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ACEP Professional Development Brochure [2025]

Association of Consultation and Engagement Professionals

“Other courses we had attended were so bland. We couldn’t get to grips on the changes we needed based on the theory of them. The ACEP course was much more practical, will definitely book on more.”

“I can’t thank ACEP enough. We had a fun yet informative session which involved us learning all about the law of consultation. Turns out we had done some really risky things in the past..”

“After attending the course, we made changes to our process immediately and almost doubled our engagement rates.”

“Our residents were convinced that consultations were a sham. That politicians and policymakers had already made up their minds. Armed with this course we have made real changes to these attitudes. Thank-you.”



www.acep.org.uk



ASSOCIATION OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

PROFESSIONALS

ACEP is on a mission to ensure that everyone’s experience with participation is positive. Our training offer reflects this ambition - focusing on the consultors, consultees and political stakeholders who are critical to success.

From how to reduce the risks of judicial review through to designing and delivering an effective consultation, our training focuses on the practical steps needed to put learning into practice.

Our trainers have at least ten years of experience of supporting and delivering public consultations in the UK, many of them are experts in their own right. Better still, our delivery vehicle is versatile. We offer a full range of ways to get onboard and can provide remote or face-to-face options.

For example: -

- “In house” - training which fits your own timetable, comes to you and is designed around your organisational requirements (minimum numbers required)
- “Public training” - training which is scheduled throughout the year and is focused on a particular topic or topics.
- “eLearning” - video based micro credentials and our foundation course which are always available and 100% online (this is not webinar based).
- “Briefings” - short (face-to-face) executive summaries on relevant topics, typically designed to quickly engage or bring a group up-to-speed on an important topic.

Each course participant will get a certificate of attainment and each course will include both practical and theory based learning sets.

While we embrace best practice, we’re not adverse to learning either. That’s why every course is better than the last and why our trainers are passionate about going beyond theory - taking time to engage you in conversation.

In these uncertain times (with such unprecedented changes) such investment in democracy is badly needed to maintain trust in our democratic system. We hope that you are able to find something that inspires you.

If you’d like more information about any of the courses advertised here, just drop us an email on contact@acep.org.uk

Learn at your own pace

Our short eLearning courses are 100% online and consist of various multimedia modules to get you up-to-speed on essential topics.

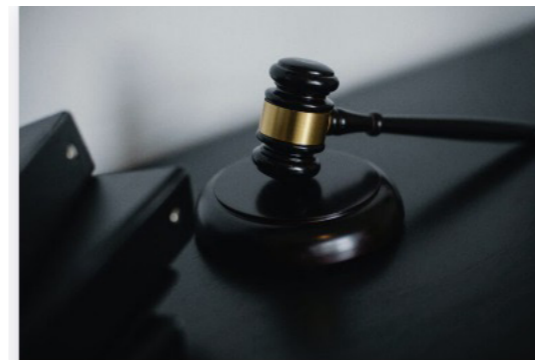
Embedded quizzes test your understanding of the materials and a virtual certificate is available.

Existing or new ACEP members may also take our “ACEP Foundation eLearning Course” and examination.

This is a two-hour video course covering all essential elements of consultation and engagement and is charged separately at £495 per learner. This includes an online exam (the pass rate is 65% and members who pass are issued a digital certificate).

The ACEP foundation course covers the following topics:-

- Consultation design and delivery
- The Consultation timeline
- Consultation law
- Options appraisal
- Stakeholder mapping
- Digital engagement
- Data Analysis



Fundamentals of public consultation law

This is a foundation course. The course is aimed at public bodies who have a duty to consult and engage [...]

Fraser Henderson

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Optioneering

This is an advanced course. Option appraisal and shortlisting are an essential part of any case for change. Poor or [...]

Fraser Henderson

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Stakeholder Mapping

Engaging the right people This is a foundation course Stakeholder Mapping is an essential part of planning a consultation or [...]

Fraser Henderson

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ACEP Foundation Course + Exam

Additional charges apply to all members This 2 hour video course covers the full foundation syllabus. It has been designed [...]

Fraser Henderson



Designing and delivering an effective public consultation

This is a foundation course which covers the consultation timeline. It will help consultation & engagement professionals understand the:-

Fraser Henderson



Effective webinars and online meetings

This is a foundation course Online webinars and online public meetings are mainstream. However, they require proper preparation and execution [...]

Fraser Henderson

Eight eLearning modules are included in any ACEP individual or corporate membership: -

- > Fundamentals of public consultation law
- > Optioneering
- > Stakeholder mapping
- > Designing and delivering an effective public consultation
- > Effective webinars and online meetings
- > Equalities for consultation and engagement
- > GDPR for public engagement
- > Social media for public engagement

Course name	Consultation, Engagement and Equality - essentials
Course duration	5.5 hours (online), 6 hours (offline)
Trainer	Fraser Henderson
Course options	Online via Zoom or Teams, Offline (in a training room) - public or in-house options

All people that have responsibility for, manage or run programmes of change involving engagement and consultation fear the possibility of legal challenges. Legal challenges can be for a large number of reasons. Most are because a party views your process as unfair or can identify a way in which you have failed to meet the Equality duty adequately.

The answer is to ensure you have a good understanding of what is lawful and what is not.

This course enlightens participants about the statutory and common law requirements related to service change, consultation and Equality requirements (including how analysis should be undertaken and impact assessments produced).

Participants will be able to discuss 'scenarios', whether factual or hypothetical, experienced or imagined to learn from the trainer what could be or should have been done to avoid challenge.

Throughout the course reference is made to specific legal cases to illustrate what is being discussed.

This course discusses the essentials that people need to know. It covers a lot of information. It does not include exercises but the trainer will throw questions at the participants for group discussion and debate. There will be time for questions and answers.

Outcome

Participants will have a better understanding of duties and requirements for lawful service change, design and reconfiguration. They will be able to advise colleagues about good process and what is likely to be lawful or not. They will be better able to plan and design appropriate processes and reports.



In-house and public training courses

Designed and delivered by consultation and engagement professionals with over a decade of experience in practical consultation delivery. Delivered online (remotely) or face-to-face, depending on the date.

Course name	Consultation: what is lawful, what is not?
Course duration	5.5 hours (online), 6 hours (offline)
Trainer	Fraser Henderson
Course options	Online via Zoom or Teams, Offline (in a training room) - public or in-house options
Number of participants:	12 max

All people that have responsibility for, manage or run consultations fear the possibility of legal challenges. Legal challenges can be for a large number of reasons. It is logical that any person with responsibility will ask themselves, “How do I avoid legal challenge?”. The answer is far from straightforward.

This course provides crucial learning that enables participants to understand how and why consultations are challenged, in order to be able to plan consultations with minimal risk of challenge.

During this course participants will explore what is lawful, from statutory requirements to common law. They will also be able to test scenarios to better understand what is not lawful and why a particular approach or scenario is not lawful.

This course is not a study of many legal cases, though some cases are referred to for illustrative purposes. It is focused on how and why challenges are accepted into Court and how to manage and design processes to avoid that happening.

Outcome

Participants will have broadened their understanding of what is lawful or not and be able to advise colleagues. They will be better able to plan and design process in order to reduce the risk of challenge, and, produce a consultation to good practice standards.

This course includes team exercises to aid participant learning and time for questions and answers.

Course name	Equality Analysis and Impact Assessments
Course duration	5.5 hours (online), 6 hours (offline)
Trainer	Fraser Henderson
Course options	Online via Zoom or Teams, Offline (in a training room) - public or in-house options
Number of participants:	12 max

The Equality Duty places a heavy responsibility on those that provide public sector services, and those are contracted by the public sector. A frequently under regarded area, where this duty applies, is in service provision that is subject to changes, whether through re-design, funding changes or changing needs. It is an area where those undertaking programmes of development and change can be legally challenged. So, besides the moral aspects of doing this well, there is the need to avoid costly challenges.

There are two pillars in doing this work: a) equality analysis, and, b) producing information for decision makers, usually in the form of an impact assessment. This course takes participants through a common change scenario, that all can relate to. It explores the phases that a change scenario goes through, how analysis is undertaken at each stage, what engagement is needed and how it should be done, the data requirement and how the learning should be turned into information.

It explores the ‘impact assessment’ as a ‘tool’ that is continuously developed and used to support good decision making.

Throughout the course reference is made to legal cases to support what is being advocated. This course includes team exercises to aid participant learning and time for questions and answers.

Outcome

Participants will have a better understanding of the Equality duty and its requirement in service change, design and reconfiguration. They will be able to advise colleagues about good process and what is likely to be lawful or not. They will be better able to plan and design appropriate research, engagement and learning.

Participants will be able to produce impact assessments or informing documents to a ‘safe and good practice standard

Course name	Stakeholder identification, mapping and management
Course duration	5.5 hours (online), 6 hours (offline)
Trainer	Fraser Henderson
Course options	Online via Zoom or Teams, Offline (in a training room) - public or in-house options

We've all heard of stakeholder mapping but are you confident you can do it well? Do you know the importance of stakeholder identification and how to do that well? What about stakeholder management, how to manage stakeholder and turn them into assets? And, what about asset management?

Doing stakeholder mapping can be counterproductive if you don't know enough about how to do identification and management well. You have to get this right to get stakeholder mapping right.

This course takes participants through a dynamic journey using a programme scenario all can identify with. On that journey participants will learn what 'good' stakeholder identification process is, what good stakeholder management looks like, including the facilities you need for competence, how these provide the foundations for stakeholder mapping (like the bottom blocks of a Jenga tower), and how to do stakeholder mapping to 'good' practice standards.

The course finishes with how we turn stakeholders into 'assets' that help enhance our capabilities in future.

This course includes team exercises to aid participant learning and time for questions and answers.

Outcome

Participants will have broadened their understanding of effective stakeholder mapping, identification and management. They will be better able to plan and design public involvement, engagement and consultation.

Participants will be able to advise their employer on use of facilities to manage stakeholders and develop community 'assets' to assist in future programmes.

Course name	Mastering digital participation
Course duration	5.5 hours (online), 6 hours (offline)
Trainer	Fraser Henderson
Course options	Online via Zoom or Teams, Offline (in a training room) - public or in-house options
Number of participants:	12 max

Most consultors are going "digital first" but do not appreciate the changed participation dynamic, how to create a truly blended consultation, design an effective online questionnaire or the range of online engagement methods and their purpose. We cover the entire range of topics, such as how to use technology to tackle the rise in fake engagement and what needs to be covered in terms of GDPR.

We will discuss the various design aspects of online consultations by collective critique and inspection of "live" examples, delve into best practices which are based on prior user research (such as how to present information online) and run demonstrations of the latest advances such as AI powered text analysis. Scenarios will be used to help participants think about key issues such as transparency and data management.

This course will help participants understand the solution marketplace and the differences between various commercial tools, providing essential support to anybody who is in the process of procurement.

This is a highly practical course and includes exclusive demonstrations of technology, including how a leading consultation platform can be used to build and maintain a corporate consultation function.

Outcome

Participants will have a better understanding of digital consultations, such that they can fully enhance and compliment their work. They will be able to design an optimised online experience while being mindful of the limits, risks and implications of the channel.

Participants will have a rounded appreciation of the solution marketplace, the art of the possible and best practices in terms of designing online engagement projects.



For elected members

Did you know that some local authorities have elected member consultation and engagement champions?

We offer a short overview of consultation and engagement from the perspective of politicians - perfect for new members or if you are changing your approach.

This tried and tested briefing will ensure that elected members are armed with key knowledge, such as how to avoid predetermination, and is packed with practical examples - including lessons from past failures.

For executives

Many department leads do not have the time to attend our courses but need to be ahead of the latest law and legislation.

We offer bespoke, short briefings for strategic oversight of consultation and engagement for professionals.

If you need to embrace change or just want to expand support for your consultation and engagement work, this is the perfect way to bring awareness to higher levels.

We put everything into context - demonstrating the link between our work and the democracy value chain.

Briefings

Situations don't just change because of new systems, processes or structures. They change because the people within them adapt and change too. Only when people have made their own personal transitions can we truly reap the benefits of change.

Course name	Consultation & Engagement in Planning & Development
Course duration	5.5 hours (online), 6 hours (offline)
Trainer	Jonathan Twitchen
Course options	Online via Zoom or Teams, Offline (in a training room) - public or in-house options

Planning is changing rapidly and major infrastructure projects need to be right first time. This course aimed at junior planners or those seeking to refresh their knowledge who are involved in the stakeholder engagement process. It is delivered by a highly skilled trainer who has first-hand experience of major planning applications and many anecdotal experiences.

This course explores the law of planning consultation and is packed with practical advice and techniques from developing a successful statement of community consultation through to dealing with DCOs. It features numerous case-studies and has a strong practical element.

The course has a strong environmental theme and covers topics such as greenwashing to ensure that learners are both aware and familiar with their responsibilities in this domain.

Outcome

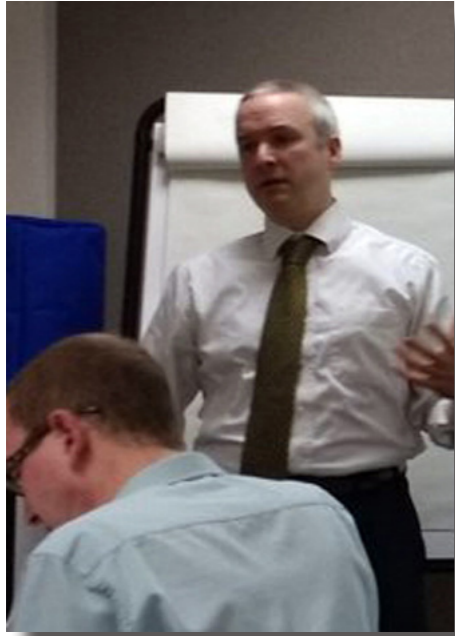
Participants have an up-to-date understanding of the law of consultation relating to planning

Participants understand how to deal with the various specific aspects of planning engagement such as SOCs and DCOs

Participants are armed with practical methods of engaging stakeholders

Participants can deal with challenges to the process on various grounds, such as environmental concerns.

Fraser Henderson



I have 15 years' experience of delivering face-to-face and virtual training on consultation and engagement related topics gained from time spent at The Consultation Institute. My career includes time spent in local and central government, Lincoln University and various participation software companies.

My specialist subject is digital engagement (previous Winner of the European Political Technologies award) and I have worked with clients across the sector to build capabilities and upskill workforces, including foreign governments in Morocco, China, Tunisia, Sweden and Ukraine.

I am the co-founder of ACEP, established in Feb 2023.

John Twitchen

I have spent much of the last thirty years in engagement and consultation, working with stakeholders on complex issues, technologies and policy changes in the energy and resources sectors. Much of my experience is drawn from stakeholder engagement in the planning process, from concept to outcome, across infrastructure and service delivery.

My specialist subejct is the built environment and planning, having established a successful consultancy in this domain and worked as a project director at Grayling Engage.



Why choose us?

Not only are we credible, we donate 20% of any annual profits to advancing our mission through competitive grants for ACEP members.

Prices and options

eLearning courses and micro-credentials

Paid ACEP members get free access to eight micro-credential eLearning courses. Corporate ACEP membership is £484 per annum for up-to five named learners or £780 for up-to 20 learners per annum.

The foundation course and exam (2hrs) is charged at additional £495 per learner and is available to ACEP members only.

All public courses (webinar, remote delivery, various dates)

Our public courses can be enrolled at £249 per learner.

All public courses (face-to-face delivery, various locations and dates)

Our public courses can be enrolled at £549 per learner and includes refreshments, buffet lunch and materials.

Remove delivery (webinar) of in-house or public courses

Our in-house price is £1,495 (max 12 learners)

Face to face delivery of in-house courses

Each one-day course is charged at £2,495 (max 15 learners). This includes all travel and expenses for the trainer but does not include any catering provision which you would be expected to provide for your delegates, unless they have their own arrangements. This is for “off the shelf” courses only (bespoke fee applies).

Member briefings

Each half-day briefing is charged at £2,495 (max 20 participants). This price reflects the time needed to tailor the briefing to the audience / organisation.

Booking and enquiries

Please email contact@acep.org.uk in the first instance to check course availability.

A full schedule of public courses will appear on our website at www.acep.org.uk/booking

ACEP membership (which entitles the bearer to eLearning courses) can be purchased directly on our website. There are various individual and corporate membership options. ACEP membership does not include access to the foundation eLearning course which must be purchased separately.

Discounts

ACEP corporate members get a 5% discount on all prices. Ask us about non-profit and charitable discounts.

Cancellation fees

In the case of cancellation, the fee for making any part of the course bespoke to the client will be chargeable based on time spent. The fee will be chargeable based on the following:

- 50% for cancellations made within 30 working days of the training date.
- 75% for cancellations made within ten working days of the training date
- 100% for cancellations made within five working days of the training date.

General terms

- All prices are zero VAT rated.
- All quoted prices are valid for 90 days from the date of this proposal. After this time, please contact us to check if they need refreshing.
- Payment terms are 100% upon order.
- Card or invoice payments accepted.

ACEP is made possible by the generosity of our founding supporters

