ASSOCIATION OF FACILITATORS

Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (Practitioner Accreditation)

Workbook & Applicant Portfolio (Extract)

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*EXTRACT ONLY

This is an extract from the Practitioner Accreditation Workbook available to potential applicants. The full version (40 pages) guides applicant through a seven-step process for developing a portfolio of evidence based of our competency model FACETS® and includes many examples and sample formats to guide applicants. For a self-evaluation version of FACETS® please register as a Guest Member at www.associationoffacilitators.co.uk.

For further information and to register to receive the full workbook and book an Accreditation interview please contact info@associationoffacilitators.co.uk.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Association of Facilitators (AoF) and to our process for the accreditation of your prior experience and learning.

AoF's accreditation process is based on the understanding that effectiveness as a facilitator rests on a combination of experienced practice and a sound theoretical underpinning. To gain AoF recognition, applicants must be able to demonstrate they are competent in both areas.

The accreditation process involves applicants:-

- demonstrating that they have identified and reviewed their experience, reflected on it and provided evidence which demonstrates the learning they have gained from it.

- presenting the outcomes of their analysis in a portfolio which enables AoF to undertake a meaningful comparison against their standards for quality and professional practice.

This workbook provides guidance on how to build your facilitation portfolio and how to gain credit from your experience and learning.

Acknowledgements

AoF would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of our Board of Reference and their commitment to developing facilitation as a profession. In particular, we appreciate the help and guidance provided by Dr Michael Field OBE and his commitment to lifelong learning which has underpinned and informed this accreditation process.

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Accreditation with the Association of Facilitators

Credit not license

For some professions, accreditation infers becoming a licensed practitioner in their particular field. Accreditation with The Association of Facilitators has no such connotation. Rather, our process is built on a commitment to *Self Regulation*. By seeking accreditation, and subsequent reaccreditation, you will be demonstrating your commitment to monitor and review your own professional practice.

Our approach provides a rigorous and challenging environment for self assessment. Participants report that they engage in a thorough inquiry into their skills, knowledge, and awareness, and that they become more familiar with their blind spots and areas for development. The process builds critical reflection, and develops emotional competence. It provides,

- a way to illuminate and evolve facilitator practice through critical reflection, feedback from peers, and assessment of competence.
- a mechanism for accreditation that will validate facilitators' experience, and that will allow areas for development to spring from a sense of self-acceptance and appreciation.

Standards not standardisation

Our proprietary model FACETS® puts forward a set of quality standards against which applicants can self assess and engage in dialogue with their peers. FACETS® is not a model that imposes standards nor does it seek conformity. Rather, it guides applicants to key areas of competence against which they may self regulate. Further, there is scope for applicants to add competences that relate to their own particular practice. Accreditation then is informed by dialogue, self assessment and peer review. It is in reference to, but not limited to, FACETS®.

A collaborative process

Our commitment to a collaborative review process rests on the contributions of three roles - applicant, support person (peer mentor/advisor) and a member of AoF's accreditation panel - coming together in a joint process of review and accreditation as shown in the following diagram and table.

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Accreditation Phase	Association of Facilitators (AoF)	Applicant	Support Person
Overall	AoF sets professional standards based on its Facilitator Competency Model, FACETS®. AoF oversees the integrity, reliability and validity of the application and accreditation process. AoF maintains links with other professional and academic bodies to ensure valid standing, calibration and recognition of AoF accreditation.	The applicant submits a Portfolio which provides evidence that they meet the standards for professional practice set out by AoF in its Competency Model, FACETS® and Code of Practice. While this is largely a self-directed, self- evaluation activity, significant support is provided by AoF in the form of detailed guidance (left-hand column) and a one-to-one support person (right hand column).	The role of support mentor/advisor is to answer questions about the AoF accreditation process and provide support for the applicant through the steps necessary to submit a portfolio. The activity is different and separate from the assessment and accreditation process.
Enquiry	Provide clear information about the accreditation process from underlying principles and philosophy to step-by-step process, timescales and fee structure.	Enquire about process to own satisfaction. Secure a place through payment of the fee.	[A support person is allocated by AoF.]
Portfolio Development	Sends application documentation. Allocates support person. Reviews submitted Portfolio. Confirm Accreditation Date.	Ensure thorough understanding of process and requirements for accreditation. Undertake self-assessment against FACETS® competences. Gather evidence.	Respond to queries regarding the Accreditation process. Supports applicant to self-assess and gather feedback and other evidence for portfolio. Encourages applicants to generate a rounded,

		Select Accreditation Date, finalise portfolio and send to AoF.	'best-representation' portfolio. (Does not speculate about the outcome of the accreditation process.)
Accreditation	Conducts Accreditation Interview Informs applicant of outcome	Attend Accreditation Day (Presents overview of portfolio, answers questions, responds to feedback, update self-assessment, provides feedback to AoF).	None
Membership	Issues certificates and logos Communicates with members Provides opportunities for professional support and development	Accredited member continues to self-regulate and consolidates learning in Online Learning Record. Seeks re-accreditation after 3 years	None

Building your Portfolio

In preparation for your accreditation we ask you to compile an accreditation portfolio. The portfolio should be presented in a hard copy A4 binder on the day of accreditation and as an electronic file one week before your accreditation day.

The information you present in your application portfolio provides the evidence of your learning and the rationale for accreditation. It is the information upon which your claim for credit will be based.

This steps explained in this workbook, the examples provided in the appendices and your support person will guide you through the process of preparing a portfolio which includes:

- Examples/Lists of your relevant experience
- Details of qualifications and courses attended
- An analysis of what you have learned from your experience
- Supporting evidence
- A matching of your learning from experience against the FACETS® competences (as well as any that you add)
- A Self Assessment
- An Accreditation Profile
- CV and references

Within the above structure it is up to you to decide on the content, order and relative importance of the information you decide to present. But this should be done with the aims of the accreditation process in mind. For example:-

- if you are an established facilitator of long standing the emphasis will likely be on the breadth and depth of your work and your clients

- if you are just starting out as a facilitator, the emphasis may well be on your knowledge, skills and abilities in the field you wish to enter, as well as your general working skills

- If you are a manager or a consultant, facilitation may be a component of your work portfolio but not necessarily core to your role. Here emphasis may well be upon aspects of your work and/or particular case studies.

- If you are applying for access to further training, the emphasis will be on your knowledge and your potential as a future facilitator

- if you are seeking credit in order to complete the training that you started on another training course with another organisation, or in another country, you will need to

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describe your previous studies in detail and demonstrate your commitment to completing the work

The order and relative importance of the information in your portfolio will vary according to your aims and experience. For example, if you have worked for many years in a variety of facilitation roles you may choose to present your work experience first, and this may be the largest part of your application. However, if you have only recently started to build up your experience you may wish to present your training first. If there have been significant gaps between your professional experiences, you may choose to reflect on and consolidate developments and shifts during the gaps.

Within the portfolio we expect to see an account of your experience together with any evidence to support your claim. Suitable evidence would include.

- Details of your facilitation experience including summaries, written accounts and personal reflections
- Details of relevant training - certificates, course dates, aims and objectives
- Supervision - a statement from your supervisor, manager, mentor or peer group
- Client/Peer Feedback
- Publicity Materials, e.g. website, online/Linked In/associate profiles, marketing material, testimonials (name + contact details provided)
- Audio and video materials, e.g. clips of you in a facilitation role, or of others providing feedback/evidence of your facilitation style

As well as submitting a physical copy of your portfolio as an A4 binder on the day of Accreditation, you will also need to send a complete electronic copy of your portfolio to us at info@associationoffacilitators.co.uk a week beforehand. We require one document (either pdf, Word or Powerpoint) which contains a full set of all portfolio materials you are submitting, with working hyperlinks if appropriate. Your physical portfolio will be returned to you after the accreditation day.

What Level of Accreditation should I be applying for?

We offer three Levels of Accreditation - Level 1, Level 2 & Level 3. As well as providing a path for Continuing Professional Development, these levels recognise the different skill sets and contexts in which individual facilitators practice.

The Level at which you are seeking accreditation is stated as part of your Accreditation Profile. No two facilitators will have exactly the same Profile although they may be Accredited at the same level.

Your Level, as part of your profile, will indicate your areas of competence as a facilitator and path for development. For some facilitators, progress to the next level may not be desired or appropriate.

Facilitators can discover and develop depth in their facilitation practice through the accreditation process and through continuing development post-accreditation. You do not have to move up a level in order to progress in your competency and skill as a facilitator.

It is possible to be awarded a Level 1 Accreditation with evidence of Level 2 (or even 3) practice, or a Level 2 Accreditation with elements of Level 3 practice. Examples are given shortly.

The following table attempts to help you distinguish between the Levels of Accreditation you may be applying for. Once you have an idea of your Level, do discuss this with your support person. There will be a greater volume and depth of evidence required as you make claims for higher credit.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
AoF Training Equivalent	Foundations in Facilitation Skills Programme: • 5 days contact time • 1 or more self-study day • Presentation of case study • Live group facilitation practice/review • Self and Peer Assessment • Portfolio presentation	Certificate in Facilitation Skills Course • +5 days contact time • 2 or more self-study days • Presentation of case studies • Live group facilitation practice/review • Self and Peer Assessment • Portfolio presentation	Diploma in Facilitation Skills Programme • +7 days contact time • 3 or more self-study days • Presentation of case studies • Live group facilitation practice/review • Self and Peer Assessment • Undertake a social action project • Portfolio presentation
Typical roles	• Managers who lead team meetings • Project Managers • Teachers and trainers who are engaged in people-centred learning • Consultants working with in-house or external groups • Volunteers with responsibilities for co-ordinating community, social or charitable action	• Team/Department Managers and Leaders • Project Managers • HR, L&D and change professionals • Consultants working with in-house or external groups • Coaches and Therapists • Community leaders • Self-empowered learners • Aspiring Group Facilitators	• Managers and Leaders • Programme Managers and Change Agents • Consultants working with in-house or external groups • Mentors, Coaches, Supervisors and Therapists • Community leaders • Self-empowered learners • Group Facilitators
Context	• Facilitation is likely to be one of many roles you perform, rather than your main role • Facilitation may not explicitly be part of your role description, however you regularly use	• Facilitation and developing others is likely to be a significant part of your role, and recognised as such by others • You may be working in an internal capacity with a role as a manager	• Facilitation, co-operative enquiry and learning within groups is the major part of your role • You use a wide variety of styles within a variety of groups and organisations • You may offer facilitation services directly to organisations or via an associate relationship

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	facilitation skills	or leader or externally as a consultant/trainer	• You may be working in an internal capacity with a role as a manager or leader or externally as a consultant/trainer/change manager
Content	• Task oriented • Managing and coordinating the performance and output of groups and teams • General understanding and experience of team development without a requirement for great psychological depth • May be first experience of Reflective Practice	• Task and Process oriented • Conversant with Change Management, Organisational Dynamics, Learning & Development, Human Resources, Training • Familiar with change in groups and organisations • Reflective Practice • Personal Development	• Group Process oriented as well as capable task facilitators • Creative facilitation of emergent agenda and diverse groups • Breadth and depth of awareness from personal to group, organisation and social dynamics • Psychological depth • May have specialist knowledge in addition to core facilitation skills, e.g. Gestalt, psychometrics, strategic change, business administration
Core Knowledge	Facilitation Skills, Modes of Power, Contracting, Safety, Group Dynamics and Team Development.	As Level 1 plus Experiential Learning, Reflective Practice, Psychological Defences, Change Management and Personal Development	As Level 2 plus evidence of a wide and flexible range of approaches, self awareness, critical reflection, depth of theoretical knowledge, committed approach to self-development
Supervision	Typically through a peer network, manager, coach or mentor.	Regular review of performance through self-and-peer review as well as external supervision	Regular reflection and personal/group supervision

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Some examples:
Owen has worked in the Learning and Development Department of a large technology company for the last 3 years. He delivers the induction programme to new joiners once a month and also manages the administration of the modular development programme. He has recently taken on responsibility for management training and this involves managing a small team. He has added facilitation to his *training* profile.
Owen is an Accredited Facilitator at Level 1.

Julie works as a Liaison Officer in a school. She regularly organises meetings between teachers, local authorities, education bodies and linked schools. She is responsible for planning the agenda and usually opens and closes the meetings. She is often coordinating and influencing action between meetings. She is a trained counsellor and works part time.
Julie is an Accredited Facilitator at Level 1 with part accreditation at Level 2 (Theory) and Level 3 (Awareness)

David works for a charity and trains young people in life skills through working in outdoor environments. He works on long-term contracts and occasionally on a freelance basis. He previously worked in a gym as a personal trainer where he trained in NLP and is now a key member of a small organisation with an assigned mentor. David runs intensive courses often involving overnight stays and is required to have extensive supervision, in addition to his mentoring, which is arranged by his organisation.
David is an Accredited Facilitator at Level 2

Karen is a project manager for a construction company and has 10 years experience in various firms. She travels regularly and juggles two client projects as well as having internal responsibility for team-building days. She has a full-time team and reports to an internal director as well as to her client sponsors. She has a high degree of autonomy in her work and is often called upon to lead key workshops, lead decision making and negotiate programme changes with the client. She has identified a special interest in developing others and has been on various short courses in management and leadership skills, some of which involved experiential learning. She has supervision every two months and maintains a journal.
Karen is an Accredited Facilitator at Level 2 with part accreditation at Level 3 (Contracting and Ethics)

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Jayne is a freelance group facilitator working across a range of organisations and often at a senior level. Having participated in many learning groups herself, she now has a deep understanding of group dynamics and has experienced how psychological defences can limit team productivity. Over the years she has developed an open and less defended personality. Jayne can see the deeper motivations that are below the surface in groups and is able to draw attention to them. She helps groups and teams get 'unstuck' and describes her work as 'holding up a mirror' to any limiting attitudes and behaviours. She helps groups and teams to engage in truthful conversations about the impact of their behaviours upon one another. Jayne works with her supervisor to explore the impact that her role has on groups and vice versa.
Jayne is an Accredited Facilitator at Level 3

In considering the level of accreditation that you wish to apply for, it may be helpful to consider some of these questions:

Question	Response
What are the key areas of my practice. Team meetings? Personal development groups? Training? Therapy? etc.	
Using the case studies above, match your practice to the level that is a 'best fit' at this stage. Explain your choice.	
Can you provide sufficient evidence? Explain	

Table 1: What level are you applying for?

Note: After completing this table, it may be helpful to talk with your support person assigned by AoF. They will be able to guide you further to the level that best suits your experience and practice as a facilitator.

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The FACETS® Competency Model

FACETS® (© 2025) is our core Facilitator Competency model. It acknowledges that facilitation is not merely a one dimensional activity, but has multiple and interrelated layers. F A C E T S is designed as an acronym which signifies six key areas that we consider to be central to both the skill level and character of practitioners.

FACILITATION

This facet covers the identifiable skills and the personal qualities and attitudes that combine to form a facilitators' style. **It is about the dimensions, modes, and hands-on practical interventions that can be utilised in groups. For example, providing activities, eliciting meaning, establishing a positive climate, and handling emotions, etc.** Our approach is informed by humanistic psychology and the founding work of John Heron around power.

AWARENESS

This facet is best described as **the ability to 'tune into' the prevailing group dynamics, identifying "what is really going on?" guiding the skillful exploration of relationships, and the surrounding context in our personal, interpersonal, group, organisational and social systems. It is also about responding to these dynamics with an appropriate and considered response to equality, diversity, and dominance**. High levels of awareness enhance the quality of intervention that a facilitator provides, often getting below the surface to explore assumptions, attitudes, beliefs, defences and anxieties. Awareness is foundational to qualities such as safety, being genuine, inclusive and having positive regard.

CONTRACT

This facet is about **handling working relationships that form a boundary around any facilitated event, seeking to agree a way of working that will support a mutually-held goal. Contracting has many dimensions and dynamics**, including the relationship between facilitator and participants, facilitator and sponsor, and participants and sponsor. It also has differing layers, from creating the culture and conditions for deep self-discovery, organisational change, greater team cohesion, to the efficient delivery of

ETHICS

This facet honours the ethical framework within which practitioners operate, and points towards professional standards and good practice. **It encompasses such areas as professional responsibilities, diversity, equality, integrity, and the environment. It transcends the mere agreeing to an ethical statement by supporting practitioners to 'walk their talk' hold boundaries, and to demonstrate their values in action**.

THEORY

This facet concerns the way facilitators handle the knowledge that underpins and informs their practice. **Our commitment is to the development of critically reflective practitioners, i.e., those who not only shape their practice by engaging with theory but also develop and share fresh knowledge and insights arising from their experiences.** We highly value learning that is experiential, emergent, and critically reflective and is related to action, participation and lifelong learning.

SUPPORT

This facet attends to the area of **supervision, personal maintenance, and well-being.** As with any 'helping' profession, facilitators often face difficult behaviours, resistance, and complex situations. Over time the gradual build-up of client material can have a detrimental effect on performance. This facet seeks to ensure that **facilitators regularly attend to their own support needs and thus continue to serve their clients well**.

The complete model, provided separately, forms the basis for self-assessment and portfolio presentation. As well as the competency areas that we have identified as important for AoF accreditation, you are encouraged to add competencies that are important for you, in your area of facilitation.

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Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment is at the core of our Accreditation Process. Participants report that through a thorough inquiry into their skills, knowledge, and awareness, they become more familiar with their blind spots and areas for development. The process builds critical reflection in participants, and develops emotional competence.

The Practitioner Accreditation process that we administer provides

- a way to illuminate and evolve facilitator practice through critical reflection, feedback from peers, and assessment of competence
- a mechanism for accreditation that will validate facilitators' experience, and that will allow areas for development to spring from a sense of self-acceptance and appreciation.

To prepare your accreditation for submission you will need to undertake the following steps, each of which is outlined in detail in the rest of this document.

STEP 1: Take time to review your range of facilitation experiences

STEP 2: Identify the relevant experience for which you seek credit

STEP 3: Provide the supporting evidence

STEP 4: Match your experience/learning against FACETS ®

STEP 5: Write your Self-Assessment Statement

STEP 6: Prepare your Accreditation Profile

STEP 7: Submit your Portfolio

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About the Accreditation Day

Once your portfolio is submitted, there is no other preparation to do, other than to come ready to talk about the process of gathering your portfolio, the content of your submission and to answer questions related to the evidence and accreditation profile you have prepared. Please bring the A4 folder to your Accreditation Day and be prepared to leave it with us for a short while.

You will not be 'tested' on your theory or practice of facilitation on the accreditation day. Rather, what will be jointly explored between us is your application and evidence for accreditation against the FACETS® framework (which encompasses theory and practice). Like the portfolio preparation phase, the accreditation day is intended to support your development as a facilitator.

In essence, you will have a 30-45 min individual interview with 2 or more representatives of AoF during a day-long process.

A typical schedule is as follows:

09.00-09.30 Arrival & Coffee
09.30-10.00 Welcome & Introductions
10.00-10.45 Applicant 1
11.00-11.45 Applicant 2
12.00-12.45 Applicant 3
13.00-13.45 Lunch
14.00-14.45 Applicant 4
15.00-15.45 Applicant 5
16.00-17.00 Process feedback and close

Your interview slot will run approximately as follows:

- Interview (15-30 mins)
- Clarifying Questions
- (Reactions from observing group)
- Reactions/observations – AoF
- Your reactions
- Summary and close

Other individuals seeking accreditation may witness the interview 'goldfish-bowl' style, as you do theirs, although you do not assess or accredit each other. Feedback is sought by us on the process and administration of the accreditation process. Through these and other governance mechanisms we seek to keep the accreditation process open and transparent.

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On some occasions there may be fewer than five applicants and the timings will be adjusted accordingly. If you are unable to attend a pre-booked day or miss your slot for any reason, you will usually have to pay an additional fee to rebook.

Following Your Accreditation

Following the Accreditation day, you will be informed of the outcome by phone or email within two weeks. Your A4 portfolio will be returned to you by post.

You will also receive a Feedback and Accreditation Profile which confirms the accreditation profile offered to you by AoF and provides a rationale for this profile and some written feedback which responds to and builds on your own suggested areas for development.

You will also receive a Certificate of Accreditation and guidelines for use of the AoF logo.

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