CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ACCREDITATION PANEL ACCREDITATION CRITERIA, SCORING AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Programme Accreditation Criteria

Diversity statement

The Correctional Services Accreditation Panel's commitment is to ensure that all accredited programmes demonstrate in relation to the full range of the accreditation criteria that appropriate consideration has been given to diversity issues.

Programmes can only be effective if they address the implications that gender, culture, age, sexuality, ability, nationality, ethnicity, religion, learning style and past and present life experiences have for programme access, participation and treatment outcome.

Summary of Accreditation Criteria, Document Requirements for Accreditation, Accreditation Assessment Scoring System

(i)   Accreditation - The Ten Criteria

To be accredited, a programme must demonstrate to the Panel that it meets the following ten criteria:

1.   A Clear Model of Change

There must be an explicit model to explain how the programme is intended to bring about relevant change in offenders.

For any effective programme, it should be possible to specify clearly how it brings about change. Without such a specification programme objectives can become blurred, and it may be difficult to identify its evidence base. The programme's Theory Manual, therefore, must explain for whom the programme is intended, what changes it intends to bring about in participants, and how it will achieve this, providing empirical evidence in support. In addition, the methods and exercises in the Programme Manual must correspond to the approach described in the Theory Manual.

To meet this criterion the application should provide a summary of the model of change of approximately 1000 words. This should describe how the programme is intended to work, drawing on relevant theory and research. This summary will, in effect, provide an overview of the material covered in many of the other criteria. The summary should specify:

- who the programme is for
- the dynamic risk factors it seeks to change
- how diversity principles have been taken into account in the research and development of the programme
- the treatment methods used
- what is achieved during each major phase of the programme
- how the combination of targets and methods is appropriate for the targeted offenders

Where the evidence is incomplete, the model of change should be in the form of a plausible hypothesis, and the Theory Manual should provide research evidence to support the general approach and methods employed. However, the programme will not be fully accredited until the hypothesis has been empirically supported through evaluation.

In order to satisfy this criterion, the summary must demonstrate:

    i.   internal coherence of the model of change

    ii.   empirical support for the model of change

    iii   consistency between the model of change and the programme as described in the Programme Manual

2.   Selection of Offenders

There must be a clear specification of the types of offender for whom the programme is intended, and the methods used to select them.

For a treatment programme to be effective, it must be targeted at the right individuals. It is important, therefore, for selection processes to be clearly specified, and for there to be a means to exclude or de-select from the programme as appropriate.

To meet this criterion the application must include:

    i   a statement of the type or types of offending behaviour that the programme is intended to address

    ii   a list of inclusion criteria

    iii   an account of the action taken to ensure that potential participants are not inappropriately excluded on the basis of their background (e.g. their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, sexuality, or age)

    iv   a list of exclusion criteria (together with a justification for each)

    v   a description of the selection procedure employed

    vi   a list of, and references for, any assessment instruments employed in selection, together with a justification for their use and an account where relevant of their psychometric properties (e.g. reliability and validity)

    vii   a description of any deselection criteria and the procedures by which unsuitable participants are removed from the programme

3.   Targeting a Range of Dynamic Risk Factors

A range of dynamic risk factors known to be associated with re-offending must be addressed in an integrated manner within the programme.

A number of offender characteristics have been shown to be linked to the risk of re-offending. Some of these are associated with offending in general, while others are more particular to specific offence types. Those characteristics that are historical in nature and hence impermeable to change, for instance the number or type of previous convictions, are referred to as static risk factors. Other characteristics associated with re-offending, however, are potentially subject to change, and are described as dynamic risk factors. Because modification to dynamic risk factors should be associated with a lessening of the risk of reoffending, they represent suitable targets for treatment. Examples of dynamic risk factors are listed in the table below.

To meet this criterion the application must:

    i   list the dynamic risk factors targeted by the programme and how they complementeach other (in cases where only a narrow range of dynamic risk

factors are targeted, it must be shown that this will be adequate to reduce the risk of re-offending in those taking part in the programme)

    ii   demonstrate how these risk factors are either directly or indirectly related to the type of offending addressed by the programme (the dynamic risk factors listed in the table below are accepted for accreditation purposes without the need to produce supporting evidence)

   iii   provide evidence to show that these risk factors are likely to be present in those taking part in the programme

   iv   describe how these risk factors, and changes in them, are assessed and measured

    v   indicate in what ways the programme addresses each of the risk factors

   vi   where important risk factors are not targeted by the programme, indicate where else in the management of the offender these will be addressed

The dynamic risk factors listed below are acceptable for accreditation purposes and do not require evidence in support of them:

Generic Dynamic Risk Factors
- poor cognitive skills;   - anti-social attitudes and feelings, including sexist and racist attitudes;   - strong ties to and identification with anti-social/criminal models and impulsive anti-social lifestyle;   - weak social ties and identification with pro-social/non-criminal models;   - cognitive support for offending: distorted thinking used to justify offending;   - deficits in self-management, decision making and problem solving skills;   - difficulty in recognising personally relevant risk factors and in generating or enacting appropriate strategies to cope with them;   - poor pro-social interpersonal skills;   - dependency on alcohol and drugs;   - contingencies favouring criminal over pro-social behaviour;   - some adverse social or family circumstances;   - weak or fragile commitment to avoiding re-offending.

Additional Dynamic Risk Factors
Sex Offending Factors   - deviant sexual interest, offence related interests, especially arousal patterns, and excessive sexual preoccupation;   - empathy deficits: limited awareness of the victim's point of view, or an inappropriate reaction to victim distress;   - social support for sexual offending. This includes direct social support for sexual offending, as in a network;   - social support for sexual offence related ideas, for example, social messages supporting cognitive distortions, or family collusion, which may be a consequence of manipulation of family members by the offender; and the absence of social support for relapse prevention strategies.

4. Effective Methods

There must be evidence to show that the treatment methods used are likely to have an impact on the targeted dynamic risk factors.

The aim of treatment is to modify dynamic risk factors as well as other offender characteristics that make re-offending more likely. These may be targeted in a variety of ways, using a range of treatment methods. In practice, however, it is not always the case that treatment methods have their intended effects. Whatever methods are employed in the programme, therefore, must be supported by evidence of their efficacy – in other words, there must be proof that they work.

To meet this criterion the application must:

i   provide a clear description of the treatment methods used
ii   offer a theoretical justification for these treatment methods in respect of the dynamic risk factors identified in criterion 3
iii describe how methods will be adapted to take account of diverse backgrounds
iv   describe evidence that demonstrates the efficacy of the chosen treatment methods in relation to the type of offender targeted by the programme
v   show how the programme acts as a cohesive whole and, where different treatment methods are used, describe how these are integrated with each other

5. Skills Orientated

The programme must facilitate the learning of skills that will assist participants in avoiding criminal activities and facilitate their involvement in legitimate pursuits.

There is an increasing amount of evidence to show that the acquisition of skills by an offender is an important component in reducing his or her likelihood of re-offending. These skills may be related to literacy, numeracy, and employment, or to those associated with aspects of self-management, interpersonal functioning, problem solving, and other cognitive abilities. It is important to note, however, that learning a skill is not simply about being provided with new information, but also about being able to implement it, which requires practice.

To meet this criterion the application must:

i   define the skills that participants will have the opportunity to learn
ii   demonstrate that these skills are relevant to those participating in the programme, and that participants are likely to lack competence in them
iii provide a reasonable justification backed by evidence, if available, of how the acquisition of each of these skills is potentially associated with either a reduction in criminal activity or an increased ability to pursue legitimate activities
iv   specify the ways in which each skill is acquired (if not already described in Criterion 4)
v   describe any additional arrangements for fundamental skills acquisition, such as links with education or vocational training

6. Sequencing, Intensity and Duration

The amount of treatment provided must be linked to the needs of programme participants, with the introduction of different treatment components timed so that they complement each other.

For treatment to be most effective, the frequency and number of treatment sessions should be matched to the degree of treatment need typical for most participants in the programme. This will usually be dependent on participants' learning styles, their level of risk, and the extent to which the dynamic risk factors to be addressed in treatment are likely to be resistant to change: a short programme may be appropriate for low risk offenders, while those with greater need will require programmes of longer duration to ensure that there is adequate time in which to modify well established attitudes and behaviours. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the timing and pacing of different components of the programme to ensure that treatment gains are reinforced and maintained.

To meet this criterion the application must:

i   specify the overall length of the programme and demonstrate that the programme length will be sufficient to achieve sustained change

ii   show how intensity, duration and, where relevant, sequencing can be adapted to meet differing levels of risk, treatment needs and learning styles of participants

iii   describe the sequencing and length of different phases of the programme, and where there are gaps between phases indicate how long these last

iv   indicate whether homework is a requirement of the programme; if so, describe the nature of homework to be done by offenders between sessions

v   describe the action to be taken in relation to missed sessions or activities, insufficient progress, or the emergence of new areas of concern

vi   specify any pre-programme preparation and further work to be done once the programme has been completed

7. Engagement and Motivation

The programme must be structured to maximise the engagement of participants and to sustain their motivation throughout.

A programme is unlikely to be effective unless offenders both actively engage with it, and remain motivated throughout its course. The extent to which this occurs is dependent in part on the way in which the programme is delivered, the commitment staff show to it, and the degree to which participants are responsive to programme methods and content. A good indicator of engagement and motivation is the proportion of offenders who complete the programme, and reasons for non-completion must, therefore, be understood.

To meet this criterion the application must:

i   specify how motivation is assessed pre-programme, and describe any steps taken to enhance it

ii   describe the methods used to maintain motivation during the programme

iii   indicate the steps taken to ensure that needs associated with an offender's age, gender, ethnic background, learning style and personal life experiences (past and present) * are addressed.

iv   describe how pro-treatment attitudes are encouraged amongst managers, other staff, and associated professionals with whom the offender is in contact

In addition:

> v   evidence must be provided of attendance and completion rates, with an account given of the reasons for non-completion, which should include information obtained from participants themselves, e.g. from exit interviews.

* personal life experiences (past and present) –
This is intended to ensure that people's individuality is recognised and hence to improve responsivity. It is important to do more than recognise broad aspects of identity. One example would be to recognise the different experiences of young black people - what part of the country they live in, who their friends are, what background factors are important for them, what is the cultural context they live in now. It also includes family-related factors. For example, if someone has experienced/witnessed violence/sexual abuse in the family they may have developed strategies which, although dysfunctional in the present, were self-protective for them in surviving the abuse at the time. For example, they may have learned that telling the truth is dangerous.

In summary, this notion allows for, and positively encourages, fine-tuning of programme delivery whilst maintaining programme integrity.

8. Continuity of Programmes and Services

> There must be clear links between the programme and the overall management of the offender, both during a prison sentence and in the context of community supervision.

Programmes must be integrated with the offender's sentence and supervision plans to ensure that there is continuity between programmes, both within one service and between prison and the community, to effect a smooth transition and maintain progress. Issues related to public protection also require that provision be made for sharing of information between agencies so that offenders can be monitored appropriately.

To meet this criterion the application must:

> i   show how the programme is integrated into the overall plan of work for the offender, demonstrating how offenders' needs beyond the end of the programme will be addressed (for example, accommodation, community and family networks, links with other treatment providers)
>
> ii   contain guidelines that specify the roles of Case Managers in the Probation Service and Resettlement Managers in HM Prison Service, programme delivery staff, and managers
>
> iii   indicate how Case Managers/Resettlement Managers are informed about the aims and objects of the programme
>
> iv   specify the arrangements for liaison, handover and communication between programme staff and others involved in the management of the offender
>
> v   specify the arrangements for non-completers
>
> vi   indicate how issues relating to confidentiality and disclosure to other agencies are dealt with, especially in cases involving protection of children and vulnerable people
>
> vii   describe the enforcement policy in relation to programme attendance and enforcement of Orders or licence conditions

viii   provide details of pro forma summaries to be used at case reviews and programme completion (which should include recommendations for further treatment or supporting work where appropriate)

9. Maintaining Integrity

There must be provision to monitor how well the programme functions, and a system to modify aspects of it that do not perform as expected.

Unless a programme is monitored closely it may not run as intended, with the risk of undermining its efficacy. Systems therefore need to be in place to ensure that the integrity of the programme is maintained, and deviations from required standards corrected. Three specific aspects of programmes require particular attention: supporting conditions, programme integrity, and treatment integrity.

To meet this criterion the application must:

i   indicate how information obtained from monitoring is used to improve the operation of the programme

ii   include procedures for obtaining offender feedback, indicating how this is used to influence the further development of the programme

iii   indicate how access to the programme and outcomes are monitored in relation to diversity policies and potential discrimination, whether intentional or not

iv   describe the arrangements for audit

In addition, consideration must be given to the following areas:

A. Supporting conditions and programme integrity

i   specification of staff selection procedures

ii   describe staff training procedures, and indicate how competency in delivering treatment is assessed

iii   details of staff training (including training in relation to cultural awareness)

iv   description of staff support and supervision arrangements (including an account of how negative effects of the programme on staff are identified and managed)

v   information on procedures to ensure continuity of staff, reliable availability of staff and participants, and the delivery of sessions/activities when planned

vi   description of the resources and facilities available to the programme

vii   account of the management structure of the programme

B. Treatment integrity

i   details of the way in which treatment supervision takes place to ensure compliance with the programme manual and the competent use of any specific techniques

ii   account of methods to ensure proper use of participant inclusion and exclusion criteria

iii   description of how the treatment style of staff is monitored, including their sensitivity to the diversity and past and current life experiences of participants

iv   details of how circumstances or activities that might interfere with treatment are detected and managed

10. Ongoing evaluation

There must be provision to evaluate the efficacy of the programme.

Unless the programme is properly evaluated it is not possible to know whether or not it is effective, which in the long term means a reconviction study with relevant comparison data, as soon as reasonably feasible. As a decrease in recidivism is intended to be achieved through change in targeted dynamic risk factors, improvement in these risk factors is an important, and more immediate, measure of efficacy. Evaluation should demonstrate, therefore, that offenders who complete the programme change as intended.

To meet this criterion the application must describe the arrangements for evaluation, which should as a minimum include an assessment of:

- the demographic and clinical characteristics of participants and those not accepted onto the programme
- changes in the dynamic risk factors targeted by the programme
- reconviction rates
- relationship between records of attendance and whether offenders change as intended
- previous criminal history and reconviction

(ii)   Documentation Requirements for Accreditation

A full application must consist of the application itself, which must address each of the ten criteria listed above, and five supporting manuals.

The following are the required manuals:

The Theory Manual

This manual must describe the theoretical base for the programme and the model for change, and include:

- who the programme is for;

- what is to be achieved during each major phase of the programme;

- why the combination of objectives and methods is appropriate for the targeted offenders;

- how specific dynamic risk factors are addressed in sequence through the programme;

- how each method or group of methods can be expected to lead to the intended changes in cognitions, attitudes, skills and behaviour during the course of the programme;

- the role of complementary work expected to occur outside of the programme.

The Programme Manual

This manual must describe each session of the programme in sufficient detail to enable any well-trained professional to run the programme in the intended fashion.   There should be:

- specific aims and objectives for each session stated in terms of intended learning outcomes;

- sufficient well-produced and clear materials appropriate for use with the offenders attending;

- clear links between each session, the model of change, and the supporting research evidence;

- clear reference to relevant sections of theory: summarised elements from the Theory Manual should be reproduced as inserts contained within the Programme Manual.

The Assessment and Evaluation Manual

This should contain:

- all assessment and evaluation instruments used in the programme;

- guidance on their administration;

- an explanation of the practical uses of the various applications and contents.

The Management Manual

This should describe:

- the selection, training, supervision and performance appraisal of staff;

- how offenders are selected for the programme;

- the ways in which offenders are assessed before, during and after the programme;

- the minimum operating conditions required to enable the programme to run as intended;

- arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the programme, including the assurance of programme and treatment integrity, and audit;

- the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff.

The Staff Training Manual

This should be presented in a similar style to the Programme Manual. It should describe:

- detailed training courses, including curriculum and training materials, for all staff involved in the programme;

- how staff competence to run the programme will be assured;

- how competence will be assessed at the end of training on a pass/fail basis;

- how performance will be reviewed regularly.