

MEDIN Data Archive Centres accreditation

1. Introduction

In 2019 MEDIN DACs endorsed a move to adoption of Core Trust Seal (CTS) accreditation in place of MEDIN accreditation, recognising the organisational and reputational benefits such accreditation will give them. This has since been approved by the MEDIN Executive and Sponsors Board, agreeing that from 2020 onwards, all DAC (re)accreditation will be by CTS. This document lists some questions that various DACs have asked during this transition period and will be distributed to all DACs for information.

2. Questions about Core Trust Seal Accreditation

Q1) Does Core Trust Seal apply to the whole of an organisation, or can it apply to a group/department/database within an organisation?

A1) As long as the entity under consideration can be clearly defined and labelled such that it is absolutely understood by the world what is actually certified (and more importantly, what is not), then there is no problem.

Q2) How long does the process to apply for CTS take?

A2) Based on experience from the DACs, the process takes approximately 18 months. Much of the time needed is to research what material or evidence is missing (e.g. documented processes and policies) and then to carry out the work to generate the evidence.

Q3) How many people are typically involved in an application, and for how long?

A3) In examples from the DACs, there are typically about 5 people involved, people normally share the research and evidence gathering, possibly with working groups meeting every couple of months.

Q4) How frequently do you submit the form for feedback from the CTS team during the application period?

A6) The form is not usually submitted to CTS while it is in progress; instead, groups tend to liaise and get verbal feedback. Top tip – liaise with CTS team during your application to ask questions, they are very helpful. Make time to get people in your team to proofread your application so that it reads well, is consistent in language, check all URL links work, etc.

Q5) Were any sections in the CTS application form harder than others?

A5) The IT infrastructure, long term preservation plan sections have been found to be a bit more challenging. Advice is to not overstate your abilities; it is better to be honest that you are working towards something.

Q6) Is it quicker/less intensive when reapplying second time around?

A6) Yes, mainly focusing on a few areas where the DAC had scored themselves as working towards a criterion. However, there is not a need to address all of these, just those that would be easy to

achieve on re-accreditation. Check whether there is any new CTS guidance and whether anything new is needed.

Q7) Have external stakeholders provided any feedback to indicate that gaining CTS accreditation has been worthwhile?

A7) The Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) is making it a requirement for all of the NERC Data Centres to gain accreditation. Publishers of journals need to know a repository is trusted, so there is a push from publishers as well.

Q8) Can MEDIN support DACs through accreditation?

A8) The MEDIN DAC Working Group can advise and support the organisation applying for CTS accreditation by sharing experiences, reviewing documentation and providing a sounding board. CTS charges an administration fee upon submission of the accreditation application. This should be paid by the organisation applying for accreditation, but MEDIN can reimburse this charge to DACs on request.