



European Quality Award

EQA Guide to Applying

Accreditation for mentor/coach training programmes

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This information guide provides an introduction to the EMCC European Quality Award (EQA) for mentoring/coaching training programmes and the process of applying for accreditation. After reading this guide the next step is to apply by contacting your accreditation manager (see page 11 of this document or the website for contact information: www.emccouncil.org).

The pages that follow introduce EMCC, the EQA award, to whom it applies and the framework of standards on which the award is constructed. The process of application and assessment is introduced by a flow chart (page 7) followed by textual detail.

Please note that any programme submitted for assessment must have completed a full cycle. This means that the whole programme will have been delivered at least once and will, therefore, enable evaluation by the applicant and the students as well as providing full evidence to support the assessment process.

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EMCC International Vice-president Accreditation

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1. THE EMCC AND THE EUROPEAN QUALITY AWARD (EQA)

What is the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC)?

The EMCC exists to promote good practice and the expectation of good practice in mentoring and coaching. We are a Council that consists of representatives from EMCC affiliate countries plus direct members in countries where a local EMCC does not yet exist. The EMCC membership comprises a rich mixture of individual mentors/coaches, mentoring/coaching organisations, training and education organisations, buyers of mentoring/coaching, mentoring/coaching associations - all of whom share EMCC's vision to promote good practice and the expectation of good practice in mentoring and coaching across Europe.

What is the EMCC EQA?

This is an independent quality award awarded to providers of mentoring/coaching training to make their qualifications/training widely and immediately recognisable. This is through linking them to recognised professional standards. It is an integral and essential step on the path to establishing the professional credibility and status of mentoring/coaching.

EMCC has created a framework for assessment based on extensive consultation and the most comprehensive competence research of mentoring/coaching produced to date. The emphasis of this award is to raise standards whilst acknowledging existing excellence.

What does the EQA offer?

This Quality Award offers the marketplace the much needed framework to enable:

- Purchasers of mentoring/coaching services to understand the quality of what they are buying and to make appropriate choices for their respective needs
- HR and Learning Development specialists to choose appropriate programmes for developing their own managers and leaders in mentoring/coaching skills
- HR and Learning Development specialists to develop their own programmes to industry equivalent standards and to get these programmes accredited
- Individuals who wish to train as mentors/coaches to select programmes with confidence that the content is of high quality and relevant to and recognised by the market they wish to enter
- Training providers to design programmes which gain recognition for the quality of their provision.

Who is the EQA aimed at?

The EQA is for training organisations - including 'in-house' - that provide mentoring/coaching training.

Why is the award important to you and your organisation?

As a provider of quality mentoring/coaching training and education, your organisation will benefit in many ways through applying for and achieving the award, including:

- An audit check on quality, allowing your organisation to reflect on its processes, procedures and outputs
- Assurance that your programmes are of an agreed standard and benchmarked against best practice
- Feedback elicited through the EQA process can lead to programme development and improvements
- Marketing opportunities for your programmes stemming from a successful application process
- Your reputation for being a provider of quality training and educational programmes.

2. WHAT IS THE EMCC MENTOR/COACH STANDARDS FRAMEWORK?

The EMCC Competence Framework is based on recognition of different levels of training and experience. The framework operates from an equivalence model that encompasses the range of experience in the field of mentoring/coaching. This approach is designed to enable submitting organisations to benchmark their own capability indicators for training programmes against those currently agreed by the EMCC.

The competences and capability indicators are subject to ongoing research and, in collaboration with others, will continue to evolve over time to ensure that they continue to reflect appropriate standards of professional practice.

3. WHAT ARE THE EQA LEVELS?

There are 4 award levels: Foundation - Practitioner - Senior Practitioner - Master Practitioner

Foundation

This programme level is aimed at those:

- Who wish to gain an understanding of mentoring/coaching practice and to have the core skills
- Likely to be working with others using mentoring/coaching conversations to support and encourage development of skills/performance
- Who wish to use a mentoring/coaching approach within their own field/role and clearly understand how their mentor/coach role integrates with their vocational roles.

Practitioner

This programme level is aimed at those:

- Who will either be working as an internal mentor/coach, use mentoring/coaching as part of their main job or starting up as an external mentor/coach
- Who are likely to be working with a small range of clients/contexts and within own area of experience to improve performance, build confidence and stretch capability
- Who will typically be able to apply a limited range of models, tools and processes.

Senior Practitioner

This programme level is aimed at those:

- Who will practice as professional mentors/coaches and can draw on a range of models and frameworks
- Who are or wish to work with a range of clients, contexts and organisations
- Whose focus of work will be building capacity for progression, managing complex and challenging relationships, working with ambiguity and change.

Master Practitioner

This programme level is aimed at those:

- Who will practice as professional mentors/coaches and will create their own coherent approach drawing on a wide range of models and frameworks
- Who are or wish to work with a range of clients, contexts and organisations.

The Competence Framework (Appendix A) specifies the competences/capability indicators required at the different levels, and through the EQA support material we also specify the anticipated amount of taught input, learning and practice directly related to mentoring/coaching that would support the development of such capability (Appendix B).

Through the EMCC EQA process, we assess the training programme and its effectiveness in supporting individuals to be able to work with confidence and evidenced capability at a range of levels.

In the light of this, all of these requirements will be taken into account through the assessment process. A Masters degree in one discipline which has a core element of mentoring/coaching included in the overall programme, may receive an award for the mentoring/coaching element at the level achieved by assessment against the criteria. The mentoring/coaching element only will receive the EQA award and will not apply to the Masters degree as a whole.

4. WHAT ARE THE QUALITY STANDARDS?

Standards and quality assurance

The EMCC applies two sets of standards to programmes. These are the General Quality Standards (for which appropriate institutions such as Universities can substitute Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) / European Association for Quality Assurance (EAQA) standards for higher education, established as part of the Bologna process *as part of the evidence for this*) and the Programme Assessment Standards.

The basic requirements for the General Quality Standards include:

Governance and management

Establish a clear management structure, lines of accountability and appropriate safeguards for financial and quality standards

Standards and quality assurance

An appropriate regulatory framework for governing any awards (credentials)
A clear and consistent mechanism for ensuring academic/professional standards
A means of ensuring that programmes supplied meet the learning objectives stated.

Effectiveness of staff providing programmes

A means to ensure providers are competent to teach, facilitate learning and assess standards.

Student support

Effective systems for monitoring student support and administrative arrangements.

Full details regarding the Quality Standards are included as part of the assessment process.

5. HOW TO APPLY FOR AN EQA AWARD

The application at Practitioner, Senior Practitioner and Master Practitioner level is in two stages. The application at Foundation level is in one stage only.

Expression of interest

If you would like to apply for an award on behalf of your organisation, please contact your local accreditation manager or the EMCC International accreditation administration EMCC.Accreditation@emccouncil.org

- The EQA accreditation team will discuss your requirements with you. They will also explain the process of the assessment and answer questions. At this point you decide whether or not to proceed
- If you decide to proceed you will be sent an invoice, once payment has been received we'll send you the application document and supporting documentation for Stage One (Practitioner, Senior Practitioner and Master Practitioner levels) or full application documents if you are applying at Foundation level.

What happens next?

- You complete the application form
- You will be allocated an Assessor and a Verifier (not required for Foundation level). For Practitioner, Senior Practitioner and Master Practitioner, the first stage role of the Assessor is to review your application form and advise you whether you have sufficient information available to go the next step - stage two.
- If the assessor thinks you have sufficient information to proceed to the full assessment stage two and you agree to proceed, an invoice will be raised for the stage 2 assessment fee, once payment has been received we'll send you the documentation for the stage 2 assessment.

What happens during the assessment process?

- Use the guidance in the Submission Documentation and Toolkit to assist in completing your full application.
- You are encouraged to complete this with as much care and detail as possible, and to provide as much relevant documentary evidence as possible to support your claim. Any queries should be directed to your Assessor.
- Depending on the information provided, the Assessor will agree the next steps. This could be an entirely documentary exchange and discussion. However, with your agreement, the Assessor may visit your organisation to observe classroom teaching or other forms of learning experience. They may also ask to meet with a cohort of learners to elicit their opinions about the programme. If you have agreed to a site visit which attracts extra assessment time this will be invoiced to you together with related expenses e.g. travel. Assessors will endeavour to keep within the time allocated for programme levels and extra assessment time is only usual where information in the application is insufficient
- The Assessor will guide you as to whether your submission, in their view, meets the necessary criteria
- Once submitted the Assessor and Verifier will independently assess your submission and subsequently discuss their findings related to the evidence provided (documentary and observed during the visit if applicable) and make a recommendation as to the acceptance or rejection of your application or the need for further information
- The Assessor and Verifier will provide the report on your programme for submission to you.

EQA Panel assessment

- The Panel for each organisation's application will consist of a minimum of four experienced mentoring/coaching practitioners who have knowledge of the EQA process
- The Panel meet in closed session, and will form its decision by assessing the application for:
 - **Validity**
Does the evidence presented in the application match the criteria for level?
 - **Reliability**
Is there sufficient evidence in the claim to meet the criteria?
 - **Currency**
Is the evidence up to date?
 - **Authenticity**
What evidence is there that the claims made in the application can be supported and are true?

EQA panel decision

The Panel will come to one of the following decisions:

- Accept (at stated level)
- Request for more evidence (the assessor will discuss with the organisation)
- Unsuccessful - resubmission
- Award at a lower level.

EQA appeal panel

For an unsuccessful application, an organisation has a right of appeal. Once an appeal letter has been received, EMCC will appoint an Appeal Panel, which will consist of 3 people, who have not been involved in the original assessment.

Communication of EQA Panel decision

- The Panel will write to the applicant organisation with its decision. All awards by the EMCC are subject to renewal annually (by submission of a report confirming continued compliance together with advice on changes to programme which may attract a 'mini' review) and re-accreditation every 5 years.
- Through awarding the EQA, the EMCC is confirming that the applicant has demonstrated equivalence to EQA standards for mentoring/coaching training programmes.

Note: all enquiries and applications are treated in the strictest confidence.

GDPR

For the purposes of GDPR, contact with EMCC regarding an EQA application includes your agreement for EMCC to hold your data. We never share (or sell) your data with third parties. Once awarded, your EQA award will be displayed on the EMCC award listing on our website which is open to the public and can be viewed here. If you do not want your award to be publicly listed please let us know.

6. EQA APPLICATION TIMETABLE

An annual timetable for submissions is available for download [here](#).

7. FEES

The cost of submitting a complete EQA application is available from EMCC accreditation administration or your country accreditation manager (if there is one) whose contact details appear on under the “Contact Information” section of this document. If you do not have a country manager you are able to gain advice on fees from EMCC.accreditation@emccouncil.org.

The following sets out the number of days included in the ‘typical’ fees for both assessor/ verifier for each level.

NR OF DAYS	FOUNDATION	PRACTITIONER	SENIOR PRACTITIONER	MASTER PRACTITIONER
Assessor	1	1.5	2.5	3.5
Verifier	-	1.0	1.5	2.0

A daily incremental rate will be charged where more than the allocated assessor days are taken. The daily rate is available from your country manager.

Fees for additional courses:

- If you submit more than one application for assessment the EMCC will offer you a discounted price for the second and subsequent applications dependent upon their level and programme content.
- You can gain a discount on the full cost of a subsequent submission which upgrades an existing EQA programme to a higher level if this is submitted within 12 months of the original application.
- A submission for a higher level programme which has a core element of an existing EQA programme will attract a discount if submitted within 12 months of the original EQA award.
- Fees are available from your EMCC accreditation administration EMCC.accreditation@emccouncil.org.

Payment terms

- Payment is required at the application for Foundation level and in two stages for Practitioner, Senior Practitioner and Master Practitioner levels. The payments will be invoiced and are to be paid **in advance** of your receipt of the most up to date application form and supporting documentation
- Travel expenses and VAT will be added where appropriate.

Programme Changes

EQA organisations will inform EMCC of any substantive changes to the content or staffing.

Re-assessment (after 5 years)

To maintain the EQA a five year re-assessment will be required after the Award.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact: EMCC.Accreditation@emccouncil.org

The Netherlands has entered into a license agreement with EMCC and runs the EQA process at country level.

The guide to applying may also have been translated into other languages depending on the local policy of the EMCC Affiliated Country. You can check availability with the EMCC accreditation administration

EMCC.Accreditation@emccouncil.org

All enquiries regarding the EQA and submission of your application should be made to

EMCC.Accreditation@emccouncil.org

Unless you are applying in the Netherlands in which case submit your application to your local accreditation manager info@nobco.nl

APPENDIX A: EMCC Competence Framework

The most up to date version of the competence framework is available for download [here](#).

The Competence Framework is not just an accreditation tool. It is the main instrument with which professional mentors and coaches work to improve their mentoring/coaching practice and their personal development. Hence, it should be viewed as a dynamic and 'breathing' document.

What are the main changes

The changes can be summarised into four categories:

1. EIA Level Descriptors: changes that aim to fine-tune and further enhance differentiation amongst the accreditation levels
2. Re-write of existing CIs: enhancements in wording with the aim to improve clarity of a CI
3. Change of Accreditation Level for existing CIs: CIs that seem better positioned at a different accreditation level from the one they have been so far.
4. Suggestion of new CIs: a couple of occasions where new CIs have been introduced either in replacement of existing one(s) moved to a different accreditation level or as additional to the current CFW.

The main changes are:

- Foundation Level: reduced by 3 (from 33 CIs to 30 CIs)
- Practitioner Level: overall increase by 3 (from 39 CIs to 42 CIs)
- Senior Practitioner Level: overall increase by 3 (from 23 CIs to 26 CIs)
- Master Practitioner Level: overall reduction by 3 (from 17 CIs to 14 CIs).

A document showing the highlighted changes from v1 to v2 can be downloaded [here](#).

Competence Framework Glossary

A glossary that helps the interpretation and understanding of these CIs is also available and can be downloaded [here](#).

APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT INDICATORS

<i>Category</i>	<i>Study Hours</i> (includes learning and assessment of learning)	<i>Skills practice</i>	<i>Reflection review</i>	<i>Theory Models</i>	<i>Plan Process</i>
<i>Vocational Qualification Level</i>		% given are a guide - not prescriptive			
<i>Foundation</i>	Min. 20	50%	20%	20%	10%
<i>Undergraduate Degree Level</i>					
<i>Practitioner</i>	Min. 150	40%	25%	25%	10%
<i>Post Graduate Degree Levels</i>					
<i>Senior Practitioner</i>	Min. 500	30%	30%	30%	10%
<i>Master Practitioner</i>	Min. 1,800	30%	30%	30%	10%

Definition of Plan Process:

That part of the programme which is used to set up mentoring/coaching and supervision sessions; tutorial times spent in planning; setting up library access including Internet research rights for use and application of underpinning knowledge related to theory, models etc; setting up relevant software; planning personal development actions related to developing competence in mentoring/coaching.

Benchmark mentoring/coaching practice

The following table provides guidance on the number of hours of mentoring/coaching practice that will be anticipated for each level of programme. This practice (60% of skills practice hours) is expected to take place outside the taught input days.

To be absolutely clear, the mentoring/coaching practice should be external to the training programme, with real (not practice) clients and supervised. The work can be pro bono.

<i>Category</i>	Guidance on Skills practice hours	Guidance on Mentoring/Coaching Practice Hours
<i>Foundation</i>	10	6
<i>Practitioner</i>	60	36
<i>Senior Practitioner</i>	150	90
<i>Master</i>	540	250

APPENDIX C: QUALITY ASSURANCE

We expect you to demonstrate that you are effectively running the programme. **Quality Assurance (QA)** refers to a range of review procedures designed to safeguard academic and professional standards and promote learning opportunities of acceptable quality for learners. QA is about ensuring that the programme is fit for purpose and continues to be fit for purpose in operation over a period of time. We would expect to find this information in your “guiding principles” or your “quality plan.”

In summary we would like to know:

- What are you trying to achieve with your programme?
- How do you go about achieving it?
- How do you know you have achieved it?

You must demonstrate that you have established your own quality assurance standards/processes, including:

- a. Documentation of the training programme's core principles and beliefs about mentor/coach development
- b. A statement explaining the goal of your training, e.g. to develop mentors/coaches to...
- c. Process(es) for checking that the organisation operates to its own standards and collects evidence that standards and routines are being adhered to consistently
- d. Identification of opportunities for improvements to the programme or your organisation and evidence of implementing those improvements.

Answers to (a) to (d) may be included in your quality plan; if so please provide appropriate cross referencing.

Note

In the column, “Evidence reference,” please give the exact location of the supporting evidence in the documentation submitted in your application, when used. Please give page references and subheadings wherever necessary. “See course handbook” is not an exact location; assessors must be able to refer to the evidence quickly rather than having to search pages or whole documents for the necessary evidence.

Governance and management

Show evidence of a clear management structure, lines of accountability and appropriate safeguards for financial and quality standards. Please provide the following:

1. The organisational chart and structure, which must outline:
 - a. Communication lines of those positions responsible for developing and delivering policies, procedures and content relating to mentor/coach training
 - b. The relationship of instructors and whether the instructors are employees or contractors.
2. Processes to ensure resolution of complaints and disputes. Please explain your policy and procedure for receiving and resolving complaints from students, instructors or other interested parties.

Examples of evidence may include but are not limited to: organisational manuals, staffing information, job descriptions and authority diagrams or organisation charts.

3. Financial management: what is in place to protect the student should your organisation become insolvent? What is your refund policy?

Professional/Academic standards and quality assurance

Please explain the organisation's:

- Regulatory framework for governing any awards
- Mechanism for ensuring professional standards
- Process to ensure that programmes meet the learning objectives stated, effectiveness of the programme delivery
- Assessment methods and how you ensure that they are consistently applied from one cohort to the next
- Procedures to recognise and enhance strengths and address limitations of programmes, staff, processes etc.

Examples of evidence may include but are not limited to: copy of assessment criteria, minutes from quality assurance meetings.

Effectiveness of staff providing programmes

Please explain how the organisation goes about the following:

- What are your processes/procedures to ensure your staff members are competent and continue to be competent to teach, facilitate learning and assess standards? Include information regarding:
 - How you evaluate the effectiveness of training staff providing programmes?
 - What is their professional standing in the mentoring/coaching field?
 - What is their experience in practicing mentoring/coaching?
 - How many of your staff are accredited in mentoring/coaching? By whom?
 - Significant contributions to the mentoring/coaching field
 - What is your process for ensuring that staff meet and maintain your standards
 - Continuous professional development (CPD) for trainers.
- What is the profile of the programme leader(s)? What is their expertise?
- Provide information regarding staffing of the programme, including identifying key tutors as well as alumni and visiting trainers and speakers

Examples of evidence may include but are not limited to: staff CVs, staff professional development (CPD) logs, staff appraisals, records of actions taken, training attended, supervision received, job descriptions, terms and conditions for consultants.

Learner support - quality of provision

Describe how well learners are looked after i.e. describe the quality of the delivery of the curriculum (as opposed to its content) as well as the quality of learning resources and support services made available to learners.

- What systems do you have in place to monitor learner support and administrative arrangements?

Examples of evidence may include but are not limited to: content of training manuals, including what support the training organisation may provide to learners undertaking in-house programmes, examples of support provided to the learners.

Overall quality assurance

- How do you know your evaluation of quality is effective?
- What are your independent moderation arrangements to ensure that your procedures, including assessments, are being operated in the way intended?
- What is your process for reviewing the performance of the programme, identifying general opportunities for improvement and implementing them?
- What is your process for incorporating changes in standards, course delivery?
- What is your plan for implementing changes, for example that may be required due to changes in standards, knowledge or technology? Include answers to the following questions:
 - When are changes made?
 - How are changes tracked?
 - How are instructors informed of changes?
 - What is the time frame or schedule used to implement changes?
 - How do you assure that all staff implement changes whether the instructor is an employee or a contractor?

Examples of evidence may include but are not limited to: records of independent moderator activities, existence of ongoing quality plan, programme re-designs, management reviews, development plan for instructors, minutes of meetings, quality assurance policy, etc.

Administrative processes for issuing certificates

- At what point are the students issued their certificates?
- Who issues the certificates?
- How do you verify that certificates are issued to students who have passed the theory and practical examinations, and are competent in mentoring/coaching at the level of the programme?
- How do you process requests and verify certification when students ask for duplicate certificates?