



# Partnership Brokers Association ACCREDITATION PROGRAMME

## FAQs Helping you understand the programme better

We appreciate that you are keen to take an informed decision on your professional development. So, we put together answers to the most common questions we get asked about our Accreditation Programme.

The questions range from practical aspects related to course rhythm, time-requirements and whether your partnering activities provide a good basis for supporting your learning journey, to conceptual aspects related to ambiguity and exploring the potential of reflective practice.

This is our attempt to provide enough information to help you decide about and prepare for enrolment in the programme.

Though the programme has a beginning, a middle and an end, it is not structured to the last detail. Process will be partly crafted by the mentor and the mentee, together. We have some boundaries to help create a space for the process to emerge in a way that can best serve the learning needs of the mentee and the requirements of the programme. There is a tension here – the programme tries to be flexible as well as lay down standards for a professional qualification. We hold this tension – this is part of the partnership brokering approach.



The partnership brokering approach entails working with ambiguities as the complex partnership challenges do not have pre-defined answers. Partnership brokers seldom have definitive solutions. They rely on a series of judgment calls based on what emerges, and what is needed now!

Take a look at specific questions presented in the list of contents, or jump straight to a section using these buttons:

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Still have a question?  
 Contact [learning@partnershipbrokers.org](mailto:learning@partnershipbrokers.org)

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## Before applying

Find out who the Accreditation Programme is for, which learning opportunities it offers and explore how the programme maps with your individual learning needs and motifs.

### How do we understand the partnership brokering role?

The role is layered and emerging. It brings **attention to the process of partnering**, the assumption being that the **process influences the results**.

Partnership brokering is a term coined in 2002 in a publication entitled: The Guiding Hand – Brokering Partnerships for Sustainable Development. It refers to the professional and effective management of the partnering process to help partners (and key others) to:

- Build efficient, effective, and principled working relationships
- Optimise the partnership's potential
- Shape the partnership so it has impact and influence
- Ensure genuine added value for all

The role can be undertaken by different individuals who are internal or external to the partnership.

### Who can apply for PBA Accreditation?

If you operate in a partnership brokering role, i.e. manage/facilitate/work with partners on a regular basis, you may apply for the Accreditation Programme.

As part of the programme, you will have to write/record a log book on your partnership brokering activities, which you will share with your mentor on a weekly or bi-weekly basis (as agreed between you and your mentor). This will be the basis of the mentoring support. So, regular does not mean every day, but there should be regular opportunity to reflect on your brokering practice in real time, here and now.

### What kind of roles or activities are considered partnership brokering?

Anyone who works with partners, bringing attention to the process of partnering – how they engage, how they take decisions, manage problems, resolve disputes – and helping partners work equitably and in a more principled way, can be said to be playing a partnership brokering role.

The role can be undertaken by different individuals who are internal or external to the partnership.

**Individuals who are internal** to any one of the partners or to the partnership may be called:

- Project manager or coordinator but they may be doing more than managing a project or coordinating – they are managing the process of partnership and supporting the partners. They may be part of NGO, Government, corporates, a network secretariat, a backbone organisation...
- CEO or Director or Vice President - organisational leaders or those operating in leadership roles often engage with partners and try to strengthen or even transform the collaborative processes. They are operating in partnership brokering roles too.
- Or may have any other designation – M&E, Research...



### External partnership brokers may be:

- Conducting partnering workshops
- Helping partners engage in collaborative decision making or problem solving
- Facilitate partnership reviews
- Or support partners in any other way to help them move forward

An external partnership broker may be contracted as a consultant, but the role entails focus on the partnership and the partnering process, rather than representing or protecting the interests of any one partner. They may also be called partnership evaluator, backbone organisation, member of Secretariat, trouble shooter, convenor, facilitator...

### Can enrolment in the programme be refused?

Normally, you will decide whether to enrol in the course or not. Our role in the decision-making process, is to help you to make an informed decision.

We may give you feedback based on the following:

- **Information in your application form** – we may ask for further clarifications on your partnership brokering activities to ensure that you have enough present engagement in the role to optimize the value of the programme.
- **Feedback from your trainers** in the Partnership Brokers Training or Partnership Brokering – an online course.
- **Feedback from reviewers** of Part 1 of Accreditation – the bridge.

We may, however, refuse to accept an application if there is inadequate engagement with partnership brokering or we have reason to question the partnership brokering potential or integrity.

### Does completion of the Programme guarantee accreditation?

This is an assessed course. Candidates are required to submit a compiled Log Book and Final Paper at the end of the mentored practice period. The assessment of these submissions will determine whether or not the candidate can be accredited.

Enrolment in the programme does not guarantee Accreditation. Submission of the two work-pieces Log Book and Final Paper does not guarantee Accreditation. Accreditation will be awarded if assessment of the submissions recommend a Pass.

## During the course

### What will I be doing during the Accreditation Programme?

The Accreditation Programme builds on reflective practice.

Reflection involves thinking about what we have done, what made us do it, what impact our actions had, what we are going to do hereafter, and what are we learning in the process.

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect systematically on one's actions to engage in a process of continuous learning.



The Programme invites you to explore your role in the partnership(s) you are involved in, and how your interactions and interventions influence process and progress of the collaboration(s). You will be guided by a mentor.

As part of the programme, you will record your reflections in a Log Book, which you will share with your mentor for feedback on a regular basis (e.g. every 1-2 weeks).

The Log Book is the story of your brokering and learning journey throughout the 3-month mentored practice period.

It is the main instrument used in the programme to help capture the story, based on which the mentor relates to the situation that the mentee is operating in and shares her/his own reflections and feedback.

Towards the end of the mentored practice period, candidates are expected to write a Final Paper. The aim of the paper is to conceptualise your learnings. What might other brokers draw from your experience?

### **What is the role of my mentor?**

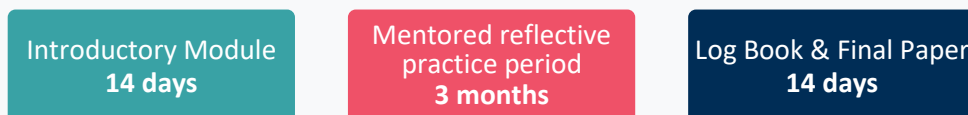
The role of your mentor is two-fold. One, to help you develop a more systematic approach for your reflective practice. Two, to help you explore and challenge your current thinking and practice through questions. They will be encouraging you to experiment with new ways of working and to try things differently. They will not, however, resolve your problems or challenges (this is more the realm of consultants) rather, they will support you as you explore, experiment, and reflect on experience.

### **Who are the mentors?**

Mentors are highly experienced accredited partnership brokers, who are themselves accredited and are now Associates of PBA. You will be assigned a mentor based on our understanding of what you need. We will try our best to match to a mentor who can help you reflect, challenge you where required, and validate where necessary. We will share the mentor C.V. with you before finalising the mentor matching. You can ask questions or express concerns if you have any. We have a process to help you and your mentor to come to an understanding on how best to support you.

### **What is the course structure and time frame?**

The course runs over four months. It operates with a firm but minimal structure. The intent is to enable you to grow at your own pace and style, with the guidance of your mentor. The course is structured in three parts:



### **How flexible is the time frame?**

To accommodate unexpected professional or personal developments during the mentored period, the programme offers some limited flexibility with the time frame.



Pending the mentor's discretion, the 3.5-month programme can be extended up to six months, within which the final submissions by the candidate (Log Book, Final Paper) as well as the grading by the mentor must be completed.

This effectively means that final submissions have to be made within five and half months of receiving the Introductory Module.

Candidates should record their reflections covering a minimum of nine weeks and maximum of twelve weeks in their Log Book.

### **How much time per week should I set aside for course work?**

This depends on your preferred reflection and learning style. Some candidates block time every day for reflection on the day's partnership activities. Some prefer to block an hour or two per week to do the same.

It is less about the time it takes to record reflections that candidates find demanding, it is usually the process of reflecting, questioning, and challenging themselves. Creating space and making time to think about new ways of working and trying things differently can be demanding in terms of head space and mental energy.

This is an intensive process, and leads to serious preoccupation, hard work and courage.

## Assessment

### **What will be assessed?**

After candidates complete the reflective practice period with their mentor, they are expected to submit:

- a compiled Log Book, which maps their learning journey and makes shifts in their practice visible, and
- a Final Paper, which conceptualises their insights guided by the question how other partnership brokers could benefit from their learnings.

### **How long does assessment take?**

Assessment builds on 2 processes: examining the Log Book and Paper, and norming the results. Norming requires a minimum of 4 submissions to make a cohort.

Pending on the submission dates and potential extension requests of all the candidates in one cohort, candidates may have to wait 1 to 2.5 months before receiving their results.

### **Who will be assessing my work?**

The Log Book will be first graded by your mentor.

The Final Paper will be graded by an examiner from our mentor pool. This is typically one of our long-standing mentors, who have years of experience working with PBA Accreditation candidates.



Both the submissions will then be assessed by the norming examiner, who is again someone who is a highly experienced partnership broker and mentor, and who also brings an academic background towards criteria setting and standardisation.

### **What happens if I don't pass?**

If you do not get a Pass, you may or may not be provided an opportunity to resubmit. It depends on whether the assessment suggests that there is enough evidence to justify a resubmission. You will be provided detailed feedback on why they did not award you a Pass. If you disagree with the results, you can appeal through an appeal procedure.

### **How will my status as accredited partnership broker be presented?**

You will receive an electronic certificate and an 'Accredited Partnership Broker' logo from PBA, which you can use on your letterhead, visiting card and bio.