

IChemE

ACTS Managers' Guidance

IChemE Accredited Company Training Schemes



Contents

1 Introduction	4	4 The accreditation and re-accreditation process	9
What is this guidance for?	4	4.1 Stages of the process	9
Who is this guidance for?	4	4.2 Possible outcomes	10
How to use this guidance	4	4.3 Conditions vs recommendations	10
Key terminology and acronyms	4		
2 About ACTS	5	5 Overview of accreditation requirements	11
2.1 What is an ACTS?	5	5.1 Core requirements	11
2.2 What are the benefits of ACTS?	5	5.2 Additional expectations for accredited schemes	12
2.3 What does an ACTS do?	5	5.3 Trainee eligibility	12
2.4 What does it cover?	5		
2.5 How long does accreditation last?	6	6 Roles and responsibilities	13
2.6 What are the fees?	6	6.1 ACTS Manager (overall Scheme Manager)	13
2.7 What types of schemes can be accredited?	6	6.2 Optional roles within the company	13
		6.3 Trainees	13
		6.4 Mentors	13
		6.5 Line Managers and Supervisors	14
		6.6 Senior sponsor and the organisation	14
		6.7 IChemE roles	14
3 Setting up a scheme	7	7 Creating an ACTS manual	15
3.1 Getting started	7	7.1 Purpose of the Training Manual	15
3.2 Is your organisation ready?	7	7.2 IChemE template and support	15
3.3 Key steps in setting up a scheme for the first time	7	7.3 What to include in your manual	15
3.4 What does a good ACTS look like?	8	7.4 Maintaining and reviewing your manual	15
3.5 Support available	8	7.5 Need help?	16
3.6 Gaining senior management buy-in	8		

8 Mapping to IChemE competencies	17	12 Maintaining and enhancing your scheme	28
8.1 What does mapping involve?	17	12.1 Using the ACTS portal to maintain scheme records	28
8.2 Recommended approach for mapping	17		
8.3 What good mapping looks like	17	13 Managing unexpected changes or disruptions to the ACTS	29
9 The accreditation visit	18	13.1 Examples of significant changes	29
9.1 Preparing for the visit	18	13.2 Proactive succession planning	29
9.2 Agreeing the visit agenda	18	13.3 Responding to disruption	29
9.3 Appointment of ACTS Assessors	18	13.4 Transition guidance for outgoing ACTS Managers	30
9.4 During the visit	19		
9.5 Structure of the visit	19	14 Resources and support from IChemE	31
9.6 A two-way process	19	14.1 IChemE contacts and support channels	31
9.7 Joint accreditation visits	19	14.2 Online resources	31
9.8 Interim reviews	20	14.3 Workshops and networking	31
10 Requirements for accreditation	21	15 FAQs	32
10.1 Key requirements	21	15.1 General and eligibility	32
10.2 Multi-site schemes	22	15.2 Accreditation and visits	32
10.3 Deliverables and metrics of success	23	15.3 Mentors and support	32
		15.4 ACTS management	32
11 Good practice for effective schemes	24	15.5 Systems and reporting	32
11.1 Good practice areas	24	15.6 Costs and resources	33
11.2 Supporting trainees on ACTS	25	15.7 Progression to Chartered and further support	33
11.3 Mentoring guidance and framework for effective mentoring	26		
11.4 Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) considerations	26	16 Appendix	34
11.5 Integrating ACTS into company talent and HR strategies	27	A Accreditation readiness self-check tool	34
		B Checklist – setting up a new ACTS	35
		C Annual scheme health check	35
		D Mock interview resources	36

1 Introduction

Welcome to the ACTS Guidance for ACTS Managers. This document is designed to support you in managing an IChemE accredited company training scheme (ACTS) and provides practical information, examples, tools, and advice to help you succeed.

What is this guidance for?

This resource has been created specifically for ACTS Managers – the individuals responsible for setting up, running, and maintaining an ACTS within their organisation. It outlines everything you need to know to:

- Understand the purpose and benefits of ACTS
- Set up or improve a training scheme
- Apply for accreditation or re-accreditation
- Support trainees on their professional development journey
- Align your scheme with IChemE's standards and expectations

Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is primarily intended for:

- New ACTS Managers setting up a scheme for the first time
- Experienced ACTS Managers looking to review or update an existing scheme
- HR, L&D or technical staff supporting ACTS delivery

While others (eg mentors or assessors within your organisation) may also find sections useful, the document is written with your responsibilities and decision-making needs in mind.

How to use this guidance

The content is organised by topic and follows a logical progression from foundational knowledge to more detailed and practical guidance. However, each section can also be used on its own – so feel free to jump directly to what you need.

Key terminology and acronyms

Here are a few key terms up front:

Term	Meaning
ACTS	Accredited Company Training Scheme
IChemE	Institution of Chemical Engineers
C&C	Competence and Commitment (the professional standards for Chartered membership)
REM	Regional Engagement Manager – IChemE staff member supporting your region
UKU	Underpinning knowledge and understanding
IPD	Initial professional development
MIChemE	Postnominals for Chartered Members of IChemE
CEng	Postnominal registration for Chartered engineers, registered with the Engineering Council
PDSUB	Professional Development Subcommittee – the committee responsible for oversight of ACTS at IChemE
PEI	Professional Engineering Institutions – equivalent to IChemE for other disciplines

2 About ACTS

2.1 What is an ACTS?

ACTS stands for **Accredited Company Training Scheme**. It is a formal recognition by IChemE that a company's graduate training programme meets the standards needed to support the development of chemical engineering professionals – particularly those aiming to achieve **Chartered Member (MIChemE)** status.

In short, an ACTS helps ensure that graduate chemical engineers are given the right support, training, and experiences to become professionally qualified. It also helps employers attract, retain and develop top engineering talent.

Key point: An ACTS is not a qualification in itself. It is a structured framework that supports early-career engineers in working towards IChemE professional membership.

2.2 What are the benefits of ACTS?

For the organisation:

- External recognition of a high-quality training programme
- Support with recruiting and retaining graduate engineers
- Access to IChemE's professional development resources and support
- Enhanced reputation within the profession and with clients or regulators

For trainees:

- Clear structure and guidance to support professional development
- Mentorship and oversight tailored to IChemE's requirements
- A defined pathway to Chartered membership
- Greater confidence and motivation during the early career phase

2.3 What does an ACTS do?

IChemE accredits company schemes that demonstrate they provide the necessary breadth, depth and quality of training and experience to meet the Competence and Commitment (C&C) Standards for Chartered membership.

This includes:

- A structured training plan covering technical, professional and ethical development
- Clear roles and responsibilities (eg mentors, ACTS Manager)
- Regular progress reviews and feedback mechanisms
- Access to support and resources throughout the training period

2.4 What does it cover?

ACTS accreditation is designed for organisations that train chemical engineering or process engineering graduates working toward Chartered status. It typically covers:

- Early-career chemical or process engineers, often within the first four-five years post-graduation, sometimes referred to as the Initial Professional Development (IPD) phase
- A broad range of sectors where chemical and process engineers work (eg energy, pharma, water, manufacturing, food and drink, consulting)
- Both UK-based and international schemes

Note: The ACTS model is flexible and can be adapted to suit your organisation's size, structure and sector. What matters most is that it meets the core IChemE accreditation requirements.

2.5 How long does accreditation last?

Once accredited, a new scheme is typically accredited for an initial period of two years. IChemE will contact you before the end of that period to begin the re-accreditation process, which follows a similar process to initial accreditation but with a focus on performance and continuous improvement. An existing scheme is typically re-accredited for a standard period of four years.

2.6 What are the fees?

IChemE charges fees to cover the costs of assessing and supporting accredited schemes. This includes the time and travel of assessors, administrative support, and access to development resources.

- **Initial accreditation:** a one-off fee applies at the point of application.
- **Re-accreditation:** a fee is charged for each re-accreditation visit.
- **Ongoing support:** there are no annual subscription fees for maintaining ACTS status between visits.
- **Variable assessor expenses:** reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred by the ACTS assessors undertaking the visit

Tip: Full details of current fees can be obtained by contacting the IChemE Accreditation Advisor or your Regional Engagement Manager (REM).

2.7 What types of schemes can be accredited?

ACTS is suitable for:

- Large multi-site graduate development programmes
- SME or site-specific schemes
- Schemes with rotating placements or fixed roles
- International schemes aligned with IChemE's global standards

As long as the scheme is robust, well-managed, and aligned with IChemE's requirements, the structure can be tailored to fit your organisational context.

3 Setting up a scheme

3.1 Getting started

Setting up an ACTS is a rewarding opportunity to shape how your organisation supports its early-career chemical engineers. Whether you're starting from scratch or formalising an existing programme, this section outlines what's involved and how to begin.

You don't need everything in place before contacting IChemE – we're here to support you through the process. Every company is unique, and we want to understand your specific needs.

Contact our team on acts@icheme.org, and we will connect you with a Regional Engagement Manager to discuss how accreditation can work for you. We'll outline the process, including costs, answer any questions, and provide initial guidance on shaping your scheme to meet accreditation requirements.

3.2 Is your organisation ready?

Before starting the application process, it's worth considering whether your organisation is ready to support a structured graduate training scheme.

Use this checklist to guide internal discussions:

- Do you employ graduate chemical, process or biochemical engineers in permanent roles?
- Can you provide a range of development opportunities aligned to IChemE's Chartered Competence and Commitment (C&C) Standard?
- Do you have experienced engineers who can act as mentors or reviewers?
- Is there commitment from senior management to support the scheme and allocate time/resources?
- Are you able to monitor and track progress over time?

Tip: You don't need to have everything perfect up front – but having the intent, support and structure in place is key.

3.3 Key steps in setting up a scheme for the first time

1. **Contact IChemE**
Let IChemE know you're interested in applying for accreditation. They'll put you in touch with a Regional Engagement Manager (REM) who can offer tailored support.
2. **Understand the ACTS requirements**
Start by reviewing this guidance and the IChemE Chartered Member information. This will help you understand what your scheme needs to deliver.
3. **Design your training programme**
Structure your scheme around real work experiences, formal training, mentoring and development opportunities. Make sure trainees can demonstrate progress in technical, professional and ethical areas.
4. **Define key roles**
Identify who will act as:
 - **ACTS Manager (you):** responsible for coordinating and overseeing the scheme
 - **Mentors:** provide day-to-day support and guidance to trainees
 - **Senior sponsors:** support the scheme at leadership level
5. **Prepare your ACTS Training Manual**
This document explains how your scheme works in practice. It will be reviewed as part of the accreditation process. A template manual is available to help you (more in Section 7).
6. **Develop an application**
Your application doesn't need to be perfect from the start. Developing an application is a collaborative process, and we will help refine your scheme as needed and provide resources to help. Once you're ready to submit your application, IChemE will arrange formal assessment (more in Section 4).

3.4 What does a good ACTS look like?

While schemes vary by organisation, accredited schemes usually include:

- A structured development plan (eg two-four years in length)
- Opportunities for trainees to gain broad experience and increasing responsibility
- Regular progress reviews and support mechanisms
- Access to mentoring and feedback
- Alignment to the C&C competencies required for Chartered Member status
- A culture of continuous learning, professional ethics, and inclusive practice

See section 11 for further advice on good practice.

3.4.1 Common models of ACTS

Organisations tailor their schemes based on context. Some common approaches include:

- **Rotational schemes:** trainees move between functions or departments
- **Functional schemes:** trainees stay within one area but gain depth
- **Site-specific schemes:** one location or business unit
- **Global or regional schemes:** multinational organisations with local oversight

Tip: There's no one-size-fits-all. Focus on creating a scheme that meets IChemE's requirements while making sense for your business.

3.5 Support available

IChemE is here to support you throughout the process. Your REM or the Accreditation Advisor can:

- Answer questions about accreditation requirements
- Review drafts of your ACTS Training Manual or self-assessment form
- Help you prepare for the accreditation visit
- Connect you with other ACTS Managers for peer learning

3.6 Gaining senior management buy-in

For companies seeking to **establish an Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS) for the first time**, securing strong support from senior management and other internal stakeholders is crucial. Their backing ensures the scheme has sufficient resourcing, visibility, and long-term commitment to succeed.

3.6.1 Why management buy-in matters

Accreditation requires investment – not just in time and administration, but in embedding a culture of structured development, mentoring, and alignment to professional standards. Senior leaders play a key role in enabling and supporting this.

3.6.2 Steps to gain buy-in

- **Link to business priorities**
Position ACTS as a way to deliver key business objectives such as staff retention, technical capability building, quality assurance, or succession planning.
- **Highlight the value of IChemE accreditation**
Accreditation provides a mark of excellence and international recognition, enhancing the organisation's reputation for professional development among graduates, engineers, and industry partners.
- **Quantify the return on investment (ROI)**
Present estimated benefits versus cost – eg improved graduate retention, reduced time to competence, stronger engagement, and progression to Chartered status. Highlight how ACTS supports recruitment, professional development, and risk reduction through competence assurance.
- **Engage stakeholders early**
Include senior stakeholders in early planning meetings or invite them to an IChemE information session with a Regional Engagement Manager to help them understand expectations and benefits.
- **Use case studies**
Share success stories from similar organisations – especially competitors or peers in your sector – that have achieved IChemE accreditation and the benefits they've seen. IChemE publishes case studies on our webpages and you can also find a list of ACTS in your sector.
- **Leverage IChemE support**
IChemE Regional Engagement Managers can support you with tailored briefings or conversations with senior management, to clarify what's involved and why accreditation matters.

4 The accreditation and re-accreditation process

IChemE's accreditation process formally recognises that a company training scheme supports graduate chemical engineers in developing the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for Chartered Member (MIChemE) status. The process is collaborative and supportive, designed to help you demonstrate how your scheme meets the required standards and provides value to your trainees.

- New schemes are typically awarded accreditation for two years
- Re-accredited schemes are normally awarded accreditation for four years

4.1 Stages of the process

4.1.1 Preparing your application

You'll be asked to:

- Complete a self-assessment application form (available from IChemE or your REM)
- Submit your **Training Manual** (see section 7), which describes how your scheme works
- Provide any supporting documentation, such as competency mapping, examples of training plans/logs, or draft C&C reports

Tip: Use the checklist in the appendix B to make sure your submission is complete.

4.1.2 Accreditation Visit

IChemE will work with you to arrange an accreditation **visit** (in-person or virtual) by ACTS Assessors volunteering on behalf of IChemE. This visit is a chance to discuss your scheme and accreditation submission, share evidence, and receive constructive feedback. The visit will typically include:

- Meetings with the ACTS Manager and scheme management team, and senior sponsor
- Discussions with trainees and mentors
- Review of your training scheme and documentation
- A short feedback session at the end

Note: IChemE provides a suggested visit agenda with full detail on the structure of the visit day. Contact the Accreditation Advisor to request this.

4.1.3 Outcome and report

At the end of the accreditation visit, the ACTS Assessors will provide **initial verbal feedback** to summarise their impressions of the scheme and highlight areas of good practice or potential development. However, they **are not able to disclose the recommended accreditation outcome at this stage**, as the outcome must be formally reviewed and ratified by IChemE's governance processes.

Draft report and review

Within **three weeks of the visit**, the ACTS company will receive a **draft version of the visit report**, completed by the ACTS Assessors. This gives the company the opportunity to:

- Check the report for **factual accuracy**
- Provide clarifications if needed

This step ensures transparency and accuracy in reporting, but **does not influence the final accreditation decision**.

Approval of outcome

Once any factual amendments are agreed, the report is submitted to the **Professional Development Subcommittee (PDSub)** – the IChemE committee responsible for overseeing ACTS accreditation decisions. This usually takes place at the **next available PDSub meeting**, typically within **three months** of the visit.

PDSub will:

- Review the report and assessors' recommendation
- Decide the **formal accreditation outcome**
- Confirm any **conditions or recommendations** to be attached

Formal notification

Within one week of the PDSUB meeting, the IChemE Accreditation Advisor will:

- Formally notify the company of the accreditation outcome
- Provide the final version of the report
- Issue a certificate of accreditation

4.2 Possible outcomes

Accreditation outcomes typically fall into one of the following categories:

Outcome	Description
Accredited (two years)	For new schemes , a two-year accreditation period allows for follow-up and development.
Accredited (four years)	For existing schemes , a four-year period is standard at re-accreditation.
Accredited with conditions	The scheme is accredited but must meet specific requirements (conditions), which may be time-bound.
Accredited with recommendations	The scheme is accredited, and improvements are advised (recommendations), though not mandatory.
Accreditation deferred	Accreditation is withheld until further information is submitted or conditions are met.
Accreditation withdrawn	In rare cases, accreditation may be withdrawn – typically only if serious concerns cannot be resolved.

Note: Accreditation may be deferred or withdrawn only in **exceptional cases**, and IChemE will always work with the company to support improvements first wherever possible.

4.3 Conditions vs recommendations

Type	Meaning	Action required
Conditions	These are mandatory requirements that must be met to maintain accreditation. They may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Linked to a specific timeframe■ Reviewed through submission of documentation or■ Followed up via an interim review meeting during the accreditation period (see section 4)	Yes – must be addressed within agreed timescales.
Recommendations	These are advisable improvements based on good practice. Not compulsory, but it is beneficial for the company to consider them.	No – but addressing them is encouraged.

5 Overview of accreditation requirements

To be accredited by IChemE, a company training scheme must demonstrate that it provides an effective, structured pathway for graduate chemical engineers to develop the competencies required for **Chartered Member (MIChemE)** status. The requirements are based on alignment with IChemE's **Competence and Commitment (C&C)** standards, and the ability of the scheme to consistently support and monitor trainees' progress toward achieving this.

IChemE recognises that accredited schemes vary in size, sector, and approach. The emphasis is not on having a standardised model, but on ensuring each scheme is:

- **Intentional:** with a clear purpose and structure
- **Supportive:** offering the right level of guidance and oversight
- **Effective:** enabling graduates to progress toward professional registration

Your scheme does not need to be perfect – it needs to be purposeful, well managed, and capable of developing Chartered Chemical Engineers.

5.1 Core requirements

An ACTS must meet the following criteria to be considered for accreditation:

5.1.1 Structured programme

The scheme should offer, where possible, a well-organised and clearly documented structure, including:

- Defined stages or milestones
- A typical duration (usually four-five years to reach Chartered status)
- A mix of technical and professional development opportunities
- Opportunities to gain responsibility, independence, and decision-making experience over time

5.1.2 Competency development

The scheme must demonstrate how it enables trainees to gain experience across all areas of the **IChemE competencies**, including:

- Application of knowledge and understanding
- Leadership, communication, and teamwork
- Professional conduct and ethics
- Continuing professional development

Note: This does not require a 'tick-box' approach – schemes should show how trainees are enabled to develop these areas over time.

5.1.3 Support and supervision

There must be:

- A clearly designated **ACTS Manager** responsible for scheme oversight
- A system for assigning and training **mentors** (ideally Chartered Members)
- Structured **progress reviews**, at intervals
- Ongoing support and guidance for trainees

5.1.4 Documentation and processes

Schemes should maintain appropriate documentation, such as:

- An up-to-date **Training Manual**
- Individual **training plans**
- Competency mapping or guidance for trainees
- Records of **review meetings**, feedback, and goal-setting

5.1.5 Integration with company practices

The scheme should be embedded into the company's wider culture and operations, including:

- Visible support from senior management
- Integration with performance management, HR, or talent development frameworks
- Recognition of IChemE Chartership as a valued professional milestone

5.2 Additional expectations for accredited schemes

The elements below represent **good practice** and are typically expected:

Area	Good practice examples
Quality assurance	Periodic internal reviews of the scheme's effectiveness which include input from trainees and mentors.
Inclusivity	Support for diverse entry routes, flexible training plans, inclusive mentoring.
CPD culture	Encouraging lifelong learning and development beyond achievement of Chartered status.
Link to IChemE	Encouraging trainees and mentors to engage with IChemE activities, volunteering and events.

Further guidance on good practice is available in section 11.

5.3 Trainee eligibility

Individuals registered on an ACTS should be **graduates**, and **eligible to register with IChemE as an Associate or Affiliate Member**, with the intention of working toward **Chartered Member (MIChemE)** status.

The purpose of an ACTS is to provide **Initial Professional Development (IPD)** – typically covering the **first three-four years** of early career development immediately after graduation. However, IChemE recognises that **career pathways differ**, and some individuals may join an ACTS a few years post-graduation. These individuals are equally eligible to participate, provided they are developing toward Chartership.

5.3.1 Non-accredited degree holders

Trainees **do not need to hold an IChemE-accredited chemical engineering degree** to join an ACTS. However, in such cases:

- It is expected that the **company checks the trainee's underpinning knowledge and understanding (UKU)** when they first join the scheme
- The company should **proactively stay informed** about the **UKU requirements and application processes** for non-accredited degree holders working toward Chartered Member status
- The scheme should **support these trainees in developing any required additional knowledge**, typically during the course of their time on the scheme

IChemE can offer **advice and guidance** on UKU expectations, assessment approaches, and how to incorporate UKU development into the trainee's individual learning plan.

Reminder: Addressing UKU early helps ensure the trainee is fully prepared to submit a complete and successful Chartered Member application when the time comes.

6 Roles and responsibilities

A successful Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS) depends on shared commitment across a range of roles – both within the company and with IChemE. This section outlines the responsibilities of everyone involved in supporting the scheme and ensuring high-quality trainee development.

6.1 ACTS Manager (overall Scheme Manager)

The ACTS Manager is the central figure in coordinating the design, delivery, and compliance of the scheme. Responsibilities include:

- Leading the overall scheme and acting as the **main point of contact with IChemE**
- Ensuring the scheme aligns with the **IChemE Competence and Commitment Standard**
- Maintaining the **ACTS Manual** and documentation
- Assigning mentors and coordinating **regular trainee reviews**
- Tracking and supporting **trainee progression**
- Leading the **accreditation and re-accreditation** process, including visit preparation and post-visit actions
- Overseeing consistent delivery and support across multiple sites or hubs (where applicable)

The ACTS Manager is accountable for the overall quality and compliance of the scheme.

6.2 Optional roles within the company

6.2.1 ACTS Administrator

Some organisations may appoint an ACTS Administrator to support the ACTS Manager with administrative and coordination tasks, including:

- Scheduling review meetings and training sessions
- Maintaining trainee and mentor records
- Assisting with scheme documentation and updates
- Liaising with internal stakeholders

6.2.2 Site/Hub Lead or Manager

In larger organisations or multi-site schemes, an ACTS Manager may delegate site-level oversight to Site or Hub Leads. These individuals:

- Oversee local delivery of the scheme at a specific site or group of sites
- Support local trainees and mentors
- Help ensure **consistency** with the overall scheme design
- Work with the ACTS Manager to ensure **compliance** and information flow across all locations

6.3 Trainees

Trainees are responsible for taking ownership of their development. They are expected to:

- Be IChemE Associate or Affiliate Members
- Engage actively in the scheme and maintain an individual training plan
- Reflect on progress and gather evidence aligned with the C&C Standard
- Attend regular progress reviews with their mentor
- Seek feedback and develop both technical and professional competencies

Trainees are encouraged to participate in IChemE activities (eg events, volunteer opportunities, local groups, Special Interest Groups).

6.4 Mentors

Mentors provide structured, ongoing support and are key to a trainee's journey. Typically, mentors are **Chartered Members of IChemE**, or working toward Chartership with suitable support.

Key responsibilities include:

- Providing **technical and professional guidance**
- Helping trainees understand and develop the **IChemE competencies**
- Helping trainees work towards Chartered status

- Supporting reflection, development planning, and problem-solving
- Contributing to trainee reviews and progress monitoring
- Review the trainee's draft Chartered application including a mock interview

6.5 Line Managers and Supervisors

Line Managers play an essential enabling role by:

- Offering appropriate **work experiences** that support development
- Giving feedback and input into reviews when required
- Collaborating with the mentor to address **performance or development needs**

6.6 Senior sponsor and the organisation

Company leadership should demonstrate visible support for ACTS and professional registration by:

- Recognising Chartered status in **career development pathways**
- Allocating resources for scheme coordination, mentoring, and development
- Embedding ACTS in the organisation's **culture and talent strategy**

6.7 IChemE roles

IChemE plays multiple roles in supporting ACTS, primarily through two key staff and additional volunteers:

6.7.1 Accreditation Advisor

The Accreditation Advisor is assigned to each company and is your primary contact for all matters relating to accreditation. Their role includes:

- Advising on **scheme design, documentation, and requirements**
- Supporting the company through the **accreditation or re-accreditation process**
- Reviewing materials and coordinating the **accreditation visit**
- Ensuring feedback and outcomes are communicated clearly and consistently

6.7.2 Regional Engagement Manager (REM)

The REM is a strategic relationship manager who supports the broader engagement between IChemE and the company. Their role includes:

- Helping ACTS Managers and senior leaders engage more fully with IChemE's **membership and professional development offer**
- Facilitating access to IChemE **resources, events, and networking**
- Sharing **good practice** and connecting companies with relevant support
- Acting as a relationship point of contact beyond the accreditation cycle

The Accreditation Advisor focuses on the **quality assurance and compliance** of the scheme. The REM supports the **broader strategic partnership** and ongoing value from your IChemE relationship.

6.7.3 ACTS Assessors (IChemE volunteers)

ACTS Assessors are trained volunteers appointed by IChemE to evaluate schemes during accreditation visits. These assessors are experienced Chartered Members or Fellows of IChemE who bring professional insight from a variety of industrial sectors.

Assessors are responsible for:

- Reviewing scheme documentation and meeting with relevant stakeholders
- Evaluating the scheme's compliance with IChemE accreditation requirements
- Providing **initial verbal feedback** at the close of the visit (excluding the outcome)
- Preparing a **draft report** for factual accuracy review
- Making a recommendation on the accreditation outcome for approval by the **Professional Development Subcommittee (PDSUB)**

ACTS Assessors are impartial, experienced volunteers who bring insight from across industry, academia, and the profession. Their goal is to evaluate and support continuous improvement.

7 Creating an ACTS manual

Each Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS) is required to maintain a Training Manual which clearly outlines how the scheme is structured and delivered. This manual acts as a central reference document for trainees, mentors, assessors, and internal stakeholders – and plays a key role in both the accreditation and day-to-day operation of your scheme.

7.1 Purpose of the Training Manual

The Training Manual should:

- Explain how the scheme is organised and managed
- Show how the company supports trainees in developing toward Chartered status
- Demonstrate alignment with IChemE's accreditation requirements
- Provide guidance to trainees and mentors on their roles, responsibilities, and expectations
- Serve as evidence during accreditation and re-accreditation visits

While the format of the manual may vary between organisations, IChemE expects that all accredited schemes will produce and maintain a version-controlled document that can be submitted as part of the accreditation process and made available to all relevant users.

7.2 IChemE template and support

To help organisations prepare their Training Manual, IChemE provides a **Training Manual template**, which includes:

- A suggested structure
- Standard IChemE wording where appropriate (eg ACTS purpose and scope)
- Prompts and examples to support completion
- Guidance notes for each section

This template is available from the ACTS resource hub or on request from the **Accreditation Advisor**, and referring to it to support development of your own manual

is strongly encouraged, especially for new schemes or those updating outdated documentation. Companies are welcome to adapt the template to suit their internal branding or formatting preferences, as long as all required content is covered.

7.3 What to include in your manual

While each manual will be tailored to your specific scheme, key sections typically include:

- **Scheme overview:** purpose, structure, duration, eligibility criteria
- **Management and governance:** key contacts, roles and responsibilities
- **Mentor support:** expectations and guidance for mentors
- **Trainee progression:** how development is planned, supported and reviewed
- **Mapping to IChemE competencies:** summary of how the scheme supports C&C development
- **Assessment and review:** how performance and readiness for Chartered status are evaluated
- **Documentation and records:** development plans, training logs, reviews
- **Policies and procedures:** managing change, complaints, confidentiality, etc

Many of these sections can draw directly from your existing internal policies and processes.

7.4 Maintaining and reviewing your manual

Your Training Manual should be reviewed regularly to:

- Reflect any changes to your scheme structure or management
- Incorporate updates to IChemE's C&C standard, application processes or accreditation requirements
- Ensure trainees and mentors are using the most up-to-date information

It's good practice to include **version control** and a **review date** within the manual, and to make revised versions readily available to all scheme users.

7.5 Need help?

The **Accreditation Advisor** can:

- Provide the most recent version of the Training Manual Template
- Answer questions about what to include
- Review draft manuals informally prior to submission for accreditation

You can also connect with other ACTS Managers via the **IChemE ACTS Organisation Community** on IChemE Connect to share ideas, examples and good practice.

8 Mapping to IChemE competencies

One of the key requirements of ACTS accreditation is that the company's training and development activities are clearly mapped to IChemE's **Chartered Member C&C competencies**. This ensures that the scheme supports trainees in developing the knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed for successful progression to Chartered Chemical Engineer status.

However, we recognise that many new schemes – and even experienced ones – may find this task challenging. This section outlines what is expected, how to approach it, and what good mapping looks like.

8.1 What does mapping involve?

Mapping means demonstrating how your scheme enables trainees to develop the five key areas of the IChemE C&C standards:

- A Knowledge and understanding to practical situations
- B Wider implications of their work as an engineer
- C Interpersonal, leadership and communication skills
- D High standards of professional and ethical conduct
- E Continuing professional development

You should show:

- **Which activities, experiences or learning opportunities** contribute to development in each area
- **When** during the scheme (eg year or phase) each competency is likely to be addressed
- **How** the trainee's development is supported, assessed, and reviewed (eg through mentor reviews, training logs, formal development plans)
- This does **not** require a one-to-one mapping of every individual competency bullet point, but rather a clear narrative and/or visual tool (eg table or matrix) that outlines how your scheme enables coverage of the full standard

8.2 Recommended approach for mapping

1. **Familiarise yourself with the C&C competencies and Guidance**
Ensure you and your mentors understand what IChemE expects of a Chartered Chemical Engineer.
2. **List your scheme's key activities and stages**
Include formal training modules, on-the-job placements, rotations, mentoring arrangements, and assessment processes.
3. **Create a mapping matrix or annotated development plan**
Map these activities to the C&C areas – show how trainees will gain the necessary development and when.
4. **Identify and fill any gaps**
Are there any areas of the C&C areas not clearly covered? You may need to introduce new opportunities or make adjustments.
5. **Review with mentors and assessors**
Your mapping should be a collaborative and evolving document. Mentors should be aware of the mapped structure so they can support trainees effectively.
6. **Use mapping in development planning and reviews**
Encourage trainees to use the C&C areas as a framework when setting development goals and reflecting on their progress.

8.3 What good mapping looks like

Good mapping is:

- **Clear and accessible:** easy for assessors, mentors, and trainees to understand
- **Evidence-based:** includes examples of typical activities or outputs for each area
- **Flexible:** recognises that trainees may progress differently, but the scheme provides all the opportunities needed
- **Consistent with trainee records:** aligns with development plans, logs, and mentor reviews
- **Living:** regularly reviewed and updated if the scheme evolves or IChemE standards are updated

Mapping to IChemE competencies is not just a compliance task – it is a valuable planning and quality assurance tool to ensure your trainees are fully supported in their development journey toward Chartered status.

9 The accreditation visit

The accreditation visit is a key stage in the ACTS process. It provides an opportunity for IChemE Assessors to explore how the scheme operates in practice, verify that it meets IChemE's standards, and offer constructive feedback to support ongoing improvement.

This section outlines how to prepare, what happens on the day, and what follows after the visit.

9.1 Preparing for the visit

Your **Accreditation Advisor** will support you in preparing for the accreditation or re-accreditation visit and will work with you to agree a mutually convenient date. Preparation typically includes submission of the following key documentation **four weeks prior to the visit**:

- A copy of the scheme's **Training Manual** (this may be referred to internally by other names)
- A completed **ACTS self-assessment and visit report form**, which includes:
 - An overview of the company's structure
 - Details of how the scheme operates across sites or hubs (if applicable)
 - Numbers of current trainees and mentors
 - Descriptions of internal processes for training, mentoring, and review
- A mapping of your scheme against IChemE's **competencies**
- Examples of supporting documents such as:
 - **Trainee development plans**
 - **Training logs**
 - **Draft C&C reports**
 - **Review documentation**

9.2 Agreeing the visit agenda

The Accreditation Advisor will also work with you to agree the **visit agenda**. IChemE provides a suggested agenda template available on the [ACTS resource hub](#). We find that the visit runs most smoothly when this structure is followed; however, the company may adjust the **timings or order of sessions** if needed to suit availability.

Typical agenda sessions include meetings with:

- The ACTS Manager and/or senior scheme leads
- Current and past trainees
- Mentors and line managers
- Senior management representatives

When confirming the agenda, the company should also provide the **names, job titles, and IChemE post-nominals** (if applicable) for all attendees taking part in each session. This should be submitted **alongside the documentation**, in advance of the visit.

9.3 Appointment of ACTS Assessors

IChemE appoints two trained volunteer ACTS Assessors to carry out each accreditation or re-accreditation visit. A visit team typically includes:

- A **Lead Assessor**, who coordinates the visit and leads questioning, evaluation, and report writing
- A **Second Assessor**, who supports the review and contributes to assessment and feedback

Occasionally, there may also be:

- A **Trainee Assessor**, observing as part of their training (non-participatory)
- An **IChemE Observer** (eg staff member) attending to observe and support the process

IChemE selects assessors based on sector experience, availability, and any potential conflicts of interest. The company will be informed of the proposed assessors in advance and has the opportunity to raise any concerns if necessary.

As part of the accreditation process, the ACTS company agrees to pay **reasonable expenses** incurred by assessors for travel, accommodation, or subsistence. This is confirmed when signing the '**Company Confirmation of Agreement to Proceed**' form. IChemE endeavours to select assessors local to the company's site(s) to minimise expenses, but this is not always possible due to availability. If assessors are expected to travel long distances or require overnight accommodation, IChemE will notify the company in advance. All expenses will be supported by receipts and coordinated through IChemE after the visit.

9.4 During the visit

The accreditation visit typically takes **one full day**.

In accordance with IChemE's **Licence from the Engineering Council**, a **risk assessment** is carried out for each scheme prior to renewal of accreditation. This assessment informs the decision on whether the visit should take place **on-site or virtually**. The decision is based on a range of factors, including but not limited to:

- Whether this is a **new scheme** (all new schemes must have their initial visit **on-site**)
- The **number of accredited sites** involved
- Any **changes to scheme management**, such as a new ACTS Manager
- The presence of any **existing conditions** from the previous accreditation
- Whether the previous visit was conducted virtually (in which case the next must be **on-site**)

IChemE will inform the company of the outcome of this risk assessment and confirm whether the visit will be **in-person or virtual**.

9.5 Structure of the visit

The visit will follow the agreed agenda and typically includes:

- Presentations and discussions led by the ACTS Manager or scheme team
- Meetings with:
 - Current and recent trainees
 - Mentors and/or line managers
 - Senior leadership or site/company representatives
- A review of documentation and supporting systems/processes

If your scheme operates across multiple sites or hubs, appropriate representatives should be included in relevant sessions, either in person or remotely.

9.6 A two-way process

The visit is also an opportunity for the company to engage in open discussion and ask for advice on **good practice**. ACTS Assessors are experienced professionals, with insight gained from reviewing many schemes across a wide range of organisations and sectors. Many assessors are also, or have been, involved in running or supporting accredited schemes themselves.

This shared learning approach is a valuable benefit of the accreditation process, and companies are encouraged to use the visit as a chance to **gain insight and guidance**, as well as receive formal evaluation.

At the end of the visit, the Lead Assessor will provide:

- **Initial verbal feedback** to summarise key strengths and any identified areas for development
- A reminder of **next steps** in the reporting and outcome approval process

Please note: ACTS Assessors cannot disclose or imply the formal accreditation outcome at this stage. Outcomes are confirmed only once approved by IChemE's Professional Development Subcommittee (PDSUB).

9.7 Joint accreditation visits

IChemE is committed to supporting companies that are accredited with **multiple Professional Engineering Institutions (PEIs)** and will, where possible, **facilitate joint accreditation visits** when re-accreditation is due around the same time.

Joint visits can offer benefits such as reduced duplication of effort, a more holistic review of professional development provision, and better alignment across disciplines. However, they also present **logistical and planning challenges**, particularly where multiple PEIs have differing requirements or processes.

9.7.1 Key considerations

- Joint visits are **recommended only for re-accreditation** purposes, and **not typically suitable for new scheme accreditations**, due to the complexity and coordination required
- The **Accreditation Advisor** at IChemE can liaise with your equivalent contacts at other PEIs to:
 - **Coordinate visit dates**
 - **Agree an appropriate agenda**
 - **Clarify the shared and separate elements** of the visit

9.7.2 Structure of a joint visit

- Certain aspects of the visit can be held **jointly**, such as:
 - Introductory or overview presentations about the scheme
 - Facility tours
 - Discussions with senior leadership
- Other components should remain **discipline-specific**, such as:
 - Meetings with chemical engineering trainees
 - Reviews of scheme documentation and mapping specific to IChemE requirements

A **suggested joint visit agenda** is available on request from the IChemE Accreditation Advisor. However, it is understood that this must remain **flexible** and be **jointly agreed** between the company and all participating PEIs.

9.7.3 Documentation requirements

- The company must still submit **documentation directly to IChemE** in line with our accreditation processes and timescales
- IChemE will carry out its own assessment and complete its own reporting and governance processes, even when participating in a joint visit

9.8 Interim reviews

An **interim review** may be requested as a **condition of accreditation or re-accreditation**, where the IChemE Professional Development Subcommittee (PDSUB) determines that a follow-up is required prior to the next full accreditation visit. This is typically in response to:

- Areas of concern or non-compliance identified during the accreditation visit that require **time-bound improvement**
- Significant **transitional circumstances**, such as a recent or upcoming **change in ACTS Manager**, the addition of **new accredited sites**, or substantial updates to scheme structure or support arrangements

Interim reviews are usually scheduled **one-two years** after the main accreditation visit and are intended to provide assurance that progress has been made and that the scheme continues to meet the required standards.

9.8.1 Format and expectations

- **Format:** interim reviews are normally conducted **virtually** and led by one or both of the original ACTS Assessors (where possible) and/or an Accreditation Advisor from IChemE
- **Documentation:** the company will be asked to provide a **concise update report** in advance, including evidence that conditions have been addressed and changes implemented
- **Focus:** the review will focus **only on the areas flagged for follow-up**, not the full scope of accreditation

Following the review, a short interim review report will be submitted to PDSUB to confirm whether satisfactory progress has been demonstrated and whether any further action is needed.

ACTS Managers are encouraged to **maintain continuity**, implement any required actions promptly, and liaise with their IChemE Accreditation Advisor for support in preparing for an interim review.

10 Requirements for accreditation

To achieve and maintain accreditation, an Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS) must demonstrate that it provides a structured, supportive, and professionally focused training environment that enables graduate chemical engineers to develop the competencies required for **Chartered Member (MIChemE)** status with IChemE.

This section outlines the key requirements that underpin a successful ACTS.

10.1 Key requirements

10.1.1 Scope and purpose

ACTS schemes are expected to support trainees during their **initial professional development (IPD)** – typically the first **three-four years post-graduation** – and prepare them to apply for Chartered status. A scheme must:

- Be aligned with the IChemE competencies and Chartered Member application process
- Provide an environment that fosters development of the **full range of technical and professional competencies**
- Include mechanisms for **regular review, feedback, and support**

10.1.2 Training environment and support

The company must demonstrate that the training environment:

- Offers **appropriate breadth and depth of chemical engineering work**
- Enables trainees to **rotate through relevant projects or roles** to gain diverse experience (where applicable)
- Provides access to **appropriate mentoring and line management support**
- Has clear **progression pathways** and development opportunities

10.1.3 Structured programme and documentation

Each ACTS must have a documented structure including:

- A **Training Manual**, explaining how the scheme operates, expectations for trainees and mentors, and how competence is developed and assessed
- A **mapping of the scheme** to the IChemE C&C Standard
- Templates or processes for:
 - **Training plans and logs**
 - **Progress reviews**
 - **Draft competence reports**

10.1.4 Mentoring and oversight

The company must ensure that:

- Each trainee is assigned a **mentor**, ideally a Chartered Member of IChemE (or working towards this status and suitably experienced, or alternatively Chartered in another Engineering discipline)
- Mentors and ACTS Managers understand their roles and are provided with **appropriate training and guidance**, including access to IChemE training
- Mentors meet with trainees **at least twice a year** (recommended: quarterly)
- Feedback is constructive, developmental, and aligned to the competencies

10.1.5 Monitoring, review and records

The scheme must:

- Maintain **accurate records** of trainee progress, development discussions, and training activities
- Use **regular review meetings** (formal or informal) to assess trainee development against the C&C Standard
- Offer opportunities for self-reflection and evidence-gathering (eg **drafting competence reports**)

10.1.6 Commitment to quality and improvement

Companies are expected to:

- Monitor the **effectiveness** of their ACTS regularly
- Seek **feedback** from trainees and mentors
- Use feedback and external input (eg from IChemE or ACTS Assessors) to drive **continuous improvement**
- Keep the scheme documentation up to date with version control, reflecting changes in structure, support, or IChemE requirements

10.1.7 Eligibility of trainees

Trainees on an ACTS must:

- Be graduates and **eligible to register with IChemE as Associate or Affiliate Members**
- Be intending to work towards **Chartered Member (MChemE)** status

Trainees who do **not hold an IChemE-accredited degree** may still be registered on the scheme. However, companies are expected to:

- **Assess the trainee's underpinning knowledge and understanding (UKU)** upon joining the scheme
- Support trainees to address any gaps in UKU through additional study or experience
- Remain informed of the latest UKU requirements and **application processes** for non-accredited candidates

IChemE can provide advice on UKU, but the company is responsible for checking and managing individual cases proactively.

10.2 Multi-site schemes

Some companies operate ACTS across **multiple sites**, regions, or international hubs. In these cases, it is essential that the scheme is managed in a way that ensures **consistency, fairness, and compliance** with IChemE's accreditation requirements across all participating locations.

Key expectations for multi-site schemes include:

10.2.1 Central co-ordination

- There must be a clearly identified **overall ACTS Manager** with responsibility for the scheme in its entirety
- The ACTS Manager should ensure that all sites operate in a way that aligns with the **core structure, processes, and standards** of the accredited scheme

10.2.2 Local oversight

- Each site or cluster of sites may appoint a **Site Lead or Hub Manager** who:
 - Oversees day-to-day scheme delivery at that location
 - Supports mentors and trainees on-site
 - Liaises with the overall ACTS Manager to ensure alignment
- The roles and responsibilities of any **Site Leads** should be clearly defined and documented.

10.2.3 Consistency across sites

- Training documentation (eg manuals, forms, review templates) should be standardised and used consistently across all sites
- All trainees should have **equivalent access** to opportunities for development, mentoring, and feedback – regardless of location
- Mentor training and scheme communications should be cascaded effectively to maintain consistency of support and expectations

10.2.4 Inclusion in accreditation visits

- When submitting an application for accreditation or re-accreditation, companies must clearly identify **all sites and locations** covered by the scheme
- The **self-assessment documentation** must include:
 - A list of all sites, locations and business units included within the application
 - An explanation of how the scheme operates across locations
 - How consistency is maintained
 - How communication and oversight are managed
- The **accreditation visit** will include engagement with **representatives from each site**, either in person or virtually
- IChemE reserves the right to request **additional evidence or engagement** from specific sites as part of the accreditation review, or to request that an accreditation visit takes place at a specific site

10.3 Deliverables and metrics of success

To ensure that Accredited Company Training Schemes (ACTS) deliver meaningful value to both trainees and the profession, IChemE encourages companies to regularly review the outcomes and effectiveness of their scheme. The following deliverables and success metrics can be used to help monitor scheme performance:

- **Progression to Chartered:** the proportion of trainees who successfully progress toward and achieve Chartered Member (MIChemE) status, ideally within a few years of completing the scheme
- **Timely scheme completion:** trainees are typically expected to complete the scheme within six years of enrolment
- **Successful applications:** a high proportion of ACTS trainees should be successful in their Chartered Member applications **without the need for reapplication or significant revision**, indicating appropriate development and preparation
- **Membership engagement:** all trainees on the scheme should be active IChemE **Affiliate or Associate Members**, in accordance with ACTS eligibility requirements
- **Mentor-to-trainee ratio:** a suitable ratio of mentors to trainees is maintained, ensuring trainees have sufficient access to guidance and feedback
- **Trained Mentors:** a high percentage of mentors have completed **IChemE mentor training** or equivalent internal training, to support consistent and informed guidance
- **Record Maintenance:** annual review and updating of trainee and mentor records on the **IChemE ACTS portal**, to ensure accurate data and effective scheme monitoring

These indicators can help companies evaluate whether their ACTS is meeting its objectives, delivering high-quality professional development, and aligning with IChemE's expectations for accredited schemes.

11 Good practice for effective schemes

While IChemE sets out the **minimum requirements** for ACTS accreditation, the most successful schemes often go beyond these to create a culture of proactive development, support, and engagement. This section highlights examples of **good practice** drawn from high-performing schemes across different sectors and organisations.

ACTS Managers are encouraged to adopt and adapt these ideas to enhance their own schemes.

11.1 Good practice areas

11.1.1 Scheme management and oversight

- **Senior leadership engagement:** ensuring visible support from senior leaders helps embed the importance of professional development in company culture
- **Clear documentation and guidance:** regularly reviewing and updating the training manual, mentor guidance, and templates supports consistency and clarity
- **Annual scheme review:** conducting a structured review each year with input from trainees, mentors, and managers helps identify areas for improvement

11.1.2 Mentor support and development

- **Regular mentor briefings:** holding annual or biannual sessions to update mentors on IChemE standards and share internal case studies or good examples
- **Mentor networking groups:** creating opportunities for mentors to share experiences and approaches across sites or departments
- **Mentor recognition:** acknowledging the role of mentors formally, such as through internal awards or performance review inclusion

11.1.3 Trainee support and development

- **Structured onboarding:** introducing new trainees to the scheme, IChemE membership, and the C&C competencies early in their development

- **Regular reviews:** encouraging quarterly mentor–trainee meetings, in addition to line manager reviews, to maintain focus on development against the C&C Standard
- **Peer learning:** creating forums for trainees to share progress, challenges, and learning (eg lunch-and-learn sessions, development circles)
- **Chartered workshops:** hosting internal or IChemE-supported sessions on how to apply for Chartered Member status, including drafting competence reports

11.1.4 Visibility and culture

- **Promoting the ACTS internally:** using internal newsletters, intranet platforms, or town halls to share scheme milestones and successes
- **Showcasing success stories:** sharing the journeys of Chartered Members or celebrating recent accreditations and awards to motivate others
- **Cross-functional involvement:** encouraging participation from departments beyond engineering (eg safety, sustainability, operations) to broaden trainee exposure

11.1.5 Evaluation and feedback

- **Trainee feedback mechanisms:** using surveys or informal check-ins to gather feedback on mentor support, opportunities, and scheme value
- **Tracking outcomes:** monitoring how many trainees progress to Chartered status, and using this to guide improvements
- **Responding to IChemE recommendations:** proactively addressing any feedback from accreditation visits, and using these insights to evolve the scheme

Good practice should be **proportionate** to the size and structure of the company, but any improvements that support **consistency, engagement, and trainee progression** are likely to strengthen your scheme's impact and long-term success.

11.2 Supporting trainees on ACTS

Providing consistent, structured and meaningful support to trainees is central to the success of any Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS). The goal is to ensure that each trainee is actively progressing toward Chartered status through access to relevant opportunities, constructive guidance, and a culture of professional development.

This section outlines key expectations and good practice for supporting trainees across the full duration of the scheme.

11.2.1 Induction and onboarding

Trainees should be given a clear and comprehensive induction to the ACTS, which includes:

- An overview of the scheme structure, duration, and expectations
- The purpose of ACTS and the pathway to Chartered status
- Introduction to IChemE's Competence and Commitments
- Roles of the ACTS Manager, mentors, and other support contacts
- Access to key documents (eg Training Manual, development plan templates)
- Information about IChemE membership and requirements to maintain this

A well-structured induction sets a professional tone and helps the trainee feel supported from the outset.

11.2.2 Ongoing development planning and review

Trainees should have:

- A **development plan** (agreed with their mentor) that reflects the IChemE C&C areas
- Regular **review meetings** with their mentor (typically every 6 months) to reflect on progress, identify gaps, and plan next steps
- Access to a **training log** or record of experience, which may be in your company's own format or aligned to IChemE's draft C&C Report
- Encouragement to take ownership of their development and become familiar with the Chartered application process early in the scheme

Development should be tailored, realistic and reviewed consistently. Trainees benefit from seeing their progress toward professional goals.

11.2.3 Mentor support and relationship building

Mentors are critical in helping trainees interpret their experiences and build confidence. A strong mentor relationship should:

- Be based on mutual trust, regular communication, and active support
- Encourage critical reflection, problem-solving, and professional judgement
- Provide feedback on performance and development needs in relation to the C&C Standard
- Support trainees in identifying when they are ready to apply for Chartered status
- Be clearly structured, with expectations understood by both parties

Mentors may be internal or external and should be trained or briefed appropriately (see Section 6.4 on mentor roles).

11.2.4 Access to opportunities and networks

Where possible, trainees should be given opportunities to:

- Rotate through different roles, projects, or departments to broaden experience
- Gain exposure to different functions (eg safety, commercial, operations)
- Participate in cross-functional or interdisciplinary teams
- Contribute to IChemE activities or attend local Member Group events
- Build their professional network and visibility within the company and beyond

This diversity of experience supports the holistic development expected of a Chartered Engineer.

11.2.5 Pastoral and career support

Trainees should feel supported not only in technical development but also in:

- Work-life balance and wellbeing
- Navigating challenges or setbacks in projects or performance
- Planning their career path beyond the scheme
- Understanding broader professional responsibilities (eg ethics, sustainability)

Trainees who feel genuinely supported are more likely to remain engaged, motivated, and committed to their development.

11.2.6 Recognising progress and readiness for chartership

Support also includes:

- Reviewing whether the trainee is on track for Chartership at the right time
- Helping the trainee prepare their IChemE Chartered application
- Encouraging participation in mock interview activities
- Providing encouragement and recognition as they approach readiness

Encouraging timely applications helps maximise the scheme's effectiveness and reinforces a culture of achievement.

11.2.7 Troubleshooting and escalation

Where concerns arise, such as:

- A breakdown in the trainee–mentor relationship
- Lack of development opportunities
- Delays in reviews or assessments
- Concerns about ethical or professional conduct

The ACTS Manager should be available to step in, provide support, or facilitate a solution. Clear escalation routes and open communication are key.

11.3 Mentoring guidance and framework for effective mentoring

To help mentors and ACTS Managers effectively support trainees and assess their progress, IChemE provides a [Mentoring Guidelines](#) document and a [Framework for Effective Mentoring](#). These resources outline the expectations of the mentor role and offer practical tools and tips for providing structured, constructive support throughout a trainee's development journey.

The [Framework for Effective Mentoring](#) includes guidance on setting clear objectives, providing feedback, identifying development needs, and reviewing progress against the IChemE Chartered Competence and Commitment (C&C) standards. It also supports mentors in helping trainees reflect on their experiences, record their development meaningfully, and prepare for Chartered Member applications.

Mentors are encouraged to refer to this framework when conducting reviews and completing progress assessments, and ACTS Managers may wish to incorporate elements into the company's training manual or internal guidance. This ensures consistency in mentoring practice and supports a culture of reflective learning and continuous improvement.

11.4 Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) considerations

IChemE is committed to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the chemical engineering profession. Accredited Company Training Schemes (ACTS) should support and reflect these values by providing fair and inclusive opportunities for all trainees and mentors.

11.4.1 Why EDI matters in ACTS

A diverse and inclusive ACTS helps:

- **Attract and retain talent** from a broad range of backgrounds
- **Foster innovation and collaboration** through diverse perspectives
- **Ensure fairness** in progression toward Chartered status
- **Align with IChemE's EDI strategy** and expectations under Engineering Council standards

11.4.2 What ACTS Managers should consider

To support EDI within your ACTS:

- **Recruitment and access**
 - Ensure open, transparent, and inclusive selection of trainees into the scheme
 - Avoid assumptions based on age, gender, ethnicity, disability, or background when assigning opportunities
- **Mentor matching**
 - Offer trainees the opportunity to express preferences for mentor pairing (eg someone outside their direct team)
 - Encourage diverse mentor representation and provide training to promote inclusive mentoring
- **Support and flexibility**
 - Be aware of and responsive to individual needs, such as flexible working arrangements, neurodiversity, or cultural considerations
 - Ensure reasonable adjustments are made for trainees who require them
- **Monitoring and review**
 - Consider collecting anonymous data (where appropriate) to help monitor diversity across trainees and mentors
 - Regularly reflect on scheme participation, progression, and outcomes through an EDI lens

■ Culture and language

- Promote respectful and inclusive language and behaviours throughout the scheme
- Encourage a psychologically safe environment where trainees feel supported and valued

11.5 Integrating ACTS into company talent and HR strategies

Once established, the ACTS should be embedded within the wider context of the organisation's **talent management and HR development strategy**. This helps to ensure it remains aligned with business goals and fully supported over time.

11.5.1 Embedding ACTS in organisational strategy

■ Include ACTS in early careers planning

Make ACTS part of your graduate programme or technical development pathway, linking it to structured onboarding, technical training, and long-term career development

■ Align with L&D and competency frameworks

Ensure ACTS maps to any internal technical or leadership competency frameworks and supports employees in meeting internal or external standards

■ Incorporate in appraisals and development planning

Encourage line managers and mentors to use ACTS development tools in performance reviews and PDP conversations

■ Support workforce planning

Use ACTS to help identify and develop future technical leaders, specialists, or project managers

■ Recognise mentoring contributions

Work with HR to ensure mentoring is recognised and valued as part of career progression or performance recognition systems

■ Report on ACTS outcomes

Share data (eg progression to Chartered status, retention, trainee feedback) in internal talent reports or senior leadership dashboards

■ Collaborate with HR/L&D colleagues

Involve HR in managing scheme logistics, tracking metrics, and evolving the scheme in line with organisational change

12 Maintaining and enhancing your scheme

While ACTS accreditation is awarded for a period, IChemE encourages organisations to treat their scheme as a living process – one that is regularly reviewed and enhanced to ensure it continues to meet the needs of trainees and aligns with current best practice.

To maintain and enhance your ACTS, consider the following:

- **Regularly review scheme structure and content:**
Ensure your training programme continues to provide sufficient breadth and depth, aligns with the IChemE C&C Standard, and reflects changes in your organisation, industry or regulatory expectations
- **Engage trainees and mentors in feedback:**
Collect and act on regular feedback from participants to improve delivery, address gaps and strengthen engagement
- **Keep scheme documentation current:**
Update your Training Manual, development plans, and internal guidance regularly – using version control and ensuring updates are shared with all relevant parties
- **Monitor outcomes and progression:**
Track how trainees are progressing towards Chartered status, identifying areas where additional support or guidance is needed
- **Stay informed about changes to IChemE standards and processes:**
Incorporate changes into your scheme as needed (eg C&C Standard revisions, UKU guidance, application process updates)
- **Invest in mentor development:**
Ensure mentors are briefed on current expectations and are supported in their role through guidance, peer networks, or IChemE training
- **Celebrate success and promote visibility:**
Share trainee achievements, Chartered success stories, and good practice within your organisation to sustain buy-in and raise the profile of the scheme
- **Participate in the ACTS community:**
Attend IChemE ACTS Manager workshops, join online discussions (eg IChemE Connect), and contribute to the evolution of ACTS by sharing your experience

12.1 Using the ACTS portal to maintain scheme records

As part of IChemE's commitment to improving the administration and oversight of Accredited Company Training Schemes (ACTS), a secure **ACTS Portal** will be made available to ACTS Managers and approved administrators. The portal is designed to support companies in maintaining up-to-date records of their trainees and mentors, and to provide IChemE with accurate oversight of scheme participation and progression.

While the portal is still in development, this guidance outlines key obligations that will apply once it is operational:

12.1.1 Key functions of the ACTS portal

- Secure access for ACTS Managers and/or nominated ACTS administrators
- View and manage lists of registered trainees and mentors on your company's scheme
- Check IChemE membership status (eg Affiliate, Associate) of registered trainees
- Update each individual's status on the scheme, including:
 - Marking trainees as having completed the scheme
 - Noting when trainees or mentors leave the company or become inactive
 - Confirming active engagement with the scheme

12.1.2 Accreditation Requirement: annual updates

To maintain ACTS accreditation, **companies will be required to review and update trainee and mentor records at least once annually** during the accreditation period. This supports compliance with IChemE and Engineering Council requirements, and ensures accurate scheme oversight.

- IChemE will issue annual reminders via email to prompt scheme administrators to complete this update
- Companies are encouraged to update records more frequently where possible, eg shortly after a new graduate cohort joins the scheme, especially following significant personnel changes or scheme completions

Once launched, full guidance on accessing and using the ACTS Portal will be provided by IChemE. Until then, ACTS Managers should continue to maintain internal records and notify IChemE directly of any significant changes.

13 Managing unexpected changes or disruptions to the ACTS

From time to time, circumstances may arise that affect the smooth operation of an Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS). IChemE recognises that organisations can face both internal and external pressures and is committed to supporting companies in maintaining continuity and meeting accreditation requirements through proactive communication and flexibility.

13.1 Examples of significant changes

ACTS Managers should inform IChemE (via the Accreditation Advisor) as soon as possible if any of the following occur, for advice on implications for accreditation:

■ Personnel Changes

- Change of ACTS Manager, administrator, or senior sponsor
- Departure or extended absence of key mentors or training leads

■ Organisational Changes

- Mergers, acquisitions, restructuring, or closure of accredited sites
- Relocation of graduate programmes or trainees to different sites

■ Programme Disruption

- Inability to provide core development activities for a sustained period
- Reduced availability of supervision, mentoring, or training opportunities

■ External Factors

- Situations such as pandemics, industry downturns, or logistical disruptions that affect scheme delivery

13.2 Proactive succession planning

To ensure long-term scheme stability, companies are strongly encouraged to have a **succession plan for the ACTS Manager role**, including:

- Identifying and training a suitable deputy or successor
- Documenting scheme processes and contacts clearly within the ACTS Training Manual

- Involving a wider support team (eg site leads or ACTS administrators) to help maintain continuity during periods of change

Having these provisions in place helps minimise disruption in the event of unplanned changes and supports new managers in quickly understanding and fulfilling their responsibilities.

13.3 Responding to disruption

In the event of significant change:

1. **Contact the Accreditation Advisor** as early as possible for advice and support.
2. **Share a brief summary** of the situation, including its likely duration and any interim measures being put in place.
3. **Review and update scheme documentation** (eg contact details, trainee/mentor lists) to reflect the new situation.
4. **Support trainees and mentors** through open communication and continuity planning.

13.3.1 Abeyance and extension requests

Where a re-accreditation visit is due at a time that is unsuitable due to major organisational change, companies may submit a request for **temporary abeyance or an extension to accreditation**. In line with Engineering Council regulations, the maximum allowable accreditation period is five years. Please refer to the [ACTS Abeyance and Extensions Policy](#) for guidance on the circumstances under which such requests are appropriate and how to submit them. We recommend discussing your situation with the Accreditation Advisor in the first instance.

13.3.2 IChemE's commitment

IChemE's approach is collaborative and supportive. We aim to help ACTS organisations navigate change while upholding the quality and integrity of professional development for trainees.

13.4 Transition guidance for outgoing ACTS Managers

A planned and well-supported transition between ACTS Managers is key to maintaining the quality and consistency of the Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS). This guidance is intended to help outgoing ACTS Managers ensure a smooth handover, protecting the integrity of the scheme and supporting the incoming manager to succeed in the role.

13.4.1 Proactive succession planning

Where possible, companies are encouraged to identify a successor well in advance of the current ACTS Manager stepping down. This enables:

- A structured handover period.
- Joint attendance at relevant IChemE workshops or meetings.
- Time to shadow and build familiarity with the scheme and processes.

13.4.2 Handover checklist

To support an effective transition, outgoing ACTS Managers should provide the incoming manager with:

- A current copy of the company's ACTS Training Manual
- A copy of the most recent IChemE accreditation visit report and any conditions or recommendations and progress towards these
- A summary of the current scheme structure, including key contacts (mentors, administrators, site leads)
- Login details and guidance for using the ACTS Portal (if active)
- A current list of trainees and mentors and their status on the scheme
- Recent or upcoming milestones (eg mentor training, trainee progression reviews, next accreditation date)
- Copies of relevant templates and internal documentation used to support the scheme (eg review forms, development plans)

13.4.3 Notify IChemE

It is important to notify IChemE promptly when there is a change in the ACTS Manager role. The Accreditation Advisor will:

- Update the scheme's records
- Offer an introductory meeting with the new ACTS Manager
- Provide access to relevant training, resources and updates
- Answer any immediate questions regarding compliance, responsibilities, or planned accreditation activity

13.4.4 Reference to abeyance and extensions policy

If a company foresees a gap in ACTS Manager leadership that could affect scheme continuity or compliance, it is advised to consult IChemE's [Abeyance and Extensions Policy](#). In appropriate circumstances, temporary adjustments may be possible – this should be discussed with the Accreditation Advisor at the earliest opportunity.

14 Resources and support from IChemE

IChemE is committed to supporting ACTS Managers and their organisations throughout the life of their Accredited Company Training Scheme (ACTS). This section outlines the key resources available to help you manage your scheme effectively and prepare for accreditation or re-accreditation.

14.1 IChemE contacts and support channels

- **Accreditation Advisor (Membership and Qualifications team):**
Your primary contact for all matters relating to ACTS accreditation. The Accreditation Advisor can assist with:
 - Setting up a new scheme or preparing for re-accreditation
 - Understanding the accreditation process and documentation requirements
 - Queries about registering trainees and mentors on the ACTS portal
 - Navigating the ACTS portal and managing user access
 - Checking IChemE membership status for trainees and mentors
 - Discussing joint visits, abeyance or extension requests, or interpretation of the accreditation requirements
- **Regional Engagement Manager (REM):**
REMs provide regional support and relationship management for organisations engaged with IChemE. They:
 - Support development of applications for first-time accreditation
 - Assist with broader initiatives such as Employer Partners and IChemE's outreach activities
 - Help connect ACTS Managers with networking and professional development opportunities
 - Support ongoing engagement between IChemE and ACTS companies
 - Act as a point of contact to strengthen your organisation's relationship with IChemE

ACTS Managers are encouraged to contact IChemE at any point if they:

- Have questions about specific elements of accreditation
- Need help mapping their training or understanding UKU gaps
- Would like a discussion about applying for a new scheme or re-accreditation
- Are considering a joint visit with another PEI
- Need to discuss an abeyance or extension request

We are here to help and always happy to provide clarification, feedback, or tailored advice.

14.2 Online resources

The following resources can be found on the IChemE [ACTS resource hub](#) or provided by the Accreditation Advisor on request:

- IChemE ACTS portal (for managing trainees and mentors)
- [ACTS self-assessment and accreditation visit report form](#)
- ACTS training manual template
- [ACTS abeyance and extensions policy](#)
- Suggested accreditation visit agenda

We recommend reviewing these resources regularly to ensure you are using the most up-to-date versions.

14.3 Workshops and networking

- **ACTS Manager workshops:**
IChemE runs periodic online or in-person workshops for ACTS Managers to share updates, discuss changes in accreditation and Chartered processes, and provide a forum for sharing good practice and challenges
- **IChemE Connect (ACTS organisation community):**
A dedicated online space for ACTS Managers and Administrators to ask questions, share resources, and collaborate with peers

15 FAQs

15.1 General and eligibility

What is ACTS?

ACTS (Accredited Company Training Scheme) is an IChemE-accredited programme that supports early career engineers to progress toward Chartered Member (MChemE) status through structured development, mentoring, and competency demonstration.

Who can be a trainee?

Graduates eligible for IChemE Associate or Affiliate Membership can join. Trainees with non-accredited degrees are welcome, but companies should support them in addressing underpinning knowledge gaps (UKU).

Can trainees join several years after graduation?

Yes. While ACTS typically supports early post-graduate development (first three-four years), individuals can join later depending on career path and company discretion.

What is the usual duration of a scheme for a trainee?

Trainees are expected to complete the scheme in approximately three-four years. A six-year maximum period is encouraged for completion.

15.2 Accreditation and visits

How long does accreditation last?

New schemes: two years.

Reaccredited schemes: four years.

What happens during the accreditation visit?

Assessors meet with scheme managers, trainees, mentors, and leadership. The visit explores alignment with IChemE standards and good practice. Outcomes are confirmed after committee review.

Can we do a joint visit with another PEI?

Yes, but usually only for re-accreditations. Joint visits require significant coordination and agreement between institutions and the company. IChemE can collaborate with other PEIs to align agendas, though separate documentation and visit aspects are required.

Are virtual visits possible?

IChemE conducts a risk-based assessment to determine if a visit should be in-person or virtual. New schemes, high risk schemes, and/or those whose last visit was virtual must have an on-site visit.

15.3 Mentors and support

Who can be a mentor?

Mentors should ideally be Chartered Chemical Engineers with sufficient experience. They play a key role in guiding development and reviewing trainee progress.

How should mentors be supported?

Provide training or briefing on ACTS, IChemE competencies, and their responsibilities in supporting and reviewing trainees.

What if a trainee lacks a chemical engineering degree?

They may still progress toward Chartered status but will need to demonstrate UKU. The company must support them in filling these gaps.

15.4 ACTS management

What does the ACTS Manager do?

They oversee the scheme, ensure resources and compliance, maintain records, support trainees and mentors, and liaise with IChemE.

Can responsibilities be delegated across sites?

Yes. Site leads or hub managers can support local implementation, reporting to the overall ACTS Manager to ensure consistency.

What if the ACTS Manager leaves?

Proactive succession planning is encouraged. IChemE also provides transition guidance and recommends informing them of any changes promptly.

15.5 Systems and reporting

What is the ACTS Portal?

A secure IChemE system for ACTS Managers and administrators to view and update trainee and mentor registrations, and check membership status. Annual updates of records are a requirement of accreditation.

Are updates mandatory?

Yes. ACTS managers must update trainee and mentor records at least annually. IChemE sends email reminders to support this process.

Do we need to submit annual reports?

Annual report spreadsheets are no longer required, but recordkeeping and annual portal updates are expected.

15.6 Costs and resources

Are there fees or costs?

Yes there is a fee at each accreditation visit. Contact the Accreditation Advisor for current fees. Companies must cover reasonable travel and subsistence costs for ACTS Assessors following a visit. IChemE tries to minimise these where possible.

What support is available?

IChemE offers an Accreditation Advisor, Regional Engagement Manager support, ACTS Manager workshops, access to peer support through IChemE Connect, as well as guidance documents, and other resources and templates.

15.7 Progression to Chartered and further support

Where can trainees find guidance on applying for Chartered Member?

IChemE offers comprehensive guidance on its website, including a step-by-step application guide, examples of Competence and Commitment (C&C) reports, and webinar recordings. ACTS Managers should familiarise themselves with this content to better support trainees. Visit: icheme.org/chartered

Do ACTS trainees still need to complete the Chartered application process?

Yes. ACTS helps prepare trainees, but they must still submit a formal application for Chartered Member status, including a C&C report, and pass a Professional Review interview.

Is there a deadline for trainees to apply for Chartered after completing ACTS?

There is no strict deadline, but IChemE encourages ACTS trainees to apply as soon as they are ready. Most ACTS trainees will apply to become Chartered within four-eight years of joining an ACTS.

Can a trainee switch schemes or transfer to a new company?

Yes. If the new company also has an accredited ACTS, the trainee can usually transfer and continue their development, though IChemE should be informed via the ACTS portal to ensure continuity.

What happens if a trainee leaves before completing ACTS?

The ACTS Manager should update their status on the ACTS portal and inform IChemE. The trainee can still progress to Chartered independently or via another scheme.

16 Appendix

A Accreditation readiness self-check tool

Use this tool to assess your preparedness and identify areas requiring development before starting the application process:

Readiness Area	Prompt/question	✓/✗	Notes/actions
Senior Management support	Do you have visible and ongoing support from senior leadership?		
ACTS Manager identified	Have you identified someone with sufficient authority, time and understanding to manage the scheme?		
Mentor pool	Do you have enough suitable mentors (ideally Chartered or experienced engineers) to support trainees?		
Mentor development	Will your mentors receive training or guidance on supporting ACTS trainees and C&C reporting?		
Trainee cohort	Do you have graduate engineers in scope, and are they eligible to join IChemE as Associate/Affiliate?		
UKU support	Can you support non-accredited graduates to meet UKU gaps over time?		
Development planning	Have you established or planned structured development plans and regular review points?		
IChemE competency mapping	Have you begun mapping training activities to the Chartered Competence and Commitment standards?		
Resources and documentation	Can you produce and maintain a Training Manual, training logs, and other supporting materials?		
Companywide engagement	Are HR, line managers and mentors engaged with the proposed scheme?		
Internal tracking and records	Will you maintain accurate records of trainees and mentors and update the ACTS portal annually?		
Awareness of accreditation process	Do you understand the IChemE application, visit, and review process?		
Prepared for timescales	Are you aware of timelines for submission, visits, and outcomes?		

Note: Companies answering '✗' to several items are encouraged to discuss readiness with IChemE's Accreditation Advisor or the Regional Engagement Manager before applying.

B Checklist – setting up a new ACTS

You may find this checklist helpful when preparing an initial application for IChemE accreditation:

- Reach out to IChemE (acts@icheme.org) to request an initial discussion and support from a REM
- Review the ACTS guidance and [Chartered guidance](#)
- Obtain management buy-in for IChemE accreditation and internal approval of costs
- Design your training programme
- Identify ACTS Manager and key stakeholders (eg mentors, senior sponsor)
- Develop draft Training Manual – a template is available via the [ACTS resource hub](#)
- Map training and experience opportunities to IChemE's C&C requirements
- Plan internal review process for training plans and mentor allocation
- Identify how trainees' UKU will be supported (for non-accredited degree holders)
- Draft or collate a sample of example documentation (training logs, review forms)
- Complete [IChemE's accreditation self-assessment form](#)
- Review and sign IChemE's Accreditation Agreement and data sharing agreement

C Annual scheme health check

Use this checklist to monitor the ongoing health and compliance of your ACTS and ensure that it continues to support trainees effectively in working towards Chartered status:

- Register new trainees and mentors on the IChemE ACTS portal
- Check and update the status of existing trainees and mentors on the ACTS portal (eg completion, leavers)
- Review mentor engagement, coverage, and training needs
- Check trainees are progressing to Chartered status within the expected timeframe
- Review unsuccessful/revision requests for Chartered applications, to identify issues or trends
- Gather and reflect on scheme feedback from both trainees and mentors
- Update the Training Manual and other scheme documentation (ensure clear version control)
- Stay up to date with changes to IChemE's Chartered application processes and requirements via IChemE communication channels, and circulate to internal stakeholders
- Incorporate any changes to IChemE's accreditation requirements or processes
- Review implementation progress of any conditions or recommendations from the last accreditation visit
- Track trainee progress and monitoring and ensure appropriate support mechanisms are in place and effective
- Attend the IChemE ACTS Manager Workshop to stay informed and share best practice
- Schedule a check-in with your Regional Engagement Manager to discuss support and collaboration opportunities

D Mock interview resources

These resources are designed to guide preparation for the professional review interview process and help trainees build confidence, receive feedback, and identify any areas for improvement before they submit their Chartered Member application.

Mock interview overview and guide

Purpose:

- Simulate the interview to help the trainee gain experience in answering competence-based questions
- Identify gaps or weaknesses in the trainee's understanding or examples
- Build confidence in presenting their experience professionally

Format:

- 60-minute interview (45 mins Q&A + 15 mins feedback)
- Two assessors: one to lead, one to observe/note-take and give feedback
- Based on the submitted or draft C&C Report and CV
- Held in person or virtually

Participants:

- Internal senior engineers, ideally Chartered Members or Fellows
- Must understand the IChemE Competencies and Commitments
- Can include current ACTS Mentors or colleagues with Professional Reviewer experience

Sample mock interview questions by competence area

Based on the IChemE five C&C areas:

A – Evidence of applying knowledge and understanding to practical situations

- Can you describe how you've applied chemical engineering principles to solve a complex problem?
- What further learning or development have you undertaken since graduating?
- Can you give an example of a time you introduced a technical improvement or innovation in your workplace?

B – Evidence they are able to handle the wider implications of their work as an engineer

- Tell us about a time you identified and managed a safety risk
- How do you apply sustainability principles in your work?
- Have you ever had to balance technical requirements with commercial, ethical or societal considerations? How did you manage this?

C – Evidence of their interpersonal, leadership and communication skills

- How have you influenced a team or project?
- What's your approach to mentoring or supporting others?
- Can you give an example of communicating complex technical ideas to a non-technical audience?
- How do you handle disagreement or conflict at work?

D – Evidence that they are committed to high standards of professional and ethical conduct

- What does professionalism mean to you?
- How do you demonstrate ethical awareness in your role?

E – Continuing Professional Development

- Can you describe how you identify your own development needs, and give an example of how you've acted on one of those needs?
- Tell us about a recent CPD activity you've undertaken and explain how it has contributed to your professional growth

Mock interview feedback template

Use a simple form to record strengths and development areas.

Competence area	Strengths observed	Development areas/actions
A		
B		
C		
D		
E		
Overall Impression		

Include feedback on:

- Clarity and relevance of examples
- Confidence and communication style
- Understanding of competencies and professionalism
- Timing and conciseness

Mock interview checklist for organisers

Before the interview:

- Obtain and review the trainee's latest CV and draft C&C Report
- Confirm two interviewers (ideally CEng/FIChemE level)
- Book suitable time slot and platform (if virtual)
- Share interview format with the trainee
- Brief interviewers on their roles and feedback expectations

After the interview:

- Provide verbal and/or written feedback
- Recommend any further development actions
- Encourage trainee to proceed with application if ready
- Share IChemE Chartered guidance or support resources if needed

IChemE support materials to refer trainees to:

- [IChemE Chartered guidance](#)
- [C&C preparatory template](#)
- Competence and Commitment Standards (C&C)
- Example applications from successful applicants internally
- [Chartered application webinars or Q&A sessions](#)
- Contact the Membership and Qualifications team for advice: applications@icheme.org

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