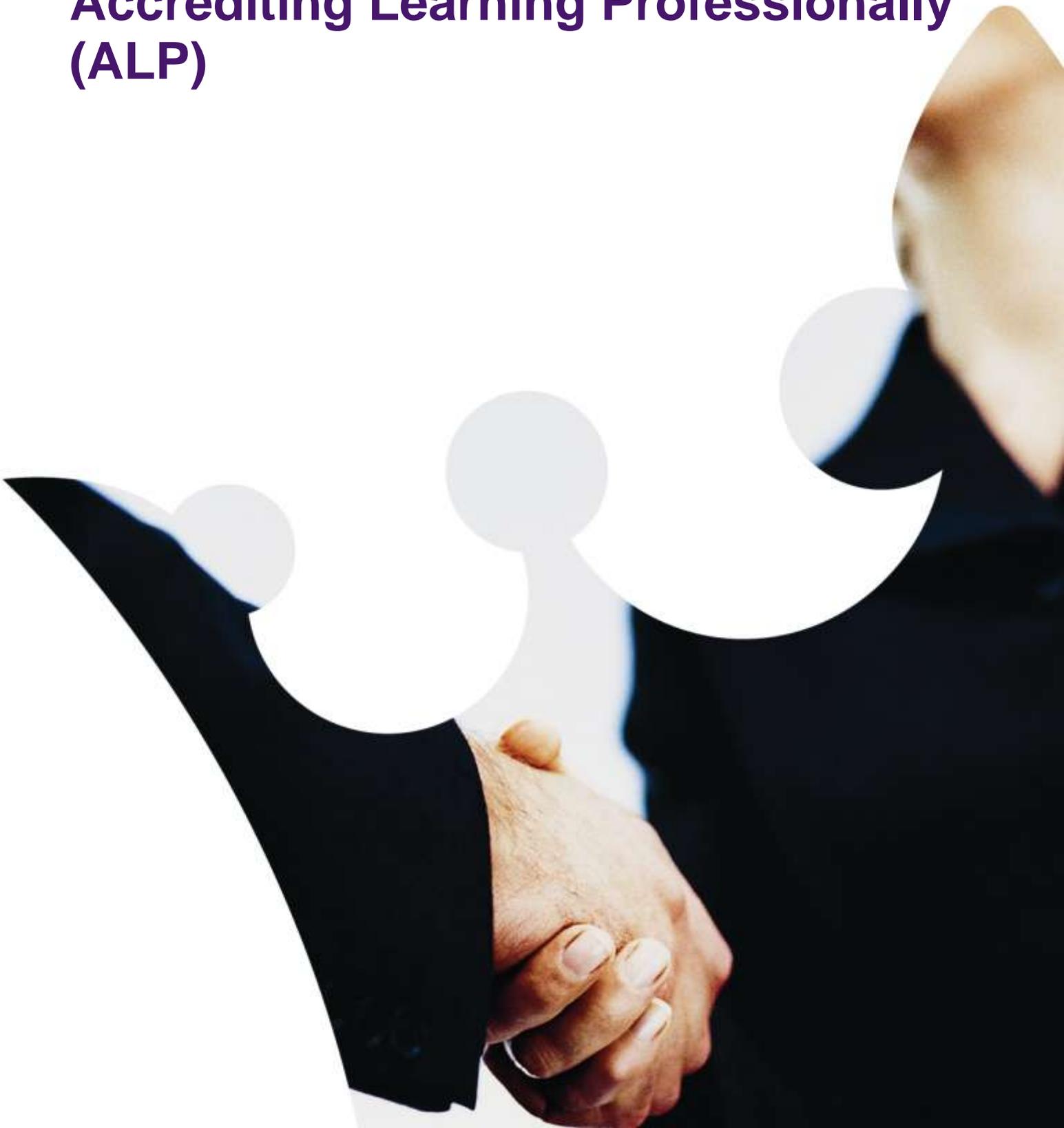


# Accrediting Learning Professionally (ALP)



# 1. Introduction

Many organisations devise high quality learning programmes that are specific to their own needs and are not part of the national and regulated Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). SFJ Awards provide a service to recognise, quality assure and certificate such learning programmes. This service is called *Accrediting Learning Professionally* (ALP).

SFJ Awards has designed and created ALP to:

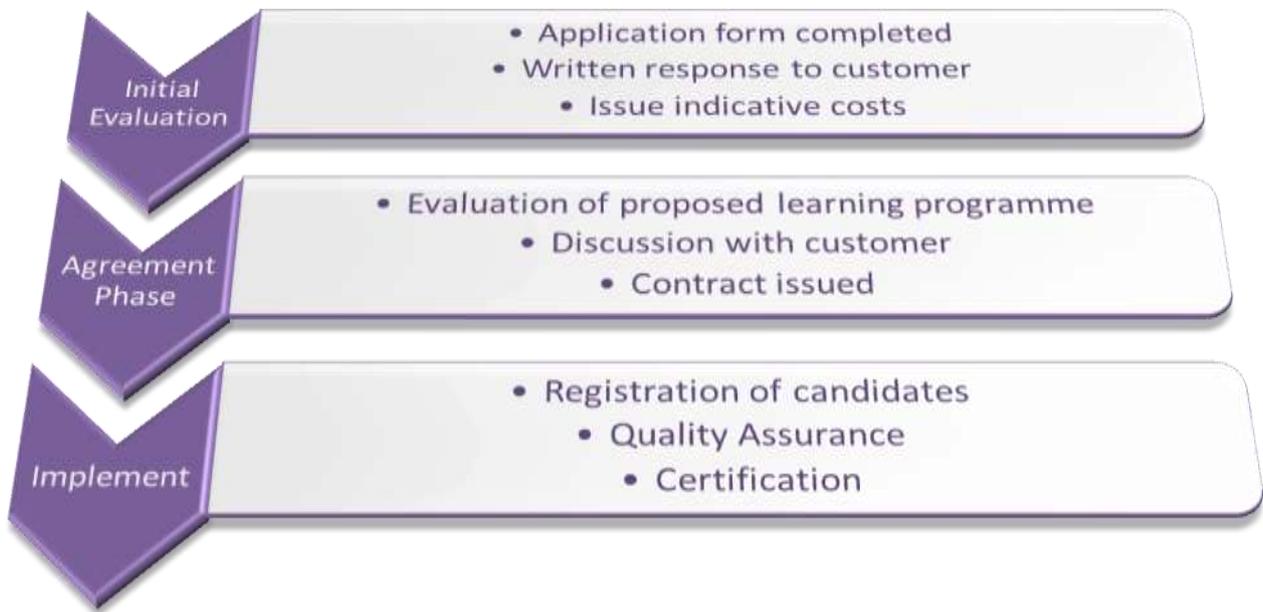
*Accredit an individual who has completed a structured learning programme and demonstrated achievement of the specified learning outcomes.*

The ALP approach has a number of important features and benefits for our customers. These can be summarised as follows:

- ALP provides a mechanism for accrediting learning programmes which would not otherwise be recognised in this way
- ALP enables learning programmes to be created and recognised that are tailored to the needs of an organisation or group
- ALP enables the accreditation of specialist and short programmes for which there may be no other form of recognition available
- ALP supports organisations and groups to develop accredited learning programmes to meet local needs
- ALP provides greater flexibility for organisations or groups to define the components of learning
- ALP provides greater flexibility for assessment than existing regulated schemes
- ALP includes Quality Assurance to ensure consistency, fairness and robustness in the assessment process
- ALP provides confidence that learners have met the defined learning outcomes for a learning programme

Through working with SFJ Awards, organisations can develop and implement learning programmes that adhere to a recognised Quality Assurance process. The advantage of this approach is that it provides independent verification and certification for the learning programme. Employers, stakeholders and service users will be able to recognise that an independent approach is being taken to develop the knowledge, skills and competence of staff who are ultimately serving the public and the wider community.

## 2 How it works



The first step is for organisations/groups to approach SFJ Awards with a request for ALP. SFJ Awards will provide a form to be completed by the applicant(s) (see Annex Two). The completed form will enable SFJ Awards to evaluate the potential and suitability of an ALP based programme. The form asks for information on matters relating to:

- The proposed name and aim of the programme
- The target audience for the programme
- The number of learners and how long it will take them to complete the programme
- The intended content of the programme and how it will be assessed
- The availability of similar programmes or qualifications

The form should be completed as fully as possible and returned to SFJ Awards. It may be necessary for SFJ Awards to request further information from the applicant(s) prior to making a decision whether to proceed with ALP recognition. It should be noted that SFJ Awards will require a supporting rationale for any programmes that appear to duplicate existing regulated qualifications.

If SFJ Awards do not support the proposal, or there are reasons why SFJ Awards cannot be involved, an explanation will also be provided to the customer. This will be done in a constructive manner to support the customer to move forward with the learning programme.

If SFJ Awards are able to support the proposal, the next stage will be to move into the agreement phase of the process. This phase will involve a closer evaluation of the proposed learning programme to check that it contains the necessary components for Quality Assurance (see ALP content below). It will also involve discussion and communications between SFJ Awards and the customer to set up and issue the necessary contractual agreements.

SFJ Awards do not require a specific approach for an ALP learning programme. This is because the ALP approach is flexible to customer needs and also acknowledges the expertise and preferences that are present at a local level. However, there are a number of components that SFJ Awards would need to see included as part of the programme. These are described in the next section.

## **ALP Content**

SFJ Awards do not prescribe the content of an ALP programme, or issue a template for the creation of course content. However, in order for the Quality Assurance of the programme to work effectively it will be necessary for an approved programme to include the following components:

- A clear and unambiguous title for the programme
- A clear introduction of the aims, objectives and content of the programme
- Assessable and clearly defined learning outcomes that cover the entire content of the programme
- Valid and reliable assessment methods
- The resources required for the completion of the programme
- The way in which learners will complete the programme
- Any links to professional standards (e.g. NOS) where applicable
- An indicative levelling of the learning programme based on the publicly available QCF level descriptors<sup>1</sup>

These items constitute good practice in the formulation of learning programmes and will support applicants to develop the content necessary for effective delivery. Further guidance is provided on these components in Annex One. In addition, there may be other components that applicants wish to include based on their own needs and this is perfectly acceptable. It should be noted that there is no requirement for learning programmes to be structured in a modular way (e.g. as training modules), though this approach is also acceptable to SFJ Awards.

Where applicants have already developed learning programmes there may need to be some re-writing of the content to include the above components. Alternatively, applicants may be developing learning programmes from scratch and these would need to include the above components. SFJ Awards can provide a consultancy service to support or lead

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<sup>1</sup> This is simply a mapping to the QCF level descriptors and gives an indication of the level at which the ALP scheme has been set. The mapping will provide those involved in the delivery of the learning programme, as well as learners, with an understanding of where the learning programme fits into the wider QCF.

the development of an ALP scheme if this is requested. This is a separately provided service and not part of the overall costs that are specified below.

## **Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance of ALP will be the same as for regulated qualifications. Therefore, during implementation, existing Centres would be expected to apply the same Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) procedures to the delivery of ALP as those that are applied to regulated qualifications. These requirements are as laid out in SFJ Awards documentation for Approved Centres.

Where applications for ALP recognition come from organisations and/or groups who are not currently an approved Centre (or linked to a suitably approved Centre) these organisations/groups will need to apply for Centre approval. Alternatively they may be able to align themselves and work with an existing approved Centre. This is because one of the founding principles of the ALP approach is to ensure that assessment is consistent, fair and robust through the use of established Quality Assurance approaches.

## **Development and Accreditation Costs**

Applicants for ALP will need to consider both the development and accreditation costs associated with the programme. Development costs will normally relate to in-house development of the product and will depend on the nature of the programme.

As discussed, SFJ Awards can also provide services to support the development of ALP where this is requested. Such services may cover one or more of the following:

- A needs analysis – looking at current provision and the best way forward to meet the identified need
- Programme content – developing the ALP provision in line with current good practice to support effective delivery and assessment
- Assessment design – developing suitable assessment methodologies and criteria to establish learner progress
- Assessment Centre support – developing and supporting suitable approaches to IQA

The cost of such services would be separately agreed with the customer based on their needs. Please note that this is not a mandatory cost or requirement of the ALP programme but is intended to support those customers who require such a service. SFJ Awards appreciate that many customers will wish to develop their own learning programmes to include the require ALP components.

Accreditation costs will vary based on the nature and extent of the programme. The accreditation costs are mandatory for implementation of the ALP service. A typical programme of average size and complexity with a minimum of 20 candidates per annum would be charged as follows:

- Up to 4 programmes - £30 per learner certificate plus £750 annual license fee
- Between 5 and 6 programmes - £30 per learner certificate plus £1050 annual license fee
- Between 7 and 8 programmes - £30 per learner certificate plus £1320 annual license fee
- 9+ programmes - £30 per learner certificate plus £1500 annual license fee

These figures are intended as an indication of likely costs, and the actual costs of individual programmes will need to be discussed and agreed prior to the issue of contracts.

SFJ Awards will generally invoice for the provision of this service at the start of the ALP scheme based on the anticipated numbers of candidates. No refund will be given in the event of candidates not completing the ALP scheme or where the ALP scheme is not progressed following the signing of contracts. This means all stakeholders must be committed to the success of the ALP programme and the benefits that it will bring to the organisation or group.

### **Implementation of ALP**

SFJ Awards will issue a contract with the organisation delivering the ALP scheme outlining the timetable, costs and invoicing arrangements. All parties will need to sign the contracts and retain copies for their own records.

Following the issue of contracts, candidates for the ALP scheme must be registered with SFJ Awards. SFJ Awards will require the following information:

- Course title
- Course provider
- Candidate names
- Start and end dates for the ALP scheme
- Approved centre name

This information will be retained in a secure database until the end of ALP scheme when the customer will provide SFJ Awards with the names of the successful candidates. SFJ Awards will then issue high quality certificates of recognition for each successful candidate and return these to the customer for distribution to successful candidates.

During the implementation phase EQA visits to the approved centres will also include quality assurance of the ALP scheme. These will be as part of the normal process of EQA applied to all SFJ Awards approved centres.

**Annex One**  
**Required Components of an ALP Scheme**

COMPONENTS	CRITERIA	GUIDANCE
Programme title	The programme must have a clear and unambiguous title including the occupational area and the target learner	Learners and employers need to be clear on what the programme is about. The title should reflect the content, the occupational area it relates to, and the target learner.
Introduction to the programme	<p>The introduction to the programme must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the overall aims and objectives of the programme</li> <li>• the overall content of the programme</li> <li>• the resources required - who can deliver the programme, resources the Learner will need and the time required for learning, including tutor input and private study</li> </ul>	<p>There must be a clear distinction between overall aims and objectives.</p> <p>The learner and the trainer(s) must be clear on what the course has to achieve overall. Therefore objectives must be specific in terms of what the learner will be able to do upon completion of the course.</p>
Assessment	<p>Assessment must be fit for purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The programme content must include clear assessable learning outcomes</li> <li>• Valid and reliable assessment methods must be used to assess the learning outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>Learning programmes are usually broken down into modules or session plans. Learning outcomes must be assessable by using assessment methods that are reliable (would produce the same result every time in a given situation) and valid (the extent to which evidence and theory support the interpretation that the assessment outcomes meet their intended uses).</p>
Internal Quality Assurance	The assessment outcomes must be subject to internal quality assurance	<p>The assessment methods and outcomes must be subject to the Centres' own internal quality assurance processes to ensure that assessments have been conducted in accordance with the agreed assessment methods and procedures, and the assessors decision is ratified by a person who has the appropriate skills and experience.</p>

COMPONENTS	CRITERIA	GUIDANCE
Indicative QCF Level	The ALP scheme must be mapped to the QCF level descriptors	This is simply a mapping to the QCF level descriptors and gives an indication of the level at which the ALP scheme is pitched. The mapping will provide those involved in the delivery of the learning programme, as well as learners, with an understanding of where the learning programme fits into wider regulated qualifications.
Centre Approval	Centres offering the ALP scheme must be approved by SFJ Awards	Quality assurance of ALP is the same as for regulated qualifications. Therefore, during implementation, existing Centres would be expected to apply the same IQA procedures to the delivery of ALP as those that are applied to regulated qualifications. Where applications for ALP recognition come from organisations and/or groups who are not currently an approved Centre (or linked to a suitably approved Centre) these organisations/groups will need to apply for Centre approval. Alternatively they may be able to align themselves, and work, with an existing approved Centre.

**Annex Two  
Application for ALP Scheme**

APPLICATION FOR ALP	
CONTACT DETAILS	
Name:	Date of application:
Organisation:	Telephone:
Address:	E-mail:
	Mobile:
	Website:

EVALUATION	
1. What is the name of the programme?	
2. What is the aim of the programme?	
3. Why is the programme needed?	
4. Are there similar programmes/qualifications available?	Yes
	No
	If yes, why are these not relevant?
5. Who are the target audience for the programme?	
6. How many learners do you expect to take this programme over a three year period?	Year One
	Year Two
	Year Three
7. What is the intended content of the programme?	
8. How long will the programme take learners to complete?	
9. How will the learners be assessed?	
<p>Additional information:</p> <p>Please use this section to provide any additional information that you feel is relevant to your application for ALP.</p>	

THANK YOU
<p>Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.</p> <p>Please attach it to your online application, or if you are an existing Approved Centre email to <a href="mailto:info@sfjawards.com">info@sfjawards.com</a> and we'll let you know when we've received it, and provide a timetable within which we will get back to you with the next stages.</p> <p>We may need to ask for some additional information in relation to your application.</p>