

Manual for
Accredited Provider of
Voluntary Continuing Professional Development Scheme
for Licensed Plumbers

Water Supplies Department

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To update the knowledge and professionalism of the licensed plumbers, the Advisory Board on the Licensing of Plumbers (ABLP) develops a Voluntary Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Scheme for Licensed Plumbers (the Scheme). The Scheme was launched in October 2016.
- 1.2 The terms of reference of CPD Course Panel (the Panel) are to:-
 - advise the government and ABLP on matters relating to the continuing professional education for the licensed plumbers;
 - establish and review the policies, requirements and guidelines on CPD activities; and
 - administer the related accreditation matters such as assessing application, approving or withdrawing accreditation, auditing and monitoring.
- 1.3 Accreditation of CPD programme providers is important to the Scheme to ensure that the programme provided are up to standard so that the target of life-long learning and professionalism enhancement can be achieved.
- 1.4 This manual provides an overview of the CPD programme provider accreditation system, accreditation criteria for selection of Accredited CPD Programme Providers (Accredited Providers), policies/procedures governing the operation of Accredited Providers, auditing of CPD activities. All these are aimed at upholding the standard of training provided, and improving the quality of CPD scheme continuously.

2 OVERVIEW OF THE ACCREDITATION SYSTEM

- 2.1 CPD activities shall mainly be organized by the Accredited Providers. Providers must seek accreditation from the Panel before their CPD programmes/activities will be recognized.
- 2.2 Any independent organisation interested in being the Accredited Providers may seek accreditation from the Panel.
- 2.3 Accreditation is for a three-year period. Accredited organizations wishing to continue their accredited status must submit a renewal application three months before the end of each accreditation period. The procedure for application for renewal of their accreditation status should follow Section 6 described below.

- 2.4 At the discretion of the Panel, the Panel may appoint his representatives to visit the applicant to make an accurate, first-hand assessment of the information given in the applicant's supporting documents.
- 2.5 The Panel will decide whether to grant accreditation status or formulate recommendations to the applicant for improving the CPD programmes or activities as appropriate. The applicant will then be notified of the application result or recommendations, if any, and the effective period for successful accreditation status.
- 2.6 For any party who is not an Accredited Provider but interested in holding an one-off CPD activity, it can apply for accreditation of the one-off CPD activity as Accredited Activity through the Panel on case-by-case basis. In the application, the applicant should demonstrate the proposed one-off activity can fulfil the CPD objectives. The presenter(s)/speaker(s) should be a licensed plumber or a corporate member of professional institution and shall demonstrate he acquires experience in the topic he is going to deliver. The application can be made at any time throughout the year. Usually two-month time shall be allowed for processing the above accreditation and the successful applicant will be notified within one month after the decision is made by the Panel. The applicant shall therefore submit the application form (please refer to **Appendix 3** of the **Scheme Manual of Voluntary Continuing Professional Development for Licensed Plumbers**) together with the necessary information, including teaching materials, the resume of the presenter(s)/speaker(s) and propose the CPD credits to be granted for Panel's approval at least 2 months before organizing such activity. Upon completion of the CPD activity, the provider of Accredited Activity shall also submit the record to the secretary of the Panel within one month as specified in Appendix III.

3 CRITERIA OF ACCREDITATION

- 3.1 Any independent organisation may seek accreditation as an Accredited Provider. Joint organisation is not eligible for being an Accredited Provider.
- 3.2 Only an organisation with experience in running training course or programmes/activities recognised by WSD related to plumbing for **more than** 15 hours of the past 12 months before application is eligible to apply for Accredited Provider status.
- 3.3 Applicant should make submission for accreditation according to section 5 of this manual.

- 3.4 An organisation seeking accreditation must establish and affirm its eligibility as a provider, and provides supporting documents upon request. Roles of staff involved in developing, managing and reviewing of the CPD programme should be clearly defined.
- 3.5 The organization must appoint a person-in-charge for communicating with the Panel. The person-in-charge should preferably be a licensed plumber or an educator/trainer with at least 1 year of relevant experience in education/training for the plumbing trade.
- 3.6 There should be a CPD programme planner/chairperson, preferably a licensed plumber or an educator/trainer in the profession, responsible for the planning process of the CPD programmes/activities. The programme planner/chairperson should have at least 1 year of relevant experience in programmes/activities planning.

4 GENERAL OPERATION

4.1 CPD Programme Planning

- 4.1.1 There should be a CPD programme planner/chairperson responsible for the planning process of the CPD activities. CPD programme planner /chairperson must ensure that suitable and capable presenter(s)/speaker(s) are selected for the CPD programme/activities. Presenter(s)/Speaker(s) must have knowledge of and expertise in the contents area and he should be a licensed plumber or a corporate member of professional institution and shall demonstrate he acquires experience in the topic he is going to deliver.
- 4.1.2 CPD activities can be in form of course, workshop, seminar, visit or via e-learning platform etc.
- 4.1.3 CPD programme planner/chairperson shall ensure as far as possible that training methodology is compatible with the programme objectives and appropriate to the learners' capabilities and learning needs.
- 4.1.4 To facilitate the administration of CPD programmes, each programme should be assigned with a specific and unique CPD code. Accredited Providers should follow the coding system to ensure the consistency and integrity of the coding system. Detail of the CPD programme/activity coding system is shown in Appendix I.

4.2 Record for CPD Programme

- 4.2.1 Accredited Providers shall keep proper record for each CPD activities during the accredited period and ensure the record is easily accessible for the Panel's reference. Such record would be used for auditing purpose by the Panel.
- 4.2.2 When planning CPD activity, the objectives and expected outcome of each of the CPD activity should be clearly identified and recorded. Contents and time allocated for each CPD activity should be tuned so as to allow the participants to achieve the expected outcome.

4.3 Assigning of CPD Credits

- 4.3.1 Accredited Providers are also responsible for assigning credits to their activities. Detail of the CPD credit allocation criteria is shown in **Appendix II**.

4.4 Verification of Participation and Successful Completion

- 4.4.1 For each CPD activity, Accredited Providers are responsible for verifying and checking the participants' identity as shown in their plumber licences.
- 4.4.2 On the other hand, Accredited Providers shall ensure that only the learners' personal and training records are properly kept.
- 4.4.3 Accredited Providers must award certificates or written statements verifying an individual's participation and successful completion of each CPD activity.
- 4.4.4 Accredited Providers shall use the following terminology for the certificates or written statements:

This activity for _____ (Number) _____ CPD credit(s) is provided by (Name and code of the Accredited Provider) _____. This CPD programme provider is accredited by the CPD Course Panel under Advisory Board on Licensing of Plumbers.

- 4.4.5 Providers of Accredited Activity shall use the following terminology for the certificates or written statements:

This activity for _____ (Number) _____ CPD credit(s) provided under (Name and code of the Accredited Activity) _____, is accredited by the CPD Course Panel under Advisory Board on Licensing of Plumbers.

4.5 Information to be Submitted for each CPD Activity

- 4.5.1 The Accredited Providers should submit their planned activities, including the activity name, commencement date, activity duration, total credits and the application method, to the secretary of the Panel quarterly and to update the secretary of the Panel within one week on any changes to the planned activities.
- 4.5.2 Accredited Providers must submit the preliminary information of each CPD activity including activity name, commencement date, total credits and code should be submitted to the secretary of the Panel for prior vetting at least one week before the commencement of activity to prevent incorrect information printed on attendance certificates. Detailed information (**Appendix III**) must be submitted to the secretary of the Panel within 1 month after each CPD activity (or supplement as requested by the Panel), to assist the Panel in evaluating and monitoring the standards of their CPD activities and programmes. Besides, the information would be used for verifying the CPD records submitted by licensed plumbers.
- 4.5.3 If the CPD records submitted directly from licensed plumbers are not found in the submitted Accredited Provider's records, the relevant CPD credits claimed by the licensed plumber may not be accepted in general.

4.6 Programme Evaluation

- 4.6.1 Accredited Providers shall conduct self-evaluation for each CPD programme/activity after each activity. When conducting evaluation, programme planning team and teaching staff should be involved as far as possible. The following items should cover the evaluation:-
- Learners' achievement in each objective of the CPD programme
 - Expertise of presenter(s)/speaker(s) in teaching and conducting the programme
 - The knowledge and professional experience/skills of presenter(s)/speaker(s) are up-to-date
 - Appropriateness of the teaching method and facilities
- 4.6.2 Accredited Providers should then review the breadth and depth of the coverage, and improve the subsequent training arrangements.

4.7 Accredited Providers Cannot Accredite Activities

- 4.7.1 Accredited Providers cannot delegate their accredited status to another organisation to organise accredited CPD activities. One-off CPD activities delivered by other parties shall be applied for accreditation by the Panel on case-by-case basis.

4.8 Co-organized Activities

- 4.8.1 An Accredited Provider may co-organize activities with other non-accredited providers.
- 4.8.2 The co-organized activity (for which CPD credits will be assigned by the Accredited Provider) must be planned and implemented with the direct involvement of the Accredited Provider in all stages of the activity – from initial planning through implementation to evaluation. Sub-letting or outsourcing the activity to another party is not allowed.

4.9 Organisational Change

- 4.9.1 It is the responsibility of the Accredited Providers to inform the Panel of any personnel change in its organization such as change of CPD programme planner that might impact its competency to continue meeting the relevant accreditation status. Accredited Providers shall inform the changes in writing as soon as possible for CPD Course Panel's review and decision.
- 4.9.2 The Panel may appoint representatives to conduct visits to the organisations to verify, clarify and audit the current abilities of the organisations to implement the Panel's accreditation requirements.
- 4.9.3 The Panel might withdraw the accreditation if the Panel thinks that the changes would affect the organisation's ability to continue to be an Accredited Provider. In such case, the Panel shall not be liable for any claim for damages or loss suffered by the Accredited Provider or any other party arising therefrom.

4.10 Audit of CPD Activities

- 4.10.1 In order to assure the quality of the CPD activities, the Panel will appoint representatives to conduct audit of the CPD activities provided by Accredited Provider and one-off CPD activities without advance notification. The Panel will randomly select 5% of the Accredited Providers and course provider for one-off CPD activity each year and delegate representatives to audit them on

site at any time. In such case, Accredited Provider shall facilitate the audit and provide the complete set of documents or records, including the attendance list with name, signature, and LP number if applicable of participants or any necessary information as required by the auditors as far as possible. Sample of audit check list is enclosed in **Appendix V**.

- 4.10.2 The Panel may require the Accredited Provider to rectify any deficiencies identified during the audits and request them to submit remedial proposal to the Panel for approval. The Accredited Provider shall then make necessary rectification, or the Panel might not recognize the CPD credit for those CPD activities. If there is repeated deficiency being identified on any items on the Audit Checklist during the audit, the Panel will issue a warning letter to the Accredited Provider. The Panel has the right to withdraw the accreditation status of the Accredited Provider if the Panel discovers any fraudulent information reported by the Accredited Provider or the Accredited Provider received three warning letters. The Accredited Provider shall inform the affected attendees in writing with a copy send to the Panel.
- 4.10.3 The Accredited Provider(s) who have been audited can be exempted from audits within the next two years.

5 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 5.1 Applicant shall review section 3 of this manual to determine whether the organization is eligible for accreditation and whether the required documentation or evidence of your compliance that you will need to provide is available.
- 5.2 Applicant shall review section 4 of this manual to ensure the operation complied with as an Accredited Provider.
- 5.3 The application form for accreditation as an Accredited Provider includes the following parts at **Appendix IV**:-

- Part I – Fact Sheet
- Part II – Report Summary Sheet on Training Programme or CPD Programme/Activities

The applicant shall submit the application form (**Appendix IV**), together with the necessary supporting document, including the resume of the person-in-charge and CPD programme developer/chairperson for Panel's approval.

- 5.4 Applicant may download the forms in WSD's webpage.
- 5.5 Applicant should make use of Part II – Report Summary Sheet for reporting the training course or CPD programme/activities organized within 12 months preceding application.
- 5.6 Applications as an Accredited Provider will be processed throughout the year.
- 5.7 Throughout the accreditation application process, the applicant is required to respond to any questions / concerns raised by the Panel and provides evidence to support its responses.
- 5.8 The Panel may decide to reject the application if the Panel thinks, upon an initial examination of the accreditation document, that the information provided is inadequate and/or the state of readiness of the applicant is such that it is unlikely that the Panel will be able to conduct a meaningful accreditation exercise.
- 5.9 It may take usually two months for the application process. Successful applicant will be notified within one month after the decision is made by the Panel.

6 CRITERIA OF ACCREDITATION RENEWAL

- 6.1 Accredited Provider applying for renewal of accreditation status is required to submit a renewal application at least 3 months before the end of each accreditation period.
- 6.2 Accredited Provider which apply for renewal of accreditation status must demonstrate records in running training course or programme/activities recognised by WSD related to plumbing for more than 45 hours of past 3 years.
- 6.3 An organisation seeking renewal of accreditation is required to fulfil criteria list out in Section 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.
- 6.4 Accredited Provider should make submission for renewal of accreditation according to Section 5 of this manual.