

## Questions and Answers

### Topic: Accreditation requirements

**How does accreditation work for large organisations where the preparation of Biodiversity Development Assessment Reports (BDARs) is shared across teams, and is not the responsibility of one person? What does this mean for accreditation renewal requirements?**

The Department understands that assessors often work in teams. Information about working in teams is provided on the Department's [webpage](#). The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities cater for people who carry out different tasks in an organisation, or work in different types of organisations. Assessors can mix and match to address their own requirements.

**My interpretation is that I am currently accredited and I do not qualify for re-accreditation because I have changed roles. However, I want to gain full accreditation once again. How can I gain full accreditation if I am not eligible to attend the renewal course?**

This interpretation is incorrect because it has not taken into consideration the transition allowances put in place in May 2021 to provide a staged uptake of CPD.

The current transition allowances provide for most people who were due to be re-accredited in the 2021-22 financial year. Please refer to the transitional allowances in the [Continuing Professional Development Log \(CPD-log\) Guideline](#) (Section 3.2).

In the future, if you let your accreditation lapse, you will need to re-apply. This will require attendance of the initial training.

Specific questions about personal circumstances can be sent to the BAM Accreditation Mailbox at [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au).

**My accreditation is due to expire in 7 weeks. When can I be renewed and will any assessments I complete while outside of renewal be null and void?**

All current assessors were sent email correspondence in May 2021 about the renewal process. It is also described on the Department [website](#).

You can be renewed at any time from June 2021. You are required to do three things:

1. Fill in your application form
2. Attend training
3. Fill in your CPD as best as possible to the level described in the transitional requirements.

If you are not renewed by your expiry date, then the three-month grace period applies. Any work you do during this period can still be included in your CPD. The only thing that you are unable to do is formally submit a [Biodiversity Assessment Method Calculator \(BAM-C\)](#) calculation or a Biodiversity Assessment Report (BAR).

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## **What happens if I went on maternity leave during my accreditation period and have a 12-month gap of BAM experience?**

Questions relating to your own circumstances can be sent to the BAM Accreditation Mailbox at [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au) (see Section 4.5 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#) about personal circumstances).

For your initial renewal, if you have periods of absence from the workplace, you can generally complete your CPD-log with as many of the components of the CPD as possible.

For subsequent terms of accreditation, you can compile the information in your CPD-log, send it to the BAM Accreditation mailbox at [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au), and request consideration of your personal circumstances (in accordance with Section 4.5 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#)).

## **Will not preparing Biodiversity Development Assessment Reports (BDARs) or Biodiversity Certification Assessment Reports (BCARs) preclude me from renewing my accreditation?**

The current transitional allowances provide for most people to be re-accredited for their second term of accreditation. Please refer to the transitional allowances in the [CPD-log Guideline](#) (Section 3.2).

Please note the [CPD-log Guideline](#) allows you to include preparing BARs, contributions to BARs, and review of BDARs as evidence you have met the annual activity requirements.

## **What are the fieldwork log requirements?**

Fieldwork can include detailed vegetation community survey and targeted species survey, or six site inspections for government reviewers. Please see Section 4.1 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#) and the CPD-log template for more details. You can find the CPD-log Guideline and the CPD-log template on the Department's [webpage](#).

## **I am not accredited. However, I have done the 5-day training course and review BDARs for Council. Do I need to renew my training?**

There is no requirement for someone who is not accredited to renew their training.

If you are not accredited but wish to refresh your knowledge of the [Biodiversity Offsets Scheme \(BOS\)](#) and the [Biodiversity Assessment Method \(BAM\)](#), you do have the option of completing the full course. However, this is not mandatory and alternative options are currently being considered to meet this interest. Other options may be available to you in future. A person looking to refresh their knowledge of the BOS and BAM could complete the revised accredited assessor training course.

It is expected that around 350 people will need to attend renewal refresher training in the 2021-22 financial year. As such, renewal refresher training is not currently open to people who are not accredited. Once this demand has been met, renewal refresher training may be made available to non-accredited persons as a refresher course.

Further details on the renewal refresher training, and the revised main Accredited Assessor training course, are available on the Department's [webpage](#).

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## **Do we only need to fill out the CPD-log for the last 12 months, or from when our accreditation commenced?**

The tasks and activities you put in your CPD-log can include activity from your whole period accreditation.

## **If we did not receive an email, where can we find out when our renewal is due?**

The email referred to here is some communication sent from the Department announcing training and the publishing the [CPD-log Guideline](#).

Expiry dates can be found on the [public register](#) or by logging into your account in the [Biodiversity Offsets and Agreements Management System \(BOAMS\)](#).

Please remember to check your junk email folder to ensure Departmental correspondence has not ended up there by accident.

## **Topic: What you can include in your CPD log**

### **Does experience as a government or an independent reviewer include situations where government is the proponent (i.e. internal review by Transport for NSW)?**

Your CPD-log does not need to reflect a specific position or job. If you are a reviewer, or if you work for a government agency, you may be undertaking work that is similar to the work of a consultant. The focus should be on the tasks that you are doing and how they relate to the CPD minimum requirements. You can mix and match the specific work tasks you have undertaken to show how you meet the CPD minimum requirements.

### **I would like to know about ongoing accreditation for accredited assessors who do not prepare BDARs. There are roles, particularly in government, where it is important to have accredited status and a deep understanding of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme that never are required to prepare a BDAR (e.g., roles in review, or the provision of expert technical advice). Has some equivalency been considered?**

The Department has taken this issue on board in its development of the [CPD-log Guideline](#). The draft and final version of the [CPD-log Guideline](#) include options for accredited assessors who work in government agencies.

Furthermore, the CPD-log Guideline provides for different types of fieldwork, including the review of BAM-C calculations and BARs. Sections 4.1 – 4.3 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#) outline the different tasks and activities that meet the annual activity requirements.

### **Does time spent assessing others' BDARs in the context of a Land and Environment Court case count?**

If the assessment of a BDAR for a Land and Environment court case involves a detailed written review, it can be used in your CPD-log. However, there must be evidence of the work, similar to that of a consent authority critical review.

## **Does attending webinars or watching webinar recordings count as part of training?**

Yes, attending webinars or watching webinar recordings counts toward your annual activity requirements (refer to Section 4.4 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#)).

## **Can a consultant who peer-reviews BARs inside their company use this as evidence of contribution to BARs in the same way as government employees do?**

The [CPD-log Guideline](#) describes how government or independent reviewers would demonstrate this CPD-element. For a consultant to use peer-reviewing within a company, they would need to demonstrate a similar level of detailed/critical review in written form. This may be difficult to provide.

Government or independent reviewers who provide detailed review and written feedback about the BAM-C or BARs must be able to demonstrate this if requested. It should be a written detailed review of a BAM-C analysis or BAR, evaluating their technical quality and alignment with the requirements of the BAM (refer to Sections 4.2 and 4.3 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#)).

## **Does slide 20 of this webinar presentation mean that CPD activity can be averaged over the accreditation term? For example, if you certify three BDARs in one year, will this count for the three BDARs required over the three-year period?**

Yes. Section 3.1 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#) states that, for the purposes of renewal, assessors can satisfy their CPD requirements if they meet the number of activities required for the whole term of their accreditation.

## **Topic: Training costs**

**The cost of renewal training seems high for online training that reportedly is heavy on (i) basic things that should be assumed knowledge and (ii) ethical behaviour. Also, the cost to assessors is not just the fee, but time away from their (often small) businesses when they would be otherwise engaged in work that would generate an invoice.**

Renewal refresher training is a refresher course that has been designed with consideration for varying levels of assessor experience with the BOS. It refreshes assessors on some basics. The course also includes new content to improve knowledge on areas that are the subject of frequently asked questions by assessors and on topics identified in feedback from assessors.

The delivery format, being online over two half-days, was structured with consideration for the other work commitments that an assessor might have.

The fee is charged by [Greencap](#) to cover the cost of administration, system support, delivery of the course and reporting participant results to the Department. The same fee is applied to every assessor who attends renewal training, including Department staff.

**Will there be any considerations for Principal Consultants who are unable to undertake full field days per year? Due to consultant rates, it becomes too expensive to have some Senior and Principal Consultants undertake field work, let alone be able to complete ten days of it. Often, they are the most knowledgeable and experienced persons applying the BAM. However, because they often do not meet field time requirements, they cannot get accredited or re-accredited. This raises concerns where junior staff can get accredited easily because they meet the field time requirements but are often comparatively**

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**inexperienced in the application of the BAM. Are there alternative ways in which Principals can get re-accredited when they have not met the field time requirements?**

Yes, this is considered in the [CPD-log Guideline](#).

Section 6 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#) includes special consideration for a limited number of people who are very involved with the BOS and BAM. If they feel they can address their CPD in a different way, they can apply to the Department to request a different approach. Accredited assessors can request an alternative approach in limited circumstances using the **Continuing Professional Development Request for consideration (PDF 44KB)**.

**Course fees are expensive and the course covers similar content to that presented during initial training. Over 300 assessors need to undertake this training this year, totalling over \$300,000 for the training provider. How is this justified?**

Please see the answer to the first question in this section.

**Will we get an answer on the request for consideration before we pay for Greencap courses?**

Yes, you can.

The transitional arrangements provide a pathway for all assessors. Those assessors renewing their accreditation in the 2021/22 financial year should include in their CPD-log any activities they have completed without seeking a request for consideration.

If you are due for re-accreditation after 30 June 2022, then you may put in a request for consideration. However, please consider whether you can complete the amount required in the transitional arrangements table first (Table 2 of the [CPD-log Guideline](#)).

The form for a request for consideration is available on the Department's [webpage](#).

## Topic: Training

**There have been multiple changes from [Biodiversity Assessment Method 2017 \(BAM 2017\)](#) to [Biodiversity Assessment Method 2020 \(BAM 2020\)](#). In addition, there have been many ongoing clarifications updates from the [BOS Assessor Updates](#). Does the renewal training summarise and discuss the various changes and their implications, and how they should be applied? For example, there have been some changes to Stage 3 of the BAM that can impact credit generation.**

Yes, it provides a short recap. However, you do need to check the other material as well. Module 7 provides a short recap of the changes in [BAM 2020](#). BAM content in the training has all been revised to align with the requirements of [BAM 2020](#) and provide clearer explanations of BAM requirements. In particular, content on BAM Stage 3 is supported by detailed explanations of concepts and screenshots to demonstrate how to apply Stage 3 in the [BAM-C](#).

The details of changes in [BAM 2020](#) outlined in relevant release notes and assessor updates are not duplicated in training. Recent efforts to revise assessor training have sought to reduce duplication of information.

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**I expressed interest with [Greencap](#) and they told me that I needed to wait for an email from the Department. Which is correct?**

You are able to contact [Greencap](#) at any time six months before your re-accreditation is due if you are interested in finding out more.

To ensure all assessors due to renew their accreditation in July and August 2021 were able to attend renewal refresher training, assessors in these groups were prioritised for re-accreditation. As this demand has now eased, assessors are able to contact [Greencap](#) and express interest in attending training in the six months prior to their renewal date. [Greencap](#) will also continue to contact assessors directly inviting them to enrol in training as their renewal date approaches.

**What is the anticipated duration of the eLearning component of refresher training?**

Assuming an assessor has been regularly engaged with the BOS and BAM over the period of their accreditation, they should be able to complete all eLearning modules in approximately five hours. The estimated time required to complete each eLearning module is shown when the module is first opened. The estimated duration allows for assessors to work through the content and assessment at a leisurely pace.

## Topic: Systems

**Does government or independent review experience require access to the BAM-C? Can I request that the consultant adds me (as an accredited assessor) as a case party so I can access the BAM-C?**

Yes. [Assessor Update 34](#) included a [practice note](#) with instructions.

A webinar about [BOAMS for Local Government and other Consent Authorities](#) also provides instructions.

Webinars and Assessor Updates can be accessed on the Department's [webpage](#).

**I have just realised that my accreditation expired in February 2021. However, there is no extra case button on my [BOAMS](#) landing page, nor have I received any other form of notification. Should I contact the team directly?**

Please note that no assessor's accreditation expired before June 2021. All assessors whose accreditation was due in the 2020/21 financial year had their accreditation extended by 12 months. All impacted assessors were individually notified in 2020. Expiry dates can be seen on the public register. Assessors accounts in [BOAMS](#) also contain your accreditation details.

Any concerns about your individual situation should be sent to the BAM Accreditation Mailbox at [BAM\\_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BAM_accreditation@environment.nsw.gov.au).

## Topic: Transitional Arrangements

**In the transitional arrangements, it is unclear in row 1 of Table 2 whether ANY of the CPD requirements must be met. The following rows (2, 3 and 4) identify minimum CPD requirements starting at one as a minimum. Therefore, following this pattern, is it to be read that for row 1 no CPD are required?**

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Yes.

As we are only publishing the [CPD-log Guideline](#) now, we have provided consideration that we have not given enough notice.

However, we do want people to add what they can to their CPD-log when submitting their renewal application. Please note that even if you cannot address the CPD requirements in their entirety, you will still be eligible for another term of accreditation.

**Topic: CPD Log Template**

**A Q&A template for CPD-log was mentioned but I cannot locate it. Is there a link to the CPD-log template?**

The CPD-log template is found on the Department's [webpage on renewing accreditation](#).

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