



The Law Society

Family Mediation Accreditation: Portfolio route

Frequently Asked Questions



Frequently asked questions Family Mediation Accreditation: Portfolio route

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Questions?

If having read the frequently asked questions and **the Scheme** guidance notes you have any other queries, please contact the accreditation office:

Tel: 020 7320 5797

Email: accreditation@lawsociety.org.uk

Eligibility to apply for accreditation

I am not a solicitor, can I apply?

The Law Society's Family Mediation Accreditation is open to any mediator who has successfully completed their initial or foundation training with an **FMC** recognised mediation organisation and who meets the requirements for accreditation. If you are a mediator who has already obtained accreditation or who has been competence assessed via one of the exiting other routes, you can apply via the passported route to join the accreditation. Full details are provided in the accreditation application guidance notes, which can be accessed on our [website](#).

I completed my initial/foundation training more than three years ago, can I still apply?

You should talk with your PPC about the reasons why you have not been able to apply for accreditation within the required three-year limit. The **FMC** standards set out information in relation to those who have trained but not accredited (see **FMC Professional Standards and Self-Regulatory Framework Part 1.**, s.3., s.3.6/7).

I trained with an organisation which is not a member of the Family Mediation Council or approved by one of their member organisations, may I apply?

You should contact the member organisation that you trained with for further guidance. The Law Society, as a member body of the **FMC**, only accredits mediators from **FMC** member organisations.

I have only completed three mediations, is that sufficient to apply?

The minimum requirement is three completed mediations with outcome statements, **memorandum of understanding** (for children only or children's arrangements cases) and **open financial statements** (together with **MOU** for all issues or property and finance cases) and as much additional practice experience that will allow you to evidence against all the required competencies. You should carefully assess your practice experience against the competencies to ensure that you can meet them, and discuss your level of experience with your **PPC** who will be able to assist you in deciding whether you have sufficient experience to evidence the competencies or that you should delay your application until you have sufficient experience to do so.

I specialise in child only mediation practice, may I still apply?

Accreditation can only be attained in relation to all-issues mediation and you must be able to evidence that you meet all the competences as listed. You may latterly decide to act as a child only specialist but please bear in mind that in order to re-accredit, you must be able to demonstrate currency of knowledge and practice in relation to all-issues mediation.

I haven't observed any mediations and my PPC has not observed my practice, can I still apply?

The **FMC** Standards introduced on 1 January 2015 set out a requirement that a mediator must observe a mediation session conducted by an **FMCA** mediator (and provide an evaluation and reflection on what they observed) and that they must also be observed as a practitioner by their own **PPC**, who will provide feedback to the mediator on what they observed. This requirement forms part of the overall portfolio for accreditation. However, the **FMC** has been clear that the standards will require time to be fully introduced and therefore you should, in the first instance discuss your situation with your **PPC** and ensure that you check information being issued by the **FMC** in respect of any transitional arrangements set out by the **FMC**.

Preparing to apply

I trained before the move to the new FMC Standards were established and don't have a full three year record of my development with my PPC. What should I do?

You should, in the first instance, talk with your **PPC** to establish between you what deficiencies you have in your record of learning and development, time spent with your **PPC** or any gaps in your practice generally. Your **PPC** must be able to provide a professional development statement with your portfolio that meets the requirements set out by the **FMC**. However, there is also provision in the standards for exceptional or extenuating circumstances which you and your **PPC** may wish to consider for your own situation. (See also **FMC Professional Standards and Self-Regulatory Framework**, Part 1., s.3., 3.6/7) You or your **PPC** may also contact the **accreditation office** for further guidance having considered your situation, the **FMC** published standard and any exceptional or extenuating circumstances that may apply.

I have asked my PPC to give me a Professional Practice Development Report Statement and they wish to charge me for it.

Please bear in mind that your **PPC** will be providing the statement based on their knowledge and assessment of you and your practice. **PPCs** are aware of the critical role that they play in the development of mediator practice and will want to take time to consider your development to date, to gather and check information and to complete the report. It is therefore a piece of work that will take their professional time and skills and should be paid for.

I have recently changed my PPC, who should complete my Professional Practice Development Statement?

You should discuss this with your current **PPC**. If your new **PPC** feels that they are unable to comment in all the sections of the report, it may be necessary to discuss what your previous **PPC** can comment on, in which case, the report should be signed by both **PPCs**.

Preparing my initial accreditation application form and portfolio documents

One of the cases I am going to submit is very similar to a question in the case study questions

section, can I just refer the assessor to my case report?

You can, but please consider how you can best provide all the evidence required that will assist the assessor in deciding on your competence – you might choose to answer another question in the same section in order to provide the widest possible demonstration of your competence.

I have a case that I want to submit but it falls outside the two-year limit. What should I do?

Provided the case is less than three years old at the time of your application, you can submit the case but you must provide an explanation as to why it falls outside the time limit, which should be approved and counter-signed by your **PPC**. Reasons may include a break in practice (please provide the reason for the break in your practice e.g. career break, parenting leave etc. or because of e.g. illness). Please note that we reserve the right to ask you to submit a more recent case.

What is a 'reflective account'?

When you write reflectively as a professional, you should consider how you can best set out what you did (the skills you used), why you decided to intervene or act in the way that you did (planned intervention), what you learned as a result of acting in the way that you did and what, if anything, you could or might have done differently having reflected on your actions or interventions. Writing reflectively allows you to consider carefully your own practice and to demonstrate (e.g. to an assessor), your depth of knowledge, skill and your ability to consider and reflect on your own actions.

I don't prepare Parenting Plans, can I still submit a child only case without one?

Yes you can. As mediation moves into the new arrangements for family justice services all mediators should be aware of the value to parents of having a document which sets out their aspirations and contingencies for all aspects of their future co-parenting. Examples of parenting plans can be found at <https://www.cafcass.gov.uk/grown-ups/parenting-plan>, but in many cases mediators commonly prepare a **Memorandum of Understanding**, which sets out arrangements for future separated parenting.

After I submit my application

How long before I can expect to hear about my application?

We will acknowledge safe receipt of your application. In general, you should expect to hear on outcome of your application within six to eight weeks of submission; however, this may take longer during busy periods and or where missing or further information is required.