

Accreditation Board report, April 2006

We welcome new members to the board. Helen Bethune Moore has resigned as Victoria's delegate to the board and Janet Mackenzie has taken her place. Michael Lewis, president of the NSW society and the NSW delegate to the IPed Interim Council, is the current council delegate to the board. Julie Harders has been nominated by the NSW committee as an alternate delegate; she will be assisting Shelley and participating in AB teleconferences/face-to-face meetings if Shelley is unable to attend.

Most societies have now held accreditation workshops: Victoria led off in February, followed by Queensland on 1 March, Tasmania on 25 March, Canberra on 29 March and WA on 4 April. South Australia and NSW will be holding their workshops on 13 April and 6 June respectively; I will be participating in both meetings.

The focus of these workshops has been on:

- reporting on the progress made by the Accreditation Board to date
- explaining what types of evidence members should include in their portfolios and what evidence won't help them
- urging members to develop an evidence-gathering mentality and start looking at every job they do now as potential evidence for their portfolio
- reducing fears about the difficulty of preparing an application for accreditation
- answering members' questions, on the spot if possible
- preparing a list of questions that delegates need to answer through *CredAbility* and web sites and consider as a board.

Attendance at these workshops has ranged from very good (40 to 50 in Canberra and 30 in Perth) to modest (16 in Brisbane), but all have produced interesting questions and participants have appreciated the opportunity to learn more about what's involved in preparing an application. At all workshops people have asked for follow-up workshops and been assured that the board will organise these.

Certain topics aroused particular interest, including the use of the Standards in preparing applications, definition of competence for editors, the need for detailed guidelines, project management and the Standards, and renewal of accreditation (the requirements, the cost and whether we should accredit editors for life). Other topics of interest included:

- confidentiality
- the vintage of the evidence submitted (two years? five years? fifteen years?)
- assessors (names of, rates of payment and whether we would employ two assessors for applications involving disparate specialties)

- whether student assignments and work done overseas would be acceptable as evidence
- the role of the MEAA in accreditation
- whether we would consider awarding a few extra points to editors who have been working in the profession for a few years.

Of these topics, the question of defining a minimum level of competence is by far the most crucial for the Accreditation Board; we need to produce a definition in terms of the Standards as soon as possible.

We now have 28 distinguished editors in our first pool of assessors. I have enclosed the first edition of *CredAbility* for your information; this column explains the basis of appointing distinguished editors and lists their names. A supplement that describes briefly their areas of expertise will shortly be circulated through web sites and newsletters.

It is clear from the questions asked that people's knowledge of the accreditation program ranges from extensive to non-existent. It is therefore particularly important that board delegates use *CredAbility* and all other means available to provide all our potential applicants with the most up-to-date information and that we tell them where they can find these details.

The Accreditation Board's aim is to develop a program in which preparing applications is as simple for applicants as we can make it. When you try the work-through-the-Standards exercise with a piece of tracked or marked-up text, it becomes obvious that selecting the appropriate sub-sections in the Standards is quite easy. So if our members have salted away appropriate MSS and supporting evidence, they will experience no great difficulty in preparing their applications, provided they have detailed guidelines to assist them.

At the same time, the board will need to consult with assessors to ensure that the guidelines issued to both applicants and assessors are neither too general nor too restrictive to allow the assessors to do their job. Development of these guidelines is another high priority for the AB; we cannot finalise them until the final or next-to-final revised Standards have been approved, but we can make a good deal of progress with the existing version.

The importance of the guidelines was stressed by Canberra's three distinguished editors during the conversation Louise Forster and I had with them before the Canberra workshop. They raised the questions of payment and workload for assessors, and also the question of confidentiality; they felt anonymity was essential and pointed out problems in maintaining this.

They discussed the Standards in terms of the competency-based nature of our accreditation scheme: specifically, they expressed concern that the competency statements and performance criteria would reduce their scope to something akin to marking a test.

A Queensland member of the Education, Training and Mentoring Working Group also discussed amendments to the Standards from another point of view – the need to take into account the affective aspects of tertiary courses in editing and publishing. These affective criteria would be particularly important for project management.

The first teleconference between the convenors of NOWG, the Standards Review Working Group, the Education, Training and Mentoring Group and the Communications Working Group and me has yet to take place, due chiefly to my lack of broadband, but this must be a high priority for all of us. We have a great deal to discuss.

Robin Bennett

Chair, Accreditation Board

First Cohort of Assessors for Accreditation

ACT

Elizabeth Murphy (generalist)

Chris Pirie (generalist)

Loma Snooks (generalist)

NSW

Heather Jamieson (literary fiction, generalist)

Sybil Kesteven (educational, vocational)

Pam Peters (generalist)

Meryl Potter (generalist, education, corporate)

Julie Stanton (generalist)

TAS

Janice Bird (generalist)

SA

Karen Disney (generalist, online editing)

Celia Jellett (generalist, children's literature)

Susan Rintoul (generalist, education)

Kathie Stove (generalist, sciences)

QLD

Susan Addison (legal, humanities)

Paul Bennett (education, business)

Rosanne Fitzgibbon (fiction, history, education)

Jill Morris (children's and adult fiction)

Barbara Ker Wilson, AM (generalist)

Ruth Ridgway (sciences, generalist)

Jan Whelan (generalist)

Judy Heinemann (education, government)

VIC

Elizabeth Flann (generalist)

Beryl Hill (generalist, writer)

Janet Mackenzie (generalist, writer)

Renée Otmar (generalist)

Susan Keogh (education, non-fiction)

WA

Anne Surma (generalist)

Janet Blagg (fiction, non-fiction)