

Guidance Notes for Practitioner Organisations' Application Form

The development of National Registers of Practitioners has the primary aim of providing the public and other organisations with reassurance that the practitioners included on the Registers have met standards of training and practice that ensure they are competent to meet the needs of their clients and to practice within legal and professional requirements.

However, the concept of agreed standards is fairly new in the animal training and behaviour therapy sector and their methods of assessment are themselves in development. The ABTC is aware that many organisations have effective standards and procedures that meet the aims of ensuring their practitioners are competent, but that these may not be as well documented as this application process assumes.

Organisations are invited to apply to the ABTC even where they perceive they do not yet have fully developed procedures that explicitly meet the agreed standards. The process of putting the application together may be viewed as an opportunity for review and development of the Organisation's procedures, and the ABTC will accept indications of new practice that has been developed in this way, subject to evidence of its application.

In recognition of the developmental opportunity the application process offers, the ABTC has a tiered series of outcomes designed to serve and encourage organisations towards fully meeting the agreed standards for the Practitioner Register for which they are applying.

These are:

1. The application fully satisfies the ABTC that the Organisation is of good standing and is committed to the aims of the ABTC; has an appropriate and effectively policed Code of Conduct for its members; has membership assessment criteria that fully meet the agreed standards for the practitioner role, and their assessment is comprehensive, fair and transparent; and has appropriate and effectively policed CPD requirements to ensure their full members remain up to date in their field. All full practitioner members of the Organisation can be entered onto the appropriate Practitioner Register with immediate effect on receipt of the corresponding registration fee per member (thereafter subject to annual updating and registration fees).
2. The application fully satisfies the ABTC that the Organisation is of good standing and is committed to the aims of the ABTC. It substantially satisfies the ABTC that it has an appropriate and effectively policed Code of Conduct for its members; has membership assessment criteria that substantially meet the agreed standards for the practitioner role, and their assessment is sufficient, fair and transparent; and has appropriate and effectively policed CPD requirements to ensure their full members remain up to date in their field. Where gaps are identified, the ABTC will provide a set of requirements for the Organisation to address within a reasonable timescale. All full practitioner members of the Organisation can be provisionally entered onto the appropriate Practitioner Register with immediate effect on receipt of the corresponding registration fee per member. Provided the Organisation meets the development requirements within the timescale identified, their practitioner members will remain on the Registers (thereafter subject to annual updating and registration fees). Where the requirements are not met within the timescale, the Organisation's practitioner members will be removed from the Register.

3. The application fully satisfies the ABTC that the Organisation is of good standing and is committed to the aims of the ABTC. It goes some way towards satisfying the ABTC that it has an appropriate and effectively policed Code of Conduct for its members; has membership assessment criteria that goes some way towards meeting the agreed standards for the practitioner role, and their assessment is sufficient, fair and transparent; and has appropriate and effectively policed CPD requirements to ensure their full members remain up to date in their field. The ABTC will work with the Organisation to provide support and guidance in developing the Organisation's membership criteria and/or assessment to meet the agreed standards for the appropriate practitioner role within an agreed timescale. Once the Organisation has met these development requirements their practitioner members can be entered onto the appropriate Practitioner Register with immediate effect on receipt of the corresponding registration fee per member (thereafter subject to annual updating and registration fees).
4. The application falls substantially short of satisfying the ABTC any of: the Organisation being of good standing and is committed to the aims of the ABTC; and has practitioner membership criteria that meet the agreed standards for the practitioner role applied for. The ABTC will identify clearly where the shortfall lies and will invite the Organisation to reapply for Practitioner Membership once the limitations have been addressed. The Organisation may be invited to join the Council as a Provisional Member in the meantime.

Application Form Guidance

Please use these notes to assist you in completing forms.

Part 1

Box 1: Include the full name and contact details for the Organisation. The named contact person will be the primary contact for the ABTC and we will address all correspondence to the email address indicated, so please ensure that the named person/email address is appropriate for this purpose. The postal address should be the registered address of the Organisation.

Insert introductory information about your organisation to provide the reviewers with a clear outline of your purpose (eg mission statement or equivalent); your history, structure and membership numbers; and a brief account of how your purpose and practice matches the stated purpose of the ABTC (see <https://www.abtc.org.uk/>)

Box 2: Indicate which Register you are seeking to add practitioner members onto. See the ABTC website for full details of the profile and practice criteria for each listed practitioner role. If you wish to enter your Members onto more than one Register you will need to submit separate applications of Part Two of the application to match the criteria for each of the Registers you are applying to join. You will find the criteria on <https://www.abtc.org.uk/practitioners/>

Box 3: Insert the full wording of your Organisation's code of conduct (or equivalent) for practitioner members. Do not just refer to your website, but do include a link to the relevant part of your website so we can check the validity of the information included on this form. You are strongly encouraged to map your Code of Conduct against the ABTC Code of Professional Conduct (<https://www.abtc.org.uk/practitioners/>), to check that your Code covers all the key areas needed. A template for doing this is included in our application pack.

Provide a short description of the mechanism used for ensuring your practitioner members comply with your code of conduct. Include details of how you monitor compliance, and your disciplinary procedures and potential outcomes for members who do not comply.

Provide details of your GDPR policy/procedure.

Box 4: Inset full details of what your Organisation requires of its practitioner members to ensure that their knowledge and practice remains up to date (Continuing professional Development – CPD). Do not just refer to your website.

Explain how your practitioner members report their CPD, your mechanisms for assessing if they meet your requirements, and your disciplinary procedures for when they do not.

Box 5: Please list all electronic attachments you are sending with your application

Your application should be signed by an officer of your Organisation who has the authority to approve the full content of your application on behalf of your membership. The full name and Organisational role of the signatory must be included.

Boxes 3 and 4: include hyperlinks to the relevant pages of your website to reference the source of the information you include in the boxes, and/or to link to further information to illustrate your description. Include as appendices all forms that your Organisation uses for reporting/recording/assessing on disciplinary procedures, CPD clearly cross referenced in the relevant box.

Part 2

Box 1 is self-explanatory. If any of this information is different from the Part 1 form, please highlight.

Box 2 Please indicate which registers you would like to place Practitioners on.

Box 3 Please list all electronic attachments you are sending with your application

Your application should be signed by an officer of your Organisation who has the authority to approve the full content of your application on behalf of your membership. The full name and Organisational role of the signatory must be included.

Appendix: This section requires a detailed breakdown of how your requirements for the practice and underpinning knowledge in your practitioner members match with the agreed ABTC standard for the Practitioner Register you are applying for. There is a worksheet for each of the practitioner roles, so please ensure you complete the right one. You will be allocated a mentor for support on how best to complete this document for your organisation.

The Membership Committee will use this section (and associated documents) to determine how your Organisation meets the agreed standards for the Practitioner Role(s) applied for, so aim to complete this section with this in mind and include all relevant information to give them as clear a picture as possible.

The first column lists each of the agreed ABTC standards of practitioner performance and knowledge. The first set are the professional skills needed, and second set the underpinning knowledge and understanding needed for a practitioner to provide a professional service that ensures up-to-date practice within UK law and professional guidelines.

Against each of these standards you should enter the exact wording from your Organisation's corresponding practitioner member requirements that match each ABTC standard. You may need to provide an explanation of how your requirements match those of the ABTC and you should use the third column for this purpose. Please include detailed cross-referencing to the full text of your practitioner member requirements as an appendix to this application.

In the fourth column enter details of how you assess each ABTC standard equivalent when you are judging your practitioner member applications. Please include as appendices your Organisation's documents for all relevant assessment tasks, including the criteria used by your assessors reporting forms and the criteria they use to determine if a candidate has met your requirements.

You may find that the ABTC has more detailed descriptions of requirements than your Organisation has, and any one of your documented requirements may span several ABTC standards – which is fine. However, it is likely that you assess your members' practice and knowledge against the full detail that the ABTC standards capture, and you should indicate in columns three and four how you ensure that your members are competent to the detail required by the ABTC.

You may also find that there are ABTC standards that you do not currently assess formally. If you assess them informally, then indicate how this is done. If you do not assess them at all, please say so and this will feed into the developmental feedback the ABTC will provide.

To address these latter two issues, we strongly encourage you to develop your Organisation's standards and procedures to better capture what you actually do or plan to do to meet the standards for your practitioner role. We encourage you to submit your application with these developmental steps included, and the ABTC will take these into account when considering your application against the principles and outcomes outlined at the start of this document.

Finally, include anonymised paperwork for **three** practitioners that you have recently assessed and approved for your practitioner membership. The ABTC reserves the right to ask for further reports of practitioner applications (fully anonymised) as needed.

If your Organisation has multiple assessment routes (eg student route or experienced practitioner), please complete a separate worksheet for each route.

Application Submission

Begin by submitting **Part 1** of the Application Form, your non-refundable application fee, your Organisation's Code of Conduct and other details requested to admin@abtc.org.uk Your application will be acknowledged within three working days.

Once this is accepted, we will send you **Part 2** and assign a mentor to guide you through the spreadsheet for mapping your Organisations standards and assessment procedures against the ABTC standards for the relevant practitioner role. We will talk you through the spreadsheet and help you decide what information is needed for each section, and what potential development of your processes may be needed to fully capture your organisation's standards.

Once Part 2 is submitted, our Membership Committee will formally review your application. We will provide you with our Reviewer's Report and advise you on any actions needed to address any requirements and recommendations made.

Once your membership fee has been received, you will be invited to submit your practitioners' details and fees for the appropriate ABTC Register according to the outcome of the application (see 1 to 4 above).