**Specialist Quality Mark (SQM)**

**Audit Pricing Schedule and Relevant Information**

From 1st October 2022, the following fees will apply to all scheduled audit activity:

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| **New Applicants** |  | **1 FTE\*** | **2 – 6 FTE\*** | **7 – 15 FTE\*** | **16 – 60 FTE\*** | **61+ FTE\*** |
| **Desktop Audit** | £275.00 | | | | |
| **Pre-Quality Mark Audit** | £825.00 | £1000.00 | £1350.00 | £1700.00 | £1800.00 |
| **Existing Holders** | **Post Quality Mark Audit** | £825.00 | £1000.00 | £1350.00 | £1700.00 | £1800.00 |
| *All prices quoted* ***do not*** *include VAT which will be charged at the prevailing rate.* | | | | | | |
| **Payment:** | We require payment **in advance** of the scheduled audit activity. Upon receipt of your application, an invoice will be sent to you and audit costs will be calculated based upon the information that has been declared within your completed application form. Should additional information come to light during the audit planning phase that results in a change to the ‘scope’ of the audit, a revised invoice will be issued.  We reserve the right to cancel an arranged audit in the event that the audit fee remains unpaid in the 48 hours prior to audit commencement. Please refer to our separate Terms and Conditions for further details. | | | | | |
| **New Applicants:** | For new applicants, findings of the desktop audit including the formal audit report, will not be released until payment has been received in full.  The desktop application process does not provide for any period of corrective action and is a pass/fail interaction. Where the outcome of the desktop audit is ‘Premature Application’, legal service providers will be invited to reapply within a timeframe determined directly by them. Each application is treated as a standalone application, with a new Auditor appointed. Repeat applications for a desktop audit will therefore incur additional fees, as per the fee structure quoted above. | | | | | |
| **Expenses:** | No additional expenses will be charged on top of the audit fees stated above | | | | | |
| **Early Bird Discount:** | Requests for an audit received:  (a) **5 months** **prior** to the expiry date of a current accreditation certificate, **and**  (b) where the audit takes place within a period of **6 weeks** from the date of the application,  will attract an Early Bird Discount of 5%, applied to the total audit fee.  A refund to the value of the 5% discount will be issued following completion of the audit where points a and b above are both met.  **Note:** Where the audit does not take place within 6 weeks of the application date, either due to the applicant provider requesting an audit date outside of the 6-week timeframe, failing to agree to an audit date offered, or requesting a delay/postponement, the early bird discount **will not** be applied.  It should be noted that Recognising Excellence is not able to pre or post date accreditation certificates. Certificates are therefore dated according to when the current audit has completed (including any period of corrective action). Where audits take place earlier than the expiry date of the current certificate, this will result in an overall reduction of time on the current accreditation certificate.  A worked example of this is as follows:   * Current certificate ends on 1 December * Audit application is received on 1 July * Audit must take place within 6 weeks i.e. no later than 12th August * Application is therefore eligible for Early Bird Discount * Assuming full report writing (5 days) corrective action period (28-days) is utilised, new accreditation certificate will be dated 9th September * Period between 9th September and previous accreditation expiry date of 1st December is lost. | | | | | |
| **Certificates of Accreditation:** | All SQM certificates of accreditation will be released in electronic format. Where a paper copy is requested, an administration fee of £15 will be payable. Requests for a paper certificate should be made to sqm@recognisingexcellence.co.uk | | | | | |
| \***FTE – Full Time Equivalent** staff working under a legal aid contract. This will include Managers, Fee Earners, Support Staff and extend to also include Consultants and Police Station representatives (where appropriate) | | | | | | |
| **Scope of Audit:** Audit fees stated above include all appropriate planning and preparation time, on-site assessment activity, formal reporting and any period of corrective action that may apply. Where the legal service is delivered from multiple offices, Auditors will be required to visit a representative sample.  Please note that for the purposes of the audit, both employees and volunteers that are involved in providing legal services will be included and considered as part of the audit process.  It is essential that key personnel are available on the date agreed for the audit. If the Auditor is unable to complete the audit process due to personnel not being available, a revisit will be required which will incur an additional cost. As a minimum, the interview sample will include those with responsibility for the key roles of:   * Quality Manager * Equality and Diversity Manager * Complaints Manager * Category Supervisor * Finance Manager * Data Protection Officer   The interview sample will also extend to include the following roles:   * Fee earning/Caseworkers * Support staff (as appropriate) * Consultants (as appropriate) | | | | | | |
| **Accreditation Cycle:** New applicants to the SQM will require both a Desktop Audit and Pre-Quality Mark audit. Accreditation is awarded once the Pre-Quality mark audit has been successfully completed in full. Once accreditation is awarded, a Post Quality Mark Monitoring Audit will take place at regular intervals. From 1st October 2025, for any audit where the onsite activity is completed on or following this date, the accreditation period will last for a maximum of 5 years.  **Note:** When scheduling a post audit, consideration should be given to the expiry date of the current certificate of accreditation. Audits should be completed in full prior to the date of expiry of the current certificate. This includes any period of corrective action that may apply following the audit. **Recognising Excellence is unable to offer any extension to the SQM accreditation certificate in place.** | | | | | | |
| **Cancellation of your Audit:** | In the event that a pre-arranged audit is cancelled or postponed within 48 hours or less of the date agreed, a cancellation fee equal to 60% of the total audit fee will be charged.  We reserve the right to cancel an arranged audit in the event that the audit fee remains unpaid in the 48 hours prior to audit commencement. | | | | | |