



MRS Qualifications

A Guide to Centre Accreditation – Masters Programmes

The Market Research Society (MRS) is the UK professional body for research, insight and analytics. We recognise 5,000 individual members and over 500 accredited Company Partners in over 50 countries who are committed to delivering outstanding insight. As the regulator, we promote the highest professional standards throughout the sector via the MRS Code of Conduct.

MRS A Guide to Centre Accreditation – Masters Programmes
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Introduction

The Market Research Society (MRS) offers a system for the accreditation of Masters degrees in market or social research. Students who are awarded an accredited Masters degree by following one of these accredited programmes meet the qualification requirement for Certified Membership of MRS. (In order to qualify for Certified Membership, however, candidates must also meet the three-year experience requirement.) This type of accreditation is intended to promote further links between the MRS and academic institutions and to provide an appropriate pathway to membership and access to MRS services to successful participants.

The accreditation process

To apply for accreditation, course providers are required to submit a completed application form which includes the following information:

- Details of the staffing of the programme, including the name of a MRS member who is involved in course delivery and/or assessment.
- Details of how the course is delivered (e.g. full/part-time; F2F, distance or blended learning).
- Details of the course programme, showing how the programme meets each of the accreditation criteria outlined below.
- Learning resources available to students.
- How the institution will raise awareness of the MRS and its activities.

All applications will be reviewed by a member or members of MRS's Professional Development Advisory Board.

On successful review, the MRS will undertake an accreditation visit. The aims of this visit are to:

- meet staff members and inspect resources;
- discuss the programme and any issues raised at the application review.

If the application is not accepted at review stage, MRS will contact the institution to discuss the reservation which prevented accreditation. The institution may then resubmit an application once those reservations have been addressed.

The current fee for accreditation for each programme is £1,700 + VAT, the period of accreditation is for 3 years.

ACCREDITATION CRITERIA

Introduction

Applications for MRS accreditation of a Masters programme must:

1. provide details of the structure and mode(s) of delivery of the programme;
2. provide information on the entry requirements for students participating on the programme;
3. demonstrate how the Masters programme meets MRS accreditation criteria, which are based on the 12 standards of Certified Membership of the MRS;
4. demonstrate how the Masters programme meets QAA requirements for degrees at Masters level;
5. provide details of the tutor team involved in the delivery of the programme;
6. identify a member of the programme team who is a member of MRS;
7. provide details of the learning resources to which participants on the programme have access.

1. Structure of programme

Completed applications should include information about the modes of delivery (e.g. full/part time; open or distance learning), the structure of the programme and both the number of contact hours and the estimated number of notional study hours involved in each module or element of the programme.

2. Certified Membership Criteria

The criteria for the accreditation of Masters programmes reflect the 12 standards for Certified Membership of the MRS. The standards are as follows:

STANDARD 1: Ethical and legal considerations governing the conduct of MRS members
STANDARD 2: Research within its broad political/economic social/ technological context
STANDARD 3: The role of research in decision making within an organisation
STANDARD 4: Client and supply relationships in research
STANDARD 5: Project management (including planning and the use of resources)
STANDARD 6: Oral and/or written communication skills
STANDARD 7: Awareness and evaluation of research methodologies
STANDARD 8: Conducting all or part of a research project
STANDARD 9: A nominated specialist area in research
STANDARD 10: Quality control and assessment in research
STANDARD 11: Commitment to your own personal and professional development
STANDARD 12: Commitment to the development of others and or the profession

Assessing 'Certified Membership' Criteria

In order to assess the suitability of a Masters programme for accreditation, applications must demonstrate how the programme enables the applicant to meet each of these standards. The following table outlines how programmes are assessed against each of the 12 criteria:

	Standard	Guidelines for assessment
	<i>In order to meet this standard...</i>	<i>..programmes should demonstrate how they assess the participant's knowledge and ability in the following areas:</i>
1	<i>Ethical and legal considerations governing the conduct of MRS members</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ethical issues and legislation which impact on research practice The role of the MRS <i>Code of Conduct</i> as a regulatory instrument in governing research practice
2	<i>Research within its broad political/economic social/ technological context</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application of research practice to some or all of these specified contexts The understanding of the implications of the wider issues relating to a specific aspect of the research sector (e.g. field, operations etc)
3	<i>The role of research in decision making within an organisation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The application of research practice to business or corporate contexts The understanding the implications of research results in strategic decision making.
4	<i>Client and supply relationships in research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing and managing relationships with internal and/or external clients and suppliers.
5	<i>Project management (including planning and the use of resources)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The allocation and supervision of people and other resources (e.g. financial, infrastructure, data, technology, panels, etc) and the management of projects identification and planning of resource requirements for a specified research project.
6	<i>Oral and/or written communication skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral presentations to clients or people in an organisation; project debriefs; formal or informal briefing of research or other issues or presenting at conferences or seminars. Written project briefs; research summaries; research reports or debrief documents; formal conference papers or journal articles or non research papers relating to other issues.
7	<i>Awareness and evaluation of research methodologies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking the decision on appropriate methodologies for particular research projects; Balancing the ideal method with pragmatic issues, like budget and time; Developing new or adapting existing methods to suit particular circumstances and briefing and debriefing on different methodologies evaluating pitfalls

8	<i>Conducting all or part of a research project</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effective planning and execution of a research project to address a specified research problem. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualification of the problem - Data analysis - Reporting or understanding of the whole project
9	<i>A nominated specialist area in research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theory and application of effective practice in a defined specialist area within the field of market research. The specialist area may be broad or narrow and may relate to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • methodology (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, online, etc) • sector (e.g. automotive, financial, international, public policy, etc) • respondent type (e.g. children, ethnic, seniors, etc) • management (of operations, fieldwork, data processing or analysis, etc) • managing a research business • purchasing research • knowledge management
10	<i>Quality control and assessment in research</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The understanding, application and compliance with quality standards that relate specifically to research (e.g. currently ISO 20252, ISO 26362, IQCS, etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or are broader in scope (e.g. ISO 9001) • or which are internal to your workplace. These can relate either to research or specific to your work
11	<i>Commitment to your own personal and professional development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation, including the Identification of strengths and the prioritising of professional development needs
12	<i>Commitment to the development of others and or the profession</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the development of others, and awareness of the value of this contribution.

3. QAA Requirements

In addition to meeting the criteria for Certified Membership of MRS, all applications must demonstrate how the programme which is submitted meets QAA requirements for degrees at Masters level. The QAA descriptors for Masters level degrees are as follows:

Masters degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

1. deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
2. demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
3. continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

4. the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - * the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - * decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - * the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development

4. Tutor Team

The application should include a completed **Staff Outline** form for each member of the tutor team responsible for the delivery of the programme, providing details of their qualifications and experience in research-related fields. This section of the application should also demonstrate how staff are deployed across the programme.

5. MRS member of the Tutor Team

In order for MRS accreditation to be extended to a programme, MRS must be satisfied that at least one member of the tutor team is within the membership framework of MRS. This provides assurance that appropriate briefing can be given on ethical issues (e.g. Code of

Conduct) and that research practices are conducted within the ethical framework governed by MRS.

6. Learning Resources

The application should provide details of the range of learning resources available to course participants. In particular, information should be given about ways in which course participants can access information relating to ethical issues, such as those governed by the MRS Code of Conduct, and to information about the various sectors within the research industry.

CONTINUING ACCREDITATION

Once accreditation has been granted, the accredited institution will be required to submit a course update form each year in order to retain accreditation. This is to ensure that all accredited courses listed on the MR website remain current and continue to meet accreditation requirements.

For more information on the accreditation process and accreditation requirements, please contact:

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