already achieved a level of competence if not proficiency of practice in their everyday mediation practice.

Nonetheless course content should demonstrate the principles, knowledge, techniques and skills stated or implied in the Standards and particularly in relation to the duties, principles and requirements of CIM, including applying them in a simulated environment.

- c) Courses must cover both knowledge and performance criteria requirements in relation to CIM practice. In addition, courses must provide opportunities for participants to carry out simulated CIM and to produce such documents (e.g. draft letters for children and young people, documents designed to record parental agreement such as Parenting plans or MOU's and any outline plan for how the child- inclusive work is to be conducted).
- d) Course providers should encourage course participants to keep a log of their own reflections on their learning and development throughout the course.

6.10 – 6.14 Duration and Teaching Methods

6.10

- a) The course must be at least 40 hours of learning and development.
- b) 21 hours (3 days, 7 hours per day) of this must be at an attended course. The attended part of the course must demonstrate that at least 50% of the course time is spent on skills development, including role-play and small group exercises.
- c) The remaining 19 hours of course time may be spent on a combination of:
 - ‘directed’ or pre-course reading
 - pre-course assignment /s
 - face-to-face study with a recognised PPC
 - post-course assignment/s

6.11 Applicant providers must show they have allowed sufficient time to enable participants to reflect, carry out additional private study, and prepare for assessment. Each participant should be provided with appropriate feedback on his or her participation and have opportunity to demonstrate required learning outcomes.

6.12 Courses must run with sufficient participants to support skills development. Normally this will mean a minimum of 6 participants on any course to enable trainers to assess the competency of each mediator in role-plays and exercises. Each course must be run with a suitable number of core trainers and in any event not less than one core trainer per 6 participants.

6.13 Providers will need to include, as a minimum, a summary of the course programme or programmes that they expect to use, demonstrating how they meet the requirements set out above. Other material will be specified by the FMSB in the application forms. As with initial and advanced training courses, providers should note that there is a large amount to cover including development and assessment of skills.

6.14 Applicant providers must show that participants have a fair opportunity to reach the required standards.

6.15 & 6.16 Staffing/Trainers

6.15 In line with the standards set out in the FMC Core Standards for Initial Training and Course Approval, at least 80% of the course must be taught by core trainers who:

- a) are current holders of FMCA, and
- b) have successfully completed a Direct Consultation with Children (DCC) or CIM training course and are in current practice as a DCC or child-inclusive mediator undertaking work with children, young people and their parents or carers, and
- c) either have:
 - a teaching or training qualification at a minimum England and Wales Level 4, or
 - previous experience as a core trainer on child focused/child- inclusive courses, or

- experience in delivering mediation training including having previously acted in a supporting role to a core trainer on at least two comparable child-focused courses as part of a documented trainer induction programme.

Those who act as supporting trainers on any course must be additional to the required number of core trainers.

6.16 Assessors or course moderators must meet the same requirements as core trainers.

6.17 – 6.20 Assessment

6.17

- Course providers must assess all course participants to ensure they meet the competencies set out in section 6.5.
- Assessment can be through a variety of methods at the discretion of the training provider. Assessment can be through pre-course, on-course and post-course work. Methods can include, but are not restricted to: written assignments, on-course participative exercises, evaluative accounts and skills demonstration through role-play.
- The table below suggests assessment methods for each competency. If a course provider wishes to use a different method of assessment, it must show in its application that this is appropriate.

CATEGORY A - Knowledge: must know and understand	Suggested methods of assessment
1. Theoretical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-course assignments based on directed reading • Pre/post course written assignment • Participative exercises on course
2. Legal knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-course assignments based on directed reading • Post-course written assignment which could cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - responsibilities and limitations of the mediator role - safeguarding issues
3. Understanding and Application of the Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-course assignments that could cover <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case write-ups - Examination of differences between CIM mediator role and child consultant role and/or other professionals within the family justice system • On-course presentation (Final day after a practice period)
CATEGORY B - Performance/Skills: must be able to demonstrate/evidence.	
1. Working with Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed role-play on course to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information giving about the process including the principles of voluntariness and confidentiality

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparing parents for the process (especially openness to hearing 'bad news') - agreeing the best ways to approach the child / young person - agreeing the best approach to working with siblings - delivering feedback to parents
2. Meeting with Children and Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessed role-plays on-course to cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting with a child or young person - Explaining confidentiality and exceptions - Actively listening to their views - Responding to concerns with appropriate information - Signposting to support available - Agreeing with them any feedback they may wish to give their parents, how best to frame this and how best / who to deliver it - Considering with them the best way to raise with their parents any concerns they may have • On-course design of leaflets / invites for various age groups • Post-course write up of cases conducted • Post-course compilation of local and national resources

6.18 All the key areas of the FMC Professional Competence Standards in relation to CIM must be assessed at a level appropriate for a classroom/simulated environment. Participants must be assessed as adequately proficient in the duties, principles and requirements CIM and have demonstrated an adequate level of understanding and skill in all of the required competencies to pass the course.

6.19 The provider must use assessment methods that are valid and sufficient for the learning outcomes to be assessed, operate assessment in a way that is robust and consistent, and avoid placing barriers in the way of participants that do not reflect the criteria being assessed. Assessment must include observation of each participant undertaking the role of the mediator in a simulated situation, as well as assessment of written assignments and project work.

6.20 The training provider must provide full details of their assessment methods and copy assessment forms as part of their application for approval.

Part 7 – Mediation Information and Assessment Meetings

Scope of Standards

For clarity, these Standards apply equally to all pre-mediation meetings, whether the participants are attending spontaneously and voluntarily or as a requirement to attend prior to issuing court proceedings. In all cases the objectives of these meetings are the same – to provide an opportunity for potential participants to learn about mediation and other dispute resolution processes so that they can make an informed choice about how best to resolve issues arising from separation, and for mediators to assess the suitability of mediation for the participants.

Summary

At a MIAM, mediators must achieve the following outcomes:

1. Provide participants with sufficient information about mediation and other dispute resolution processes to enable them to make informed choices about how to resolve the issues they raise;
2. Obtain information from participants about their circumstances and issues arising from separation;
3. Assess the safety and suitability of mediation for the participants;
4. Discuss and, where possible, identify with participants their next steps, including the value of seeking legal advice.

Normative Conduct:

5. Mediators must ensure that meetings are conducted in ways that enable these outcomes to be achieved.

Purposes and Objectives of MIAMs

These Standards specify the outcomes that mediators are required to achieve, with a limited number of requirements about processes for doing so. As described above, a MIAM is an opportunity for potential participants to learn about mediation and other dispute resolution processes so that they can make informed choices about how best to resolve issues arising from separation, and for mediators to assess the suitability of mediation for the participants, and to signpost them to other services. A MIAM is not an opportunity simply to comply with a requirement of a Court, though a properly conducted MIAM will certainly achieve that purpose.

MIAM Outcome Standards

7.1 Providing information

Mediators must share with participants sufficient information about mediation, likely costs and other dispute resolution processes to enable them to make informed choices about how to resolve the issues they raise.

Mediators must include:

- the mediation principles as set out in the FMC Code of Practice
- the mediation process, and the benefits and challenges of mediation
- the suitability of mediation and other out-of-court ways of resolving issues arising from separation
- other appropriate support services and information relevant to the potential participants' needs
- the likely costs of mediation
- the position on legal aid for mediation
- the value of legal advice in all cases and the particular importance of this where issues arise relating to the safety of an adult or child, or it appears to mediators that delay in seeking legal advice would be detrimental to the MIAM participants.

Where relevant, mediators must also provide information about:

- the impact of separation and parental conflict on children (to include protective and risk factors regarding children's wellbeing), the importance of a child-focused separation, and parenting post-separation, including co-operative parenting
- child-inclusive mediation, where there are children of the family who are or may be capable of participating in the process
- how financial matters are dealt with in mediation and the necessity of providing full and frank financial disclosure
- what to expect from the next stage in the process and the likely timescale
- other support, including legal advice or therapeutic support for either parents or child(ren)
- any other services available to support the potential participants, including co-parenting, housing, financial information, debt services and domestic abuse support services.

7.2 Listening & obtaining Information

For accurate assessment, signposting and consideration of appropriate options, mediators must obtain information from participants about their circumstances and the issues arising from separation; and in order to build the necessary rapport mediators must give potential participants both the time and opportunity to be heard.

Mediators must obtain sufficient information about the relationship before and after separation, how potential mediation participants are likely to behave towards each other in a mediation meeting and afterwards, and the impact on any children of a mediation process, in order to assess safety and suitability for mediation.

Mediators must clarify if other professionals are involved with the family and, if appropriate, discuss with the potential participants whether and, if so, how it might be helpful in this context for mediators to liaise with the other professional(s).

7.3 Assessing safety and suitability for mediation

Mediators must assess the safety and suitability of mediation for participants at a MIAM.

The following factors must be taken into account:

- Domestic abuse of all kinds including physical abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour, emotional or psychological abuse, financial abuse, sexual abuse
- Drug or alcohol addiction
- Child abuse, or any other child protection and safeguarding concerns
- Any other vulnerability such as physical or mental health challenges or intellectual capacity that may impact on participants' capacity to engage in the mediation process or their safety
- The emotional readiness of the MIAM participants to engage in mediation and its likely impact on their effective participation in the mediation process.

Mediators must consult their Professional Practice Consultants (PPCs) if they have any doubt about whether mediation will be safe and suitable for potential mediation participants and must record the reasons if mediation is deemed suitable (see Code of Practice: s5.2.2). Where mediation has been assessed as not safe or not suitable, mediators must not mediate.

7.4 Determining next steps

It is important that MIAM participants each leave the meeting with a clear idea of their next steps. In order to achieve this, mediators must:

- Identify with participants options for their next steps
- Prepare the potential participants for the mediation process if mediation is suitable and safe
- Signpost participants to other services, legal advice, interventions or support whether or not mediation is proceeding
- Mention significant time scales when appropriate.

Where mediation is proceeding, mediators must determine, after consulting participants, which model of mediation is appropriate.

Where appropriate, mediators must assess for legal aid eligibility in line with Legal Aid Agency requirements, or signpost participants to another service offering Legal Aid if their own service does not.

Mediators must obtain the written consent of participants if other professionals are to be contacted.

Due to mediators' obligation of confidentiality to all MIAM participants, mediators must not share any information received during a MIAM with anyone other than the participants who shared this information. This means that, if MIAMs with both potential participants have taken place and mediation is not proceeding, the only reason mediators must give to other participants, the court, or any other third party is that mediation is not suitable at the present time.

Mediators must signpost participants to next steps that are necessary to ensure the safety of adults or children where relevant, even if it becomes apparent during a MIAM that the MIAM cannot be paid for.

7.5 Standards of Conduct of MIAMs

Practical arrangements and normative conduct

In order to achieve the specified outcomes mediators must make practical arrangements and must conduct themselves in ways such that:

Practical Arrangements

- the mode of delivery is safe and efficacious – mediators must deliver the MIAM face to face either in person or via an online video connection; and if a voice-only (telephone) connection is the only option, record the reasons;
- sufficient time is given to cover all the key areas described in these Standards – as it is unlikely that they can be covered effectively in less than an hour, mediators must, if the MIAM lasts less than 45 minutes, record the reasons why;
- suitable conditions are created to permit the exploration of issues of abuse, exploitation and safeguarding without either participant being able to influence the other – MIAMs must therefore be conducted separately with each participant; and there is a strong presumption against immediately consecutive meetings whether in person or online from the same home, with the consequence that mediators must demonstrate and record how any such practice has been delivered safely;
- all possible steps are taken to give both participants the opportunity for a MIAM – mediators must therefore seek to invite both participants to separate MIAMs unless the mediators do not have contact details for the other participant or in the professional judgement of the mediators it is not safe or otherwise appropriate to do so; and if potential participants are not invited to attend a MIAM, record the reason;
- participants have time to process the outcomes of the MIAM – this creates the presumption that substantive mediation must not normally follow immediately after a MIAM (though administrative matters can be addressed immediately) but, if it does, mediators must demonstrate that there are strong reasons for so doing and record these reasons;

Normative Conduct

- mediators practise active listening while allowing participants to tell their stories;
- mediators use sensitive and appropriate questioning to identify and understand the issues.

Document History

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Document Revisions:

- Number of Case Commentaries (August 2017)
- Child Inclusive Mediation (May 2018)
- Observations, Incomplete Cases and Draft Final Documents (June 2019)
- CPD, Retention of PPC Status, Training for Online Mediation, Complaints, Good Standing (March 2022)
- MIAM Standards, Fair Representation, Good Standing Amendment, Enhanced DBS Checks (September 2024)