



ICMCI Standard for Accredited Consulting Practices

Introduction

ICMCI is committed to respecting variations in member institutes' detailed arrangements for Accredited Consulting Practice (ACP) schemes, dependent on individual national standards, history, culture and approach.

However, in order to assure a minimum common understanding across all members of ICMCI, and to assure consistency in the award of CMC (and thus providing a firm basis for reciprocal recognition of both ACPs and individual CMCs), ***each national ACP scheme must conform to this ICMCI Standard*** if it is to be formally recognised within ICMCI. If an Institute has an ACP Scheme in place, it is assessed against this ACP Standard as part of the ICMCI periodic country assessments to establish conformity with the ICMCI CMC Standard.

This Standard is applicable to management consultancy ***organisations*** which wish to become ACPs - as distinct from the CMC Standard, which is applicable to ***individual*** management consultants who wish to demonstrate their qualifications. The relationship between the two standards is as follows: the ACP Standard is designed to assure that *a management consultancy organisation has the professional processes, the standards, and the commitment in place, in order to develop and propose CMC candidates who can be confidently accepted with minimum scrutiny as meeting the standards of the national Institute.*

The ICMCI ACP Standard defines a set of core, minimum requirements. Beyond these, national institutes are at liberty to develop the ACP scheme to suit their own markets (for example, involving ACPs in various ways in Institute activities). "Best practice" guidance is available from ICMCI, and updated as shared experience grows, in order to help national institutes to do so.

Related to this Standard are the following ICMCI documents:

- Appendix C Istanbul Resolutions 1 March 2004: "Taking forward the accredited practice initiative"
- Appendix D Istanbul Resolutions 1 March 2004: "Guidelines for the eligibility of consultancies as accredited practices"
- ACP Guidance Models 17 September 2004, presented at the Vancouver Working Meeting

The ICMCI ACP Standard

The Standard comprises ten mandatory features or “Requirements”. All of these have to be satisfactorily met in order for a national ACP scheme to comply with the standard.

1. The Organisation is confirmed as being a valid ACP Candidate

Institutes assure that candidate ACPs are identifiable organisations or management units undertaking a management consultancy role and providing management consulting services. *Reference is Appendix D of the Istanbul Resolutions 1 March 2004: “Guidelines for the eligibility of consultancies as accredited practices”.*

2. Its Professional Processes are assessed to assure they are appropriate for developing consultants to the CMC Standard

The professional recruitment, training, development, supervision, review and quality assurance processes of candidate ACPs for their consultant staff are thoroughly assessed upon application to become an ACP, in accordance with a written institute standard, in order to assure that they are suitable in nature and quality for developing consultants to ICMCI CMC standard. *Reference is the Guidance Model “ACP Statement of Equivalence – Professional Development”.*

3. Its Professional Standards are assessed to assure they are at least equivalent to the CMC Standard

The professional standards of the candidate ACPs for their management consultants, and the processes for assessment of their consultant staff against them, are thoroughly assessed upon application to become an ACP, in accordance with a written institute standard, in order to assure that they are of at least the equivalent level and rigour as the ICMCI CMC standard. *Reference is the Guidance Model “ACP Statement of Equivalence – Professional Certification”.*

(NOTE If a candidate ACP is already recognised as an ACP in another ICMCI member country, the institute should take due note of this fact, liaising with the other institute and limiting the scope of its audit correspondingly. *Reference is the protocol for international recognition in Appendix C of the Istanbul Resolutions 1 March 2004: “Taking forward the accredited practice initiative”.*)

4. The Institute Assessors are suitably trained/qualified, briefed and quality assured

Institute assessors undertaking the above assessments on behalf of national institutes are suitably trained and/or qualified, are briefed in their role, and are quality assured.

5. **ACPs are formally accredited by the Institute, for a maximum of 3 years**
ACP candidate organisations who pass this assessment scrutiny are formally recognised, for a maximum period of three years, as accredited by the national institute in respect of their professional training and development and professional standards, under the title of Accredited Consulting Practice (or the national equivalent name). The national institute maintains a register of its recognised ACPs; and notifies each new ACP to ICMCI, which maintains an international register of recognised ACPs.

The national institute formally re-assesses each ACP after a maximum of 3 years, covering the same areas and to the same standard as the original assessment. Reconfirmation of ACP status is subject to such an assessment.

6. **ACPs are empowered to propose CMC Candidates to the Institute**
ACPs are empowered to identify and propose suitable management consultants from their practice for award of CMC by their national institute, via a route different from that for direct CMC candidates. Moreover, ACPs are expected to do so in all possible cases, and to inform and encourage their consultants to wish to become CMCs. However, ONLY the national Institute (provided it is a full member of ICMCI) has the authority actually to award the CMC designation.
7. **CMC Candidates from ACPs are subject to lesser scrutiny by the Institute**
Institutes subject CMC candidates from ACPs to significantly lesser scrutiny than direct CMC candidates, by virtue of the fact that ACPs have demonstrated the equivalence of their professional standards and processes to those required for CMC. This lesser scrutiny may (at the institute's discretion) range from zero scrutiny (for most individual candidates), to a defined sub-set of the normal scrutiny (e.g. ethics examination) for all candidates. The principle is that the total scrutiny of candidates by a combination of the ACP and the institute must amount to the equivalent of that under the institute's CMC standard. Institutes may also at their discretion require CMC candidates from ACPs to undergo some mandatory elements of preparation.

(NOTE Even if applying zero scrutiny, an institute must as a minimum receive a written notification from the ACP nominating (or confirming) the candidate(s), and formally stating that the candidates have met the requirements for CMC as agreed between the institute and the ACP. It is also recommended best practice that institutes should require a summary of the candidate's CV and assessment details for its records. On receiving the candidate's nomination, the institute must check that the ACP is a currently recognised ACP; and decide whether it wishes to apply scrutiny on this occasion to the candidate(s) as in Requirement 8 below).

8. The Institute nevertheless reserves the right to fully scrutinise any CMC Candidate from an ACP

National institutes nevertheless reserve the right to fully scrutinise the details of any individual CMC application from an ACP, (and if not satisfied can require the candidate to go through the full scrutiny process, as for direct CMC candidates). National institutes should exercise this right of scrutiny sometimes for quality control.

9. CMCs from ACPs are individual members of the Institute, on the same basis as direct CMCs

CMC candidates from ACPs, once approved by the institute, become individual members of the institute, on the same basis and with the same responsibilities as direct entry CMCs. This means (for example) that they should meet the institute's CPD requirements; are subject to the institute Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedures; and may retain their CMC status after leaving the ACP, subject to the institute's normal requirements.

10. The Institute has the right to withdraw ACP status at any time

A national institute can at its discretion, withdraw ACP status from any of its ACPs at any time, subject to simultaneously advising ICMCI of this action. Withdrawal of ACP status should be treated as the final sanction, applied only after an ACP has been warned of problems, and given every reasonable opportunity to rectify them. Reasons for that could be any major failure to continue to observe the requirements for ACP status, such as:

- professional development to CMC level is no longer adequate
- standards are no longer equivalent to the CMC standard
- proposed individual CMC candidates are not well qualified

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1. Version presented to ICMCI Working Meeting Vancouver 2004.10.03, edited Peter Thomas
 2. Version adapted by Euro Hub Meeting Copenhagen 2005.05.13, edited Peter Thomas
 3. Version presented to ICMCI Congress Beijing 2005.09.21, edited Peter Thomas
 4. Version 1.0 approved by ICMCI Congress Beijing 2005.09.22, edited by Peter Thomas
 5. Version 1.1. approved by ExCom 2006.01.24 (small alteration in article 8)