



Accreditation Handbook

**For use by those using both the
Written Application and
Application by Interview routes**

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Why Accreditation?

Accredited status is IRMS's mark of professionalism and commitment and stands for the highest standards of professionalism, up-to-date expertise and quality, demonstrating competence and the commitment to keep pace with the profession as it advances ever forwards. As the world becomes more competitive, accreditation provides a way for you to reflect on your professional abilities and highlight them to current and future employers. The question is: why would you not want to be accredited?

Background

An Accreditation Sub-committee was formed in 2008 by IRMS, tasked with setting up an accreditation scheme for individual members. The scheme is intended to be inclusive and providing a basis for further development.

The members of the Accreditation Sub-committee had a variety of backgrounds, reflecting the diverse nature of the IRMS to ensure that the scheme would be:

- Inclusive - in being able to cover the wide membership of the IRMS
- Realistic - in the way it would be applied and the time scales involved
- Affordable - for both the members and also for the IRMS itself
- Manageable - to implement
- Achievable - for both the individual and the IRMS
- Sustainable - into the future, to allow growth and further development

The Accreditation Sub-committee's recommendation to the IRMS was to develop a scheme which did not solely rely on qualification or experience at the highest level, but one which showed that an individual was working, learning, developing and actively participating in the wider profession.

Importantly, the scheme requires reflection on practice and learning as a key component of professional development.

So what is Accreditation?

Accreditation offers professional recognition to any individual member working in the fields of records management, information management, information governance, knowledge management and any other allied profession. Successful applicants are entitled to use the post-nominal AMIRMS - Accredited Member of the Information and Records Management Society.

The Accreditation Process is inclusive, aimed at individuals who can provide evidence and reflection on a variety of on-the-job practical skills and experience, academic training, project work, professional development, strategic input and policy-making within the profession.

Benefits

Being awarded Accredited status, represents formal recognition that professionalism, knowledge, skills and commitment to the field of IRM and their associated disciplines, have been assessed by a panel of peers and judged according to specific criteria as being worthy of merit. It demonstrates to external partners that an organisation employs high calibre, knowledgeable practitioners of IRM. Organisations may like to record and publicise that their staff have professional qualifications as it shows both corporate dedication to staff learning and development and the value they place on professionalism.

Governance

The scheme is managed by the IRMS Accreditation and Development Subcommittee, comprised of previously accredited members. It is responsible for:

- implementing the accreditation process;
- monitoring and quality assurance of the process; and
- future development of the accreditation scheme by the Accreditation Sub-Committee.

Who is eligible?

The Accreditation Scheme has been designed to be inclusive, covering a broad range of fields including information governance, knowledge management or any other allied profession.

As well as those working in traditional information and records management, colleagues involved in compliance with information legislation, data management, digital preservation, archives, specialist technology or librarianship may also wish to consider applying.

IRMS accreditation is inclusive and takes account of formal, informal and experiential learning. It does not require a formal qualification. If you have qualification(s), however, they will form part of the overall experience and learning package that the accreditation process assesses.

It is difficult to give absolute guidance as everyone's experiences are different but if you have been working in a professional capacity for five years in a role primarily focused on information and records management, information governance or a related or aligned discipline you may wish to consider enrolling on the scheme.

If you have a relevant qualification, you are eligible to apply for Accreditation after three years of experience in an appropriate setting. If you do not have a qualification you are eligible to apply after five years of experience.

For further guidance on whether you are eligible, we suggest that you ask for an Accreditation Supporter and talk through your experience with them. Alternatively you may wish to join the Accreditation Candidate Forum and assess your experience alongside that of your fellow candidates. For more information please refer to the Accreditation Supporter section below.

IRMS Membership

IRMS offers Accredited Member status to individuals who work within the information and records management profession.

As the constitution currently stands, the individual class of membership also includes student, affiliated and overseas members. Accreditation is awarded to any individual IRMS Member who meets the agreed professional criteria.

At this time, Corporate Members cannot apply as organisations, but can nominate up to four members of their staff for accreditation. These individuals will follow the same process as individual members.

Accredited member status is dependent on membership of IRMS. If you cease to be a member, your accredited status will also end. Someone who has previously enjoyed accredited member status via their employer's corporate membership will need to join as an individual member if they leave the employment of that organisation and move to one that is not a member (or which is a member but has used its full quota of accredited member places).

Qualifications

Qualifications need not be restricted to information or records management; they must, however, be relevant, related subjects containing a significant amount of information, knowledge or records management content, such as an MBA with a knowledge management elective, librarianship, archives, digital security or preservation, or information rights: if you have any doubts please check with the Accreditation Officer. In addition, project or change management qualifications and standards and legislation courses can also be used to augment your application because accreditation is intended to be inclusive. It is important to note that experience and a demonstrated understanding of IRM principles and practice also counts towards accreditation.

Applying for Accreditation

The Accreditation Application forms are available on the Accreditation page of the IRMS website.

Applications are assessed by members of the IRMS Accreditation and Development Subcommittee.

The Subcommittee meets on a bimonthly basis and so all applications will be considered within two month of their receipt. Depending on the number of applications received, the actual time may be considerably shorter.

IRMS reserves the right to use suitably anonymised versions of the content submitted for purposes internal to IRMS such as accreditor training, management and reporting purposes. If we wish to use some of your content more widely, for example in guidance to applicants, we will ask for your permission first.

The accreditation form takes you through the process of submitting your information and evidence. We don't ask for a portfolio or similar, but we do expect you to be able to substantiate any claims you make on the form to your referee.

The Supporter System

We are able to offer every applicant, before they apply, an Accreditation Supporter. This will be a person, normally a member of the IRMS Executive Committee, Accreditation and Development Subcommittee or a group Chair who is already an Accredited Member and so has gone through the accreditation process. Your Supporter will be able to guide and advise you and to provide you with reassurance about your application and its content. If the Supporter is a member of the Accreditation and Development Subcommittee, they will not be involved in the assessment of your application or take part in your interview (if you go down the Application by Interview route).

Another great means of support is our Accreditation Candidate Forum: we are developing a forum for accreditation candidates to speak to each other for mutual support, sharing of expertise and advice.

Your Referee

Your referee is your mentor and your guarantor, attesting to the fact that your application is accurate and honest.

You should nominate a referee who, though not needing to be a member of IRMS, has a sound understanding of information and records management principle and practice.

They must be able to comment on the content of your application, verify the relevance of any documentation that you use to support your answers, and confirm your level of involvement in the activity described. If one referee alone is unable to vouch for all your work because of changing roles or organisation, you may nominate up to a maximum of two referees.

When you have completed your application form you need to send or show it to your referee(s) along with your curriculum vitae, and supporting evidence. Once they have completed their part of the form, you should ask them to forward it along with your CV to accreditation@irms.org.uk.

Evidence

You will also need to consider whether you need to provide your referee with any supporting material in order to demonstrate your competency and experience in that activity. You can use evidence from both current and past roles - including any IRM voluntary work, in support of your application.

Examples of evidence you could use include: letters of appreciation, conference attendance lists, committee agenda listing members and role, professional development, performance management, project documents, file plans, retention schedules, risk assessments, publications, training material, research thesis and policies, procedures or guidelines.

NONE of the evidence should be sent - if any is sent it will be destroyed and not form part of the assessment process.

Your CV

You must, however send IRMS a current, full CV. This is a key component of your application and its submission is compulsory for both methods of application. You may also refer to your CV within your application, where appropriate.

Accreditation Fee

No fee will apply during 2017, although IRMS may introduce one at its discretion in future years.

Confidentiality

IRMS recognises that if you work as a consultant or for an organisation which requires greater than normal confidentiality on your part, it may be hard to provide the evidence required. In those circumstances, please contact the Accreditation and Development Subcommittee who will work with you to determine what form your evidence should take. For example, it might be possible to include testimonials that do not identify organisations. Your reflection remains a key part of accreditation, but you may need to consider how to present that without divulging confidential information inappropriately. Again, the Subcommittee will help you with that process. This will enable you to talk about what work you have done with less identifying detail but still to get across what you have tried and what you have learned.

How to apply

You can apply for accreditation in two ways:

- Written Accreditation and

- Accreditation by Interview.

Written Accreditation is considered by some to be suitable for people with less experience because it provides a more structured framework for you to evaluate your knowledge, skills and experience. That can be incredibly useful in the earlier stages of your career as you grow and develop in your role.

If you go down the Accreditation by Interview route, you have to represent yourself and your career in conversation with the panel which may appear daunting without some years of knowledge and experience on which you can reflect. This isn't necessarily the case however as the Accreditation Panel undertaking the interview will ask questions to get you to provide answers that are as comprehensive as possible. This route has been suggested to be most suitable to people with relatively little experience (as the interview panel will ask questions to get the most information from you) or with a great deal of experience (because Professionals with more experience are likely have undertaken considerable development during their careers out with the IRMS scheme).

There are three sections to your application:

- Section 1: Principles
- Section 2: Practice
- Section 3: Development

Both routes will be based on the same methodology of assessing you in these areas, the only real difference is whether you write down your answers or speak them.

Written Application

Written accreditation is a process by which you map your knowledge, skills, qualifications and experiences to a framework designed by IRMS that we believe covers the core aspects of working in information and records management. It can be used as both a guide for your professional development and as way of having that development validated by your professional body. By completing the written submission you can think about how your skills and achievements align with the IRMS framework and consider whether there are additional elements of knowledge and practice you wish to develop in future. The process is also an opportunity to reflect. You are asked to think about what you have learned from your achievements, why that is important and how your experiences have shaped your understanding of what the role of information and records professional is, or can be. Crucially, you are asked to consider how your knowledge, skills and experiences align with that understanding.

The Written Application Form

The form has the three sections mentioned above and each of these has a number of parts. Each part is made up of space where you provide your experience and skills in the area covered by the section and a final compulsory reflection on learning question. Each answer you provide must have a maximum word count of 750. Anything less than 400 may be inadequate to provide the assessors the information they need to assess the form.

You should not expect to demonstrate the same level of competence in every section. The process has been designed to accommodate people with different areas of work and different experiences so don't worry if some sections aren't as strong as others.

Application by Interview

Application by Interview is an oral option. It is not, however, the easy option as involves exactly the same process of considering your knowledge, skills, qualifications and experiences as Written Accreditation and the process of reflection remains key. As with Written Accreditation, your knowledge, skills and achievements will be considered against

the IRMS framework and during your interview, the panel will ask you questions based on that criteria and the information you provided on your application form.

Application by Interview Form

Even with an interview, there is a form: this is an introduction to the process and to give the assessors some background into you and your experience and so there is only one part to this form: this is the section on Principles (see below). This has a maximum word count of 750. Anything less than 400 may be inadequate to provide the assessors the information they need to assess your application.

You will also need to provide a completed referee's section and your CV.

Assessment criteria

There are three sections to the assessment and the Written Application form and the Interview for Application by Interview is structured accordingly:

- Section 1: Principles
- Section 2: Practice
 - A: Information and records management
 - B: Information governance practice
 - C: Other related disciplines: practice (up to two disciplines may be covered)
- Section 3:
 - A: Development of skills
 - B: Development of the profession

Section 1: Principles

This section concerns your understanding of fundamental professional principles and how they apply to your work. In it you should describe your career and experience, any qualifications you have and what skills they have given you, what publications, books etc. that may have been of use to you and what other methods you have gained the expertise, experience and skills that you currently have. Please also consider what the profession and we as professionals are here to do and where the future of the profession is going and what it may look like.

Section 2: Practice

Section 2 is all about you demonstrating the professional practice you undertake. The default areas for assessment in this part are information and records management and information governance. However applicants who are not specialists in these areas but who are still information professionals may choose to be assessed in other areas. See C: Other related Disciplines below.

In all cases you must describe two different areas. If you are applying by Written Application you may complete two parts, for example:

- A & B: information and records management and information governance
- A & C: information and records management and a related discipline, for example information security
- B & C: information governance and a related discipline, for example copyright
- C & C: two related disciplines, for example where you are a technologist and a supplier or a copyright and information and security specialist.

A: Information and records management:

This part is about the core principles and methodology of information and records management practice, such as file plans, retention schedules and retrieving information and how you have designed, acquired, implemented, delivered, educated or accounted for any information and records management services.

B: Information governance:

This part is about the development of information strategy and the compliance framework for handling both personal and corporate information in a consistent, systematic and accountable manner. It includes data governance, information rights and data sharing protocols, risk management, quality assurance and security of information systems.

C: Other related disciplines:

This part is for people who may not necessarily be specialists in information and records management or information governance *per se* but who are still information professionals. You may be, for example:

- a technologist,
- a copyright expert,
- an information security practitioner,
- a document controller or
- business intelligence practitioner
- a supplier to the profession working alongside the practitioner.

If this is the case, use this section to describe your work, the standards and frameworks you use, policies, processes and procedures you use, training you have delivered or services you provide.

Section 3:

A: Development of Skills

This part is about your own personal development. Include details on, for example, why you did a particular course and what you got out of it.

You should try to include as much information as you can. The more you put and the greater the breadth and depth of experience you can demonstrate, the better chance you have of achieving accreditation.

Whilst you might not be able to provide direct experience, you might have knowledge about the area by attending a training course, professional meeting or doing some personal research which you can evidence.

B: Development of the Profession

This part is about your input to the information and records management profession.

Have you contributed by speaking at a conference, being a member of a committee, working group or professional panel? Have you mentored coached or buddied? Have you written a book, an article in the IRMS Bulletin, sent emails to a mailing list? Try to include as much information as you can – again – the more you put and the greater the breadth and depth of your contribution, the better chance you have of achieving accreditation.

Reflection on learning outcomes

You are also asked to reflect on your learning outcomes, describing what you have learnt and how you have developed, what worked well, and/or what improvements you would make in the future.

This is a critical part of your application as it is all about your learning experiences.

Reflection on learning has a greater weighting and so your answers here are particularly important. The breadth and depth of your answers will earn more credit. You should cover:

Context

Where and why you were there and what you were doing? Who else was there and what were they doing? What happened and who did what? This gets no marks so should get less words

Evaluation & Analysis

Give your opinion of what went well or went wrong, including if there were any surprises. This gets half of all available marks for this section.

Experience Gained

You need to reflect on what you would do differently, what you learnt, what recommendations or improvements you would make in the future. Also, include any new skills you need to acquire. This gets half of all available marks for this section

If you are a consultant or work for an organisation that requires greater than normal confidentiality, this is the area where you should provide as full an answer as possible. While you may not be able to use any identifying detail, focus on where you were when you started as a records manager and where you are now having gained experience. You can also use these sections to give an overview of the development of the profession generally.

Code of Ethics

As an accredited member, you must agree to the IRMS Accreditation Code of Ethics. This is a list of principles that all professionals in the Information and Records Management profession.

Please refer to the code online:

<http://www.irms.org.uk/member-area/irms-accreditation/irms-accreditation-code-of-ethics>

Please also find the code of ethics on the accreditation page of the IRMS website in the member area.

Assessment of Applications

Assessment is made by members of the IRMS Accreditation and Development Subcommittee. This is a panel of experienced professionals, appointed and validated as appropriate by the IRMS Executive Committee.

If you have made a written application, a panel of the Subcommittee will look at your submission.

If you are making an application by Interview, your documentation is submitted to a panel of accredited members who will undertake the interview

Applications will always be assessed by a minimum of two people, following agreed guidelines which have been designed to ensure transparency and consistency of practice.

Once assessors have completed their scoring, a recommendation will be made to the Accreditation and Development Subcommittee, for ratification.

Notification of results

Applicants will receive written notification of the outcome of their application. If successful, you will receive a letter from the IRMS confirming your Accredited Member status. Your name will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin (unless you request otherwise). You

will be able to use the post-nominal letters AMIRMS in addition to any other post-nominal you might hold, such as BSc, and will be authorised to do so for as long as you remain a member of IRMS.

If the assessors believe that you have almost met the standard required to achieve accredited status but not quite, you will be contacted for further information and/or evidence, which you would need to provide within a month.

If your application isn't successful

It is the IRMS's view that all applicants should achieve accredited status and so if you have not been successful, we will help you to achieve accreditation. You will be sent an Assessment Report which will provide you with a roadmap indicating what areas you need to strengthen with further experience, evidence or reflection, to assist your professional development and provide you with the skills and expertise to become accredited. If you did not have one before, you will also be allocated an Accreditation Supporter who will assist you in achieving the recommendations in the Assessment Report.

You will become eligible to submit a new application after the period of time specified in the Assessment Report: the panel will specify this period which they believe is necessary for further development and experience. You might need to take a course, or alternately refresh, carry out or shadow someone else performing a particular IRM function in order to address the comments made in your Assessment Report.

If you follow the roadmap with consideration and thoroughness there should be no reason why your subsequent accreditation will not be successful.

Appeal procedure

If you wish to appeal against the decision made not to award accreditation at this time - possibly because you forgot to submit a key piece of additional, relevant evidence – you can submit an appeal form at no extra charge. The form is available on the website and will be considered as long as it is received by IRMS *within 2 months* from the date of your notification of refusal letter. You should state the reason and circumstances around your appeal, and ensure that any additional evidence is validated by your original referee(s), before forwarding it to IRMS: accreditation@irms.org.uk.

The reason for appeal and any additional evidence will be re-assessed along with your original application, on a case-by-case basis. Different assessors will be used. Once ratified, the decision will be final, with no further appeals being considered.

Further guidance

If you have any queries that have not been addressed by this guidance please email: accreditation@irms.org.uk.

Appendix 1: Suggestions which may assist you in completing your form/providing responses in your Interview

Section 1: Principles

This section covers the principles you use in your work, where you picked these up and how you use them in your work

- Career and experience
- Qualifications you have and what skills they have given you
- Publications and books that have been of use to you
- Other methods to gain relevant expertise, experience and skills
- Please also consider what the profession and we as professionals are here to do
- Where the future of the profession is going and what it may look like.

Section 2: Practice

A: Information and records management

This section covers the core areas of information and records management, so you should aim to answer as many of the following points as you can.

In this section you should demonstrate how you have developed or maintained:

- Processes for creating, capturing or acquiring information and records.
- Information and records systems or technological solutions.
- Information and records review, retention and disposal processes.
- Or assisted in the migration, transfer or maintenance of records from one system or organisation to another.
- Retrieved information and records through the application of metadata, classification schemes, tagging or indexing methodology. This includes your skills in using retrieval tools
- Responded to stakeholder enquiries, research and information requests. This concerns your skills in carrying out the service activity for a requestor. A stakeholder can be anyone who has a specific interest in your service, e.g. a manager, financier, customer or user.
- Developed, maintained or delivered IRM awareness training/ workshops to non-records staff e.g. stakeholders or service users. Training can be both formal and informal, and involve groups or 1:1 briefing.
- Developed, maintained or facilitated training and/or awareness of IRM for information and records staff. Training can be both formal and informal, and involve groups or 1:1 briefing. Receiving training is covered in section 4.
- Developed or improved IRM services e.g. through understanding stakeholder needs, demonstrating good practice, advising or influencing stakeholders. This concerns your skills in crafting effective and efficient ways of actioning information and records management.
- Developed or maintained measurement of IRM services. This includes performance or quality assurance indicators and, dependant on your level of involvement you should demonstrate whether it relates to methodology, evaluation or statistics collection.
- Marketed or promoted IRM services. This includes presentations or workshops given internally or externally to both records and non-records audiences.
- Brought about a positive change in IRM culture or behaviours. This can be both in the workplace and in the wider professional environment.

- Contributed to changes in IRM structures and roles.
- Developed or contributed to IRM policies/ procedures/ guidelines/ handbooks. This includes services such as responding to data protection and FOI requests, however Information security policy and compliance is covered in section 3.
- Developed, implemented or managed daily IRM operations. This covers internal services or those provided to others and not services acquired from vendors.
- Developed, managed or liaised with vendors. Dependant on your level of involvement, you should demonstrate whether it relates to research or contractual negotiation, implementation of vendor services within your organisation, or operational liaison.

B: Information governance

This section covers the development of strategy and the compliance framework for handling both personal and corporate information, in a consistent and systematic manner. It includes data governance, information rights and data sharing protocols, risk management, quality assurance and security of information systems.

- Developed or maintained information security. This includes any work done to improve the security, accessibility, confidentiality or restriction of information be that relating to electronic or manual information.
- Developed or maintained information permission or controls. This includes access rights, includes privacy or protective markings and data handling.
- Developed or maintained information access for compliance with legislation and standards. This includes ISO 270001, IAMM, IAAF.
- Developed or maintained IRM activity in line with recognised regulations, standards and guidance. This includes ISO 15489, FOI, DPA, RIPA, BIP 0008, or other sector specific requirements or regulations.
- Developed or maintained business continuity and/or risk management processes. This may include work done in order to meet the requirements of ISO 3100, 22399 or other sector specific requirements or regulations.
- Developed or maintained information security policy, procedures and guidance. Records management policy is covered in section 2.

Section 3:

A: Development of Skills

This section covers your own personal development

- Received relevant ongoing IRM training, courses and professional workshops.
- Received informal development e.g. shadowing, observing, or discussions.
- Provided or received mentoring or coaching. There must be significant information or records management content.
- Undertaken IRM job rotation, secondment or attachment.
- Reading of professional literature
- Attendance of conferences, training, meetings etc.

B: Development of the Profession

This section covers your input to the information and records management profession.

- Provided informal development e.g. shadowing, observing, or discussions.
- Provided or received mentoring or coaching. There must be significant information or records management content.

- Developed and maintained peer group contacts e.g. networking at relevant conferences, seminars, regional or special interest group events, IRM community sites.
- Produced articles or research for publication. Do not include academic dissertations unless they have been published.
- Actively participated in IRM working groups or committees. This is not restricted to the IRMS but includes societies such as CILIP, ARA and BCS, as long as there is sufficient information management content.
- Promoted and advocated the IRM profession. This covers work and research which expands and extends the field of information and records management and thereby develops its professionalism. It can include speaking to people about being an IRM professional, as well as more formal advancement through academic research.

Appendix 2: Accreditation Frequently Asked Questions

Does my job title have to have 'Information' or 'Records' in it for me to be eligible to apply?

No. Application has been designed to be inclusive over a broad range of skills and work practices within the fields of information management, governance, knowledge management or any other allied profession, including data management, DPA and FOI requests, archive services, digital preservation and librarianship.

Do I need to have a qualification in information and records management?

No. You need a minimum of 5 years of experience working within the IRM profession, reducing to only 3 years if you also have a relevant educational qualification. Relevant qualifications include any professional qualifications with significant IRM content, such as an MBA with a knowledge management elective, librarianship, archives, digital security or preservation, or information rights.

Do I need to answer every question?

No, but you should respond to as many questions as you can in order to demonstrate the breadth and depth of your experience, and give the assessors as much information as possible to work with. All the reflection on learning outcome questions are mandatory and any question answered must have supporting evidence in order to give you a good chance of gaining enough points.

How do I answer the questions?

Marks will be given for the breadth and depth of your response. Breadth means the number of evidenced examples given and depth means the amount of detail you have given for each example. You don't have to write exactly 400 words for each response, but you must provide enough detail of your ability to the assessors.

What evidence must I provide to demonstrate my experience?

Suggested evidence includes letters of appreciation, conference attendance lists, committee agenda listing members and role, professional development, performance management, project documents, file plans, retention schedules, risk assessments, publications, training material, research theses and policies, procedures or guidelines from both current and past roles.

Try not to use the same piece of evidence more than once, but if you have to then you must explain the different ways you are applying it.

When will I get the result of my application?

If your application was received by the IRMS up to one month before a session of the Accreditation Board, you should expect notification up to two weeks after this date. If there are too many applications for the Accreditation Board to reasonably assess, or your application is received later than this cut-off, you will be informed that it will be held over until the next session. A schedule of quarterly Accreditation Board sessions will be available on the IRMS website.

How can I show people that I am accredited?

You will receive an Accredited Member certificate from the Chair of the IRMS, along with a badge and membership card which authorises you to use the post nominals AMIRMS - Accredited Member

of the Information and Records Management Society. Your name will be added to the Accredited Member list on the website, published in the subsequent Bulletin and displayed at the annual IRMS Conference.

How long does accreditation last and do I have to re-apply after a certain time?

Accreditation is awarded and retained by you for as long as you pay for Individual Membership of the IRMS. However, the IRMS reserves the right to remove Accredited Membership from anyone who breaches the IRMS Code of Practice.

What if I haven't performed a particular function for a while or have changed roles?

If you have not performed an activity for a while, moved to another role or organisation, or are now in a managerial position for that activity, you can still use work examples and evidence from previous positions. As long as your evidence, level of involvement and reflection on these experiences in the learning outcome demonstrate that you performed the function, or have a sound knowledge about its practice, it can be used in your answer. For example if you no longer collate data for an information audit but have done so in the past, or now manager teams performing audits.

I've changed roles recently so how do I choose a suitable referee?

You can nominate a maximum of two referees if it proves too difficult for you to find someone who has sufficient understanding of your work if you have changed roles, or you cannot show them evidence from another organisation due to handling sensitivities. The Accreditation Guidance gives details about what you referee needs to do.

Can I appeal against a decision not to accredit me?

Yes, as long as you do so within 2 months of the date on your notification letter. Just download an appeal form from the website and use it to state the reason for your appeal. If you forgot to submit some additional, relevant evidence, this must be validated by your referee before forwarding the form only to the IRMSaccreditation@irms.org.uk.

Appendix 3: IRMS Code of Ethics

Introduction

All Accredited Members of the Information and Records Management Society will undertake to meet the requirements and expectations of this Code of Practice.

Members should raise any matter of concern of an ethical nature with their immediate or senior managers or, if this is not appropriate, with the Information and Records Management Society, even if it is not addressed in this ethics Code of Practice.

Accredited members will keep their knowledge current and maintain their competence in the field of Information and Records Management. They will keep abreast of developments in the Information and Records Management profession.

Main principles

Members shall always seek to uphold and enhance the standing of the Information and Records Management profession and the Information and Records Management Society, and to act correctly and professionally. To this end they will:

- Promote and support the development of Information and Records Management within their own organisation and within the profession as a whole.
- Maintain the highest standard of integrity in all business relationships, both inside and outside the organisations where they work.
- Reject any practice which might reasonably be deemed improper, never use their authority inappropriately and maintain the highest standards of behaviour.
- Seek to improve the proficiency and standing of the profession by acquiring, maintaining and improving their current information and records management knowledge through training, education and research.
- Foster the highest possible standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they work or are responsible.
- Optimise the use of resources or influence to provide the maximum benefit to their employing organisation.
- Comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law of this country or any country in which they practice.
- Act in an honourable, inclusive and ethical way towards their employers, clients and all others with whom their work is connected, in keeping with the highest professional standards.
- Treat colleagues and fellow members fairly and not attempt to discredit or injure the professional reputation, personal standing, or prospects of any others.
- Not knowingly compete unfairly with any others or claim credit for the work of others.
- Refer to or advise the use of other specialists if the employer's or client's interests would be better served by others.
- Not presume to be experts in fields other than their own, or accept professional obligations that they are not competent to discharge.

A breach of any of these ethical requirements and expectations may lead to the removal of accredited status.