

## **Resolution Specialist Accreditation Scheme**

### **Question Setters, Assessors and Scheme Associate Assessors**

#### **Roles & Responsibilities**

##### **Terms of Reference**

The Specialist Accreditation Scheme was established by Resolution to provide member (and affiliate) practitioners with the opportunity to achieve a high level of professional recognition for their knowledge, skills and experience. It provides those who are accredited with a 'badge of excellence' whether with the general public or amongst their peers as a mark of the quality and status of their practice.

Resolution's Specialist Accreditation Committee has responsibility for the oversight, management and regular review of the Specialist Accreditation Scheme and for decision-making in relation to candidate requests or appeals and may also refer matters to the National Committee of Resolution or to the Head of Standards or staff team as appropriate or when required.

Specialist Accreditation is achieved by robust examination and assessment of those who apply in relation to both their Core knowledge and skills, and specialist areas of practice. Candidates are tested on their knowledge, skills and their ability to apply that knowledge and those skills in their everyday practice. Uniquely, they are also assessed on their ability to apply the Resolution Code of Practice. Those who are appointed by Resolution to act as questions setters, assessors or Associate Assessors must therefore be practitioners of the highest quality and specialism in practice.

Resolution's continuing aim is to ensure that the Specialist Accreditation Scheme remains robust, is of a high standard and reflects the very best of practice required of its members and affiliates who achieve specialist accredited status.

##### **Role & Responsibilities - Question Setters, Assessors and Scheme Associate Assessors**

Resolution's Specialist Accreditation Scheme Question Setters and Assessors are a valued and essential part of the Specialist Accreditation Scheme. Appointed members may act as Question Setters, as Question Setters and Assessors (usually those who deal with the Specialist Portfolio section of the scheme or as Assessors (usually appointed to assess the Core Section candidates). In consultation with the Specialist Accreditation Committee and Head of Standards, they are responsible for setting and maintaining the high quality standards of practice of those members who apply for, achieve and maintain their specialist accreditation.

##### **Setters/Question Setters and Assessors**

Question Setters and/or Assessors are responsible for the drafting of case studies and questions (Question Setters) and the proper assessment (Assessors) of candidate papers for Specialist Accreditation and Reaccreditation. They:

- Maintain their current membership of Resolution and their own professional standard of specialised practice in the subject area in which they provide an assessment of candidate papers
- Adhere to the Resolution Code of Practice
- Are alert to, and aware of, changes in relation to any relevant legislation or in terms of professional practice
- Adhere to Resolution's Code of Practice generally and to Resolution's policies in relation to Cheating, Collusion and Plagiarism, Whistleblowing and in relation to Complaints
- Maintain professional standards in acting confidentially, impartially and fairly in any work that they carry out as an Assessor to the Specialist Accreditation Scheme
- Draft (within the deadline set by Resolution) an appropriate Case Study and four accompanying questions that utilises the competencies for the specialist area of practice for which the Setter/ Assessor has responsibility. Setter/Assessors are required to draft Case Study and questions for each Specialist Accreditation Round (generally twice per year, currently once per year for the financial adviser part of the scheme)
- Assess/mark candidate papers to the level of assessment set by Resolution, ensuring that returns are made to Resolution within any deadline set
- Work with a Resolution Assessor or Associate Assessor in order to ensure that draft case study/questions (and any failed or borderline papers) are reviewed ahead of further appraisal by either the Head of Standards (case study/questions) or by the independent moderator to the scheme (failed and borderline papers)
- Work with a Resolution Associate Assessor to review the competencies as set (not less than annually but in any event to ensure that changes in law and practice are reflected in the competencies) and to ensure that any suggested amendments or updates are provided to Resolution's Head of Standards

### **Scheme Associate and Reserve Assessors**

Associate and Reserve Assessors provide support to Question setters and Assessors as an experienced practitioner and as a 'critical friend'. They:

- Maintain their current membership of Resolution and their own professional standard of specialised practice in the subject area in which they provide support to a question setter
- Adhere to the Resolution Code of Practice
- Are alert to, and aware of, changes in relation to any relevant legislation or in terms of professional practice
- Adhere to Resolution's Code of Practice and Resolution's policies in relation to Cheating, Collusion and Plagiarism, Whistleblowing and in relation to Complaints
- Maintain professional standards in acting confidentially, impartially and fairly in any work that they carry out as an Associate or Reserve Assessor to the Specialist Accreditation Scheme
- Work with their colleague setter/assessor to review any Case Study and questions that are set by the setter/assessor are reviewed critically and constructively, or in the case of a Reserve Assessor, provide such assessment duties as required by Resolution.

- Both Associates and Reserves provide a second assessment of candidate papers as and when required and to the level of assessment set by Resolution and ahead of further appraisal by the independent moderator to the scheme.
- If an Associate Assessor, work with their colleagues setter/assessor to review the competencies as set (not less than annually but in any event to ensure that changes in law and practice are reflected in the competencies) and to ensure that any suggested amendments or updates are provided to Resolution's Head of Standards

### **Specialist Accreditation Committee Members, Question Setters and Assessors – Individual Specialist Accreditation status**

Resolution has agreed the following arrangements for members of the Specialist Accreditation Committee, Question Setters and Assessors in relation to their own accredited status:

- Question Setters and Assessors, who hold specialist accreditation will not be required to reaccredit for the period of their appointment as a question setter or assessor. On stepping down or retiring from their role as a question setter or assessor they will be required to reaccredit as required, that is three years from the date of their departure from the scheme as a question setter, assessor or buddy.
- In the case of a new question setter who is appointed following the introduction of a new portfolio subject and for which they have taken responsibility for drafting or approving the portfolio, they will be deemed to have successfully completed that specialist portfolio subject and will be subject to the same arrangements for reaccreditation as set out for question setters, assessors and Associate Assessors above.
- The arrangements referred to above will also apply to all Specialist Accreditation Committee members. At the end of their appointment or when they step down or retire from the Committee, they will be expected to reaccredit as required that is, three years from the date of their departure from the Committee
- Resolution reserves the right to change these arrangements from time to time and as required.

### **General responsibilities of Question Setters, Assessors and Associate and Reserve Assessors**

All Question Setters, Assessors, Associate and Reserve Assessors are required to adhere to the Resolution Code of Practice.

All Question Setters, Assessors, Associate and Reserve Assessors are required to notify the Head of Standards of any change to their professional status or standing that would affect their continuing role with the organisation. They should also notify the Head of Standards if they leave or retire from practice or their specialist area of work or will be taking an extended leave from continuing practice. In the case of academic team members, this would apply to their academic appointment rather than 'practice'.

If a question setter or assessor discovers they have any connection or relationship with a candidate that may cause, or be construed as, a conflict of interest or is likely to lead to a biased or partial outcome, they should immediately notify the Head of Standards.

Question setters and assessors are required to return draft questions and assessed candidate papers within the timetable set by Resolution for each accreditation round, within the timescale set for assessment of candidates for reaccreditation.

Assessors are required to make assessment of candidate papers using the scheme set by Resolution. They are also required, in the case of borderline and failed candidates in particular to record clearly the competencies that have not been met by the candidate and any other reason that has led to a borderline or failed outcome.

Assessors will be required to provide a clear indication to failed candidates as to the reasons for their failure to reach the required standard. In the first instance this will be by indicating which of the competencies relevant to the set questions have not been demonstrated or met by the candidate. Assessors may provide any further feedback they believe would be professionally helpful or useful. From time to time, Resolution may request further feedback for individual candidates and will require assessors in any event to ensure that any feedback is provided within a set timescale. All assessors are asked to bear in mind that candidates will have spent a great deal of their time preparing for specialist accreditation and have therefore made a professional commitment to achieve specialist accreditation. Feedback should therefore be balanced, constructive and professional.

### **Recruitment and term of appointment**

Recruitment for Question setters, Assessors and Reserve Assessors is by an open process. Appointments are usually for three years and members may be re-appointed for a second period of three years, after which their further appointment will be reviewed by the Specialist Accreditation Committee.

Question setters and Assessors are free to select or invite suitably qualified and experienced colleagues to work as an Associate Assessor with them and any Associate Assessor is free to apply to be a Question Setter or Assessor as vacancies become available.

Reserve Assessors are recruited via an open process and are also free to apply to be a Question Setter or Assessor as vacancies become available.

### **Resolution's responsibilities to Question Setters, Assessors, Associate and Reserve Assessors**

Resolution provides support to its team of Question Setters, Assessors, Associate and Reserve Assessors as follows:

- Ensuring prompt fee payment for work completed by team members at a rate set out by the organisation and which is subject to regular review
- Ensuring that team members are given reasonable notice of forthcoming Accreditation Rounds and a timetable for submission of draft questions or returning assessed papers
- Providing an annual opportunity for the team to meet together to discuss issues relating to Specialist Accreditation and relevant changes in practice, qualification requirements and family law legislation

- Providing the means by which members can keep in touch with one another and have access to resources, such as past papers and so on.
- Providing administrative support, i.e. providing information in respect of timetables, and so forth, formatting questions, dispatch of candidate papers to assessors.
- Providing access to the Head of Standards or a member of staff who can assist with queries or concerns and provide support as needed and in the event of a candidate appeal or complaint
- (Please note, that Resolution's published policies and procedures will be followed in the case of any complaint made against an question setter/assessor or associate assessor)

### **Person Specification**

All Members appointed as Question Setters, Assessors, Associate or Reserve Assessors must have professional integrity and a high regard and respect for the principles of fairness, impartiality and confidentiality those set out in Resolution's Code of Practice. Additionally, they should be able to demonstrate:

- Specialist knowledge, skills and experience in the category of practice for which they wish to be a Question Setter, Assessor Associate or Reserve Assessor.
- Ability to deal with and analyse and assess candidate responses to the required Specialist Accreditation standard set by Resolution
- Excellent written communication skills, the ability to work in a balanced and impartial way and confident in making decisions
- An ability to plan for and complete tasks within a set timetable

In addition, members must have professional integrity and a high regard and respect for the principles of fairness, impartiality and confidentiality.

### **Fees and Expenses**

Travel expenses for meetings will be provided for in line with Resolution's expenses policy.

Where other expenses are incurred these must be agreed with Resolution prior to making a claim.

The Question Setting fee is £180.

Assessors who hold joint responsibility for Question Setting/Assessment in respect of a portfolio, (and where it has been agreed with Resolution that is the case), will share the question setting fee between them.

Fees for assessment are £45 per Core or Specialist Portfolio paper and £20 per reaccreditation paper.

Associate and Reserve Assessors may claim an Assessment fee where they review candidate marking for a borderline or failed paper at the request of the Questions Setter or by Resolution and prior to independent moderation.