

ACCREDITATION
POLICY
&
PRESS CARD
SCHEME

(Draft Copy)

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Developed by Membership and Accreditation Committee of MCM

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1.0 AIM

The aim of the policy is to clarify the steps that must be taken by a local or a foreign journalist to get accredited in Malawi.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Media Council of Malawi (MCM) is a non-profit, non-political and self-regulating professional organisation for the media whose vision statement is to promote a vibrant media which is professional and accountable to the public.

MCM was resuscitated in February 2007 opening hope for a new era in the media profession. Among the many objectives for which MCM was set to accomplish is to maintain and promote the status of journalism as profession in Malawi. Promotion of the status of journalism can only be achieved through the institutionalism of self-regulation concept. For many years in Malawi journalism was practised without self-regulation concept. This absence of self-regulation among media practitioners left a huge gap in the media industry. Consequently unethical news coverage, low professional standards, inadequate and/or poor training and lack of research based information to guide media practice led to the loss of public trust in media and treatment of journalism as a mediocre profession. Furthermore while media freedom is expressly guaranteed in the republican constitution, politicians and the public continued to accuse the media of abusing this freedom. The introduction of press cards therefore will open a new era in the practicing of journalism in Malawi.

2.0 WHY INTRODUCE ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES

Accreditation of journalists is one of the central principles in self-regulation. This exercise among other things aims to achieve the following:

- Developing an effective and user-friendly accreditation framework for media practitioners and journalism training institutions.
- Maintain and promote the status of journalism as a profession.

3.0 WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE POLICY

The overall supervision of the Accreditation Policy and Press Card Procedures rests with MCM's Accreditation and Membership Committee to provide guidance on the accreditation process.

4.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

MCM secretariat will be responsible for the execution and full implementation of the accreditation policy and press card procedure with oversight implementation provided by Accreditation and Membership Committee as well as Ministry of Information.

5.0 WHY JOURNALISTS SHOULD BE ACCREDITED IN MALAWI

Journalists should be accredited so that they identify themselves to Police, authorities, the public etc as genuine representatives of the media BUT should not be treated as a license or passport to free information regardless of how they get it.

Journalists should be accredited to make sure that not any journalist can cover an event but only those who have been accredited upon presentation of a press card.

6.0 WHO SHOULD BE ACCREDITED

- All journalists.

- Editors and Sub-Editors
- Freelance journalists (refer to specific condition 7.0 (b))
- Student Journalists/Trainees
- Foreign journalists

7.0 EVIDENCE REQUIRED BEFORE ACCREDITATION PROCESS

- a) Employed Journalists shall be accredited upon providing the following
 - i. Letter from employer(after confirmation)
- b) Freelance journalists shall be accredited upon fulfilling the following:
 - i. Submission of the work published in the past 6 months
 - ii. Letter from institution they have worked for
 - iii. Driving License/Pass port
 - iv. Letter from JUMA (they should be a member)
 - v. Shall be questioned if they fail to produce any article
- c) Student Journalist shall be accredited upon providing the following information
 - i. Letter from employee
 - ii. Letter from training institution
- d) A foreign journalist shall be accredited upon fulfilling the following
 - i. Verification through their embassies in collaboration with Ministry of Information

8.0 MINIMUM ACADEMIC REQUIREMENT FOR ACCREDITATION

It shall not be linked to professional qualification BUT at least a minimum academic qualification of Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE)

9.0 NUMBER OF CARDS ISSUED PER JOURNALIST

ONLY One card per person

10.0 ORGANISATION TO OVERSEE THE PRESS CARD SCHEME

Media Council of Malawi shall be responsible for the scheme

11.0 ENDORSEMENT OF THE PRESS CARD CREDIBILITY

Ministry of Information

12.0 WHO WILL CHECK CREDENTIALS OF APPLICANTS

MCM's Membership and Accreditation Committee

13.0 VERIFICATION OF CREDENTIALS

Verification of credentials shall be made through the employer together with letter of employment

14.0 SHOULD THERE BE CODE OF PRACTICE TO WHICH ALL CARD HOLDERS SHALL ADHERE TO.

Yes, the MCM Code of Ethics for Journalists in Malawi shall be used

PRESS CARD SCHEME

1.0 PRESS CARD FEATURES

The card shall have the following features:

a) Front View

- i. PRESS CARDS written on top in big letters
- ii. The front view shall carry the photograph of the bearer of the card
- iii. Logo for MCM
- iv. Expiry date for the card

Back view

- i. The rear view shall carry space for two signatures
- ii. One space for the MCM NGC Chairperson
- iii. He other space for the Secretary for Information/Director of Information

2.0 SECURITY FEATURE

- e) The card shall carry a hologram
- f) Members to discuss information to include in the hologram

3.0 FEES

- Journalists shall be required to pay a subscription fee to cover the cost for production and delivery of the Press Card (fee to be decided by MCM secretariat and approved by the Membership and Accreditation Committee)
- Card replacement shall be higher than the initial cost to avoid carelessness

4.0 FOREIGN JOURNALISTS ACCREDITATION FEE

- MCM shall collect \$100 as processing fee from foreign journalists while Ministry of Information shall collect \$50. The total amount for the accreditation of foreign journalist shall be \$150

5.0 CARD LIFE SPAN

- The card shall expire after one year

6.0 SIZE OF THE CARD

- PVC
- Credit size identity card with details of the card holder
- With a lanyard or clip (preference of the individual journalist)

7.0 SIGNATURE OF THE BEARER OF THE CARD

- This shall be decided by journalists themselves

8.0 WHEN SHALL A CARD BE WITHDRAWN

- The card shall be withdrawn when someone ceases to be a journalist or has been accused of misconduct.

PRESS CARD PROCEDURE

