

This is a transcript of an open forum hosted by the IPEd Accreditation Board (AB) via Zoom on Sunday 15 March 2020. The one-hour format was about 30 minutes of presentation by AB members followed by a Q&A session. Headings have been added for ease of reading.

Speakers (in order of main presentation):

Dr Linda Nix AE, AB chair and delegate for Editors NSW

Vicki Nelson AE, AB delegate for Editors Tasmania

Katie Lawry AE, AB delegate for Editors Victoria

Desolie Page AE, AB delegate for Editors Queensland

Dr Catherine Macdonald AE, AB delegate for Editors WA

Helen Bradford AE, AB delegate for Editors Aotearoa New Zealand

Introduction to AB members

Linda: Welcome everyone. I'm the chair of the Accreditation Board and I'll also be chairing this forum.* Before we begin, I'd like to introduce you to the other members of the Accreditation Board. As well as being chair, I'm also the branch delegate for New South Wales. I'll start with Katie Lawry. Katie, say hello to everybody.

Katie: Hi, everyone. I'm the Accreditation Board delegate for Victoria. So I work as a freelance editor and mostly in the educational area. Any Victorian members, always feel free to come say hi. Let me know if there's anything you've got any queries about.

Linda: Thanks, Katie. Katie will be monitoring the [Zoom] chat today and reading out the questions in the second half. You can ask your questions in the public chat or you can direct them to Katie in private chat.

Desolie: So I'm Desolie from Editors Queensland. I've been part of the Accreditation Board since the beginning of 2013. I really do love what we do on the Accreditation Board and promoting accreditation.

Catherine: Hi, everybody. I'm Catherine Macdonald, the Editors WA representative on the board and based in Albany. So I might not have met some of you at Editors WA functions in Perth. I hope there's quite a few of you there. I'm also a freelance editor, mostly theses and memoirs. I've been on the Accreditation Board for maybe two years – since the last exam anyway, and I'm looking forward to this session.

Vicki: Hello, I'm Vicki Nelson. I live in Hobart and I'm the Tasmanian delegate on the board. We're a very small group, so if anybody in Tasmania is here, please say hello.

* Housekeeping information is not included in the transcript.

Helen: I'm Helen Bradford; I'm the delegate from New Zealand. So I'm representing editors out here in New Zealand, which is IPEd's newest branch. So very pleased to be here today.

Linda: Fantastic. Obviously, Helen is our newest member. There are two members who can't be here today. They are **Jo Vabolis**, our South Australian delegate, and **Ted Briggs**, who is from the ACT. Ted was chair before Desolie. And although we don't have an ACT branch, he's our liaison with the Canberra Society of Editors. So if you are in Canberra, you can contact Ted. All our contact details are in the governance area of the accreditation pages of the website. I'll now ask Vicki to begin our information session.

About IPEd and accreditation

Vicki: Well, I have just a few minutes to say who IPEd is and why we run accreditation. IPEd is the professional organisation for editors in Australia and New Zealand, and the mission is to advance the profession of editing. We do that by managing the accreditation scheme, having a biennial conference, organising professional development, doing advocacy work, raising the profile of editors, sponsoring awards for excellent editing, and maintaining and promoting the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*.

So we're a professional organisation analogous to the Australian Medical Association or the Law Society or CPA Australia, organisations that promote their professions. So, for example, you wouldn't get anyone, just anybody, to do your tax return for you. You'd get someone who was accredited by CPA Australia. It's in the same way that we run an accreditation program that guarantees that the people that you employ as editors have a high and guaranteed level of professional expertise to common standards. So they've gone through a rigorous training program and they keep up to date with the latest developments.

We've all come to editing via a number of different paths. It's not usual for editors to say at the age of twelve, 'I'm going to be an editor when I grow up, I'm going to choose editing subjects at school, I'm going to do an editing degree at university, and then I will be an editor.' So we're slightly different from other professions. And that's where the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice* come in. So the Australian standards – I guess they're New Zealand standards too now – they outline the standards for being a professional editor. Maintaining the standards is one of our main responsibilities as an organisation. They outline five areas of core competence for professional editors: professional practice (including professional knowledge and conduct, legal and ethical matters); management and liaison; substance and structure; language and illustrations; completeness and consistency.

The accreditation scheme covers off on all five of those different areas of professional practice, and it comes in two parts – the accreditation exam, and renewal of accreditation.

The accreditation exam tests your skill and competence in all those areas. If you pass that exam, you, and anybody who employs you, will be confident that you have all the skills and knowledge required to be a professional editor. And only the ‘AE’ after your name can guarantee to you and other people that you are a competent editor. What accreditation doesn’t give you is any kind of objective assessment of your subject competence, be it Regency romance fiction or microbiology.

So part one of the accreditation scheme is actually doing the exam and getting accredited in the first place. Part two is continuing to practice in the profession and committing to your professional development by taking courses, engaging in networks, going to the conference, maintaining your skills and knowledge, and a whole heap of different ways. So every five years you will be required to supply a brief summary of how you’ve maintained your skills and knowledge to keep your accreditation.

So why would you want to become an accredited editor? Well, apart from it being a guarantee that you’re fabulous, you prove to yourself and to other people that you have the five core competencies required to be a professional editor. And it also improves the status of professional editing in general.

Governance of the accreditation scheme

Linda: Thank you, Vicky. I’m just going to talk a bit about the governance of this scheme. So since accreditation began, the Accreditation Board has been made up of a representative from each state or territory society of editors. And when these merged into IPEd, representatives became branch delegates. So we each represent an IPEd branch, with the exception of Ted, who remains part of the board, not only as a conduit to the Canberra Society of Editors, but also for his considerable experience. Every board member must be either an Accredited Editor, AE, or a Distinguished Editor, DE.

Delegates are appointed by their branch committee for a period of two years, and must be reappointed by the branch to continue as delegate. Branch delegates are automatically members of their branch committee and report back to the branch on accreditation matters, usually by attending the committee meetings. As long as the branch keeps reappointing the delegate, there’s no limit to the number of terms. This is because exam development is a lengthy process and we cannot afford to lose the knowledge and experience when natural attrition means people step down anyway.

All board members and any staff or contractors involved with accreditation matters must sign a specific confidentiality agreement, in addition to the

standard IPEd Code of Conduct, to ensure that all accreditation matters, especially the exam and renewal assessments, are kept both secure and private. The chair is appointed from within the Accreditation Board and reports to the IPEd Board, usually in person by attending the IPEd Board meetings, in addition to submitting a regular written report. The chair is responsible for managing the accreditation budget.

We meet every month via Zoom, and also meet in person at the biennial IPEd conference. We also conduct a lot of business via email. That business involves administering the accreditation exam and accreditation renewals. There's a lot packed into that word 'administering'. It includes constant review of our processes, as well as investigations into how to improve both the current processes and future directions of the overall scheme. And others will talk a bit more about that work shortly.

There's a vast amount of work that goes on, with the exam on a two-year cycle and one or more cohorts of AEs due for renewal each year. The Accreditation Board members are all volunteers. If there is an honorarium paid to a branch delegate, it's at the discretion of the branch as members of their committee. Many of us do not receive an honorarium. The chair receives an honorarium from IPEd itself because of the greater amount of work associated with that role.

But the board does not do all the work on its own -- we couldn't possibly. We recruit AEs, DEs and contractors for specific tasks, including assessing renewals, developing the exam, invigilating the exam, marking the exam, and technical and administrative tasks such as managing registrations and preparing, printing and posting certificates of accreditation. Volunteers receive gifts, or honoraria, and the exam team and contractors receive payment for their services. We also have some support from IPEd's staff, such as communication with members and managing payments.

The fees for the exam cover all this plus venue hire, and are set to cover costs. Developing the exam is the main fixed cost: the same amount of work goes in whether there is one candidate, 50 candidates or 100. Marking and venue hire are the main variable costs, varying according to the number of candidates and the number of venues required. This means we need a minimum number of candidates to cover both the fixed costs and the variable costs. Currently, that is around 80 to 90 candidates.

Originally, the accreditation exam was to be held every year, but when numbers dropped off after the first couple of years, the board realised it would only be viable to hold the exam every two years. Until we have sufficient candidates taking the exam every year and sufficient resources to develop an exam every year, the exam will continue to be held every two years. And by resources, I

don't just mean funds, but a sufficient number of new AEs to take up the reins and spread the workload.

I will invite Catherine now to talk about the current state of accreditation, including take-up rates.

Current state of accreditation

Catherine: I'm going to give you a brief overview of the current state of accreditation, which will cover both people gaining accreditation and also those renewing accreditation. So since 2008, the first exam, the numbers have steadily grown of people gaining accreditation by sitting the exam. In the first cohort, in 2008, there were 108 people who achieved the status of accredited editor.

And then in the mostly every second year exam since then, it's steadily grown to 334 when the last exam was held in 2018. So over a 10-year period, it's been steady growth. We've got some lovely graphs, but I don't want to risk destabilising our Zoom setup, so I'm not going to try and share my screen. I'll just tell you the numbers. And if anybody wants to see any graphs later on, we can arrange that by email.

Approximately a quarter of IPed's membership are Accredited Editors, so they must have sat the exam at some stage. That's currently about 334 out of a membership of over 1200. As well as members of IPed, there are some non-members who sit the exam. I don't know why they don't join IPed, but anyway, that's just the situation. But it shows also that there's some status in becoming an AE even outside of IPed members. There were only 10 people in 2016 who were non-members who sat the exam and 12 in 2018.

So now, as Vicky's already told you, the other aspect of accreditation is renewal, because it's not a situation of once you pass the exam, that's it. You have to actually maintain your editing status in the various ways that she pointed out. So every five years you have to demonstrate continuing work as a professional editor and also professional development activity of various sorts. You submit a renewal application, which board members then review and most people of course are active editors and have no trouble whatsoever with doing that. Occasionally extra information's required. The renewal rates are fairly steady over the years, around the 80 per cent mark. So about 20 per cent choose not to renew. We always ask people to tell us why they decided not to renew – it's usually due to retirement or leaving the profession. Of course, there are other reasons, but those are the main ones.

So in 2019, which was our latest batch of renewals, 68 out of the 88 eligible AEs applied for renewal; for some (those who were accredited in 2009) it was their second renewal. The remaining applications came from the 2014 cohort. In all, 77 per cent of eligible AEs applied.

That's about all I wanted to share with you. So I'll hand it back to Desolie.

Achievements and developments

Desolie: As you just heard we're a good 10 years into the accreditation process. In 2016, we moved from the original hard-copy papers to the on-screen testing. The board has a policy of taking small, well-considered steps forward rather than just rushing into new formats. And the current board has continued that way of working.

So in 2016 and 2018, the on-screen exams were [Microsoft] Word-based. There were a few hiccups along the way, but this year, we've moved from being all Word-based to being a combination of PDF-based and Word-based. The original Part 1, we now call LANGUAGE. So that was all your grammar, punctuation and spelling questions. That now sits on a PDF platform.

Part 2 is now called MANUSCRIPT, and that is still Word-based. So there's the manuscript to edit, the queries to the authors, and the style sheet to complete.

Part 3 is now called KNOWLEDGE and it's PDF-based. There are 10 questions to choose from. We decided in 2018 to remove the specialist questions as such. So all of the 10 questions now in the KNOWLEDGE part only test basic understanding of those things. There'll be no specialist knowledge required.

So we're really happy with the way that we're progressing with the exam. There's a way to go. We've always had requests for online exams. And yes, I assume it will come, but not just yet.

For this exam, we're also excited to introduce a syllabus for the exam preparation workshops. In the past, it's been a bit piecemeal, but now we have a syllabus so that we can be sure that all of the candidates are being given the same sort of information and encouragement. Exam workshops always include ways to manage the exam, not just the content, but your preparation and how you manage the exam. So we're really excited about that one.

We've also updated the sample exams on the accreditation part of the website to reflect the new format. Files labelled '2019 sample' are the previous samples updated to the new format. Those labelled '2020 sample' are all new questions in the updated format. So you've got [the] opportunity to practise the format. So that's all very exciting to know that we're continuing to make our small steps forward.

But we do face challenges. Part of the board's remit is to find ways to increase the frequency of the exams, the affordability of the exams, the accessibility and relevance. They're big tasks. And we do monitor what's happening in other professional organisations, including what's happening in professional editing organisations. The questions of advanced accreditation and specialist accreditations have always been on the table. But after a survey last year of AEs and DEs, we recognised that there's not necessarily a good understanding of what accreditation is and how it works.

So at the moment, we're concentrating on promoting the accreditation scheme and increasing people's understanding of the process. The other levels will come, but at the moment we're promoting accreditation within IPEd, within publishing circles, within government and private enterprise. Over to Helen.

The accreditation exam

Helen: I'm going to talk about some of the more practical aspects of the exam. I've got quite a bit of material to go through, but rest assured, most of what I'm going to say is all available on the website. If we don't get to answer some questions at the end, please check the website.

So I'm going to talk about the key dates, the format of the exam and how to prepare for the exam. So in terms of the dates, if you're not already aware, registration for the exam is already open and our early bird registrations close on the 14 June. Registrations close completely on the 15 July. And the exam itself takes place on the 15 August.*

Two webinars are already available for you to work through. And there's another one coming, so I'll talk about those in a little while. Exam preparation workshops are planned on various dates; and I'll talk also about those shortly. So moving on to the format and partly recapping what you've heard from Desolie already. There's three parts to the exam: LANGUAGE, KNOWLEDGE and MANUSCRIPT. The exam is an on-screen exam. So this means that you answer LANGUAGE and KNOWLEDGE questions on a computer and you perform the practical copyediting exercise, which is the MANUSCRIPT part, also on a computer, using files that are provided to you already loaded on a computer at the venue.

You can choose to complete the exam using a PC or a Mac. As Desolie mentioned, the LANGUAGE and KNOWLEDGE parts this year use PDF files and the MANUSCRIPT part will use Microsoft Word files. The exam is open book. This means that candidates can use their own reference materials, such as a dictionary and style guide, and their own notes, as long as they comply with the requirements in the *Guide for Candidates*, which is available on the website.

During the exam, candidates have no internet access via their phones or other devices, but they can have access to the Macquarie online dictionary on the supplied computer.

Moving on to preparing for the exam. There's lots of information available for candidates who are considering registering for the exam or actively preparing for the exam. The first resource is the IPEd website. So the website has a

* This information was correct at the time of the forum but registrations were closed and the exam postponed due to coronavirus restrictions. At the time of publishing this transcript, new dates were not available.

section on accreditation that explains what the accreditation scheme is and the benefits of accreditation. It has detailed information about the accreditation exam, including practical matters such as the exam locations, fees and key dates, the exam structure, the format and the duration. It gives you access to the *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*. As the exam tests your application of these standards, it's very important you're familiar with them. The website gives you a list of recommended reading to help you prepare for the exam. It also gives IPEd's policy on registration, refunds and cancellations, and it gives you contact information for the Accreditation Board members.

The second resource is the sample exams, which Desolie also mentioned. So the website has a section on sample exams and gives you tips on how to go about undertaking those sample exams. The sample exams are accessible on PCs or Macs and they'll work in any version of Word or Acrobat Reader.

The third resource is the *Guide for Candidates*. This is available on the website and has lots of practical information about the exam and includes tips from AEs on how to approach the exam. So I highly recommend that you read the *Guide for Candidates*.

And the fourth resource is the webinars. You can access the webinars from the Professional Development area of the website. So there's three webinars that you might want to look at. The first is called 'Preparing for the IPEd accreditation exam'. This is a one-hour webinar and it helps you decide if you're ready to sit the exam, as well as helping you prepare for the exam and deciding what strategies to use for the exam. Although this webinar was recorded before the 2018 exam, most of the content is still relevant. All the webinars cost \$35 for members, \$55 non-members and \$20 student members. And that's Australian dollars.

The second webinar is called 'IPEd Style Sheets', and this is relevant to the MANUSCRIPT part of the exam. The style sheet is worth 4% of the marks in the exam, which may not seem very much, but we know that this is an area that candidates do fail on. And it's actually quite simple to do if you practise. So we do recommend that you look at the style sheets webinar. It covers what style sheets are, how to create them and how to decide what to include in them. The third webinar is a tour of the exam documents. So this has been revised because the exam documents have changed and two of them are now in PDF format. This is a one-hour webinar and it's taking place on the 29 March, but will be recorded, and that recording will be available for those who can't attend on that date.* It shows you how to navigate the exam documents, how to answer questions in the PDF format, how to use the online dictionary, and how to work with multiple files open.

* This webinar is now available on the IPEd website.

The fourth resource is the exam preparation workshops. Several [IPEd branch] workshops will be offered before the exam using the standard curriculum that we've told you about.* For those of you in New Zealand, Tasmania and other remote locations that are too far away to attend one of those workshops, we're preparing an online workshop that will be delivered in two three-hour sessions. And the date and the cost of that is still to be confirmed. So watch this space for more information about that.

There are two more resources for you to be aware of. The next is the Accreditation Board members. So Linda has introduced you to all of us. You can contact your nearest board member or the chair (Linda) if you have any questions or concerns about the exam and the contact details are available on the website. And finally, the dreaded Facebook. There is a Secret Editors IPEd Study Group on Facebook. So if you're an IPEd member or a member of the Canberra Society of Editors, you can also access this Facebook group to help you with study questions and answers. You just need to join the Secret Editors Business Facebook group first and then you can get access to the study group page.

Linda: Thanks, Helen. And we'll take some questions now.

Question & answers

Katie: The first question is from Jen: Will there be a system of CPD [continuing professional development] points?

Linda: Not yet, there isn't. It's something that's being considered and it's being talked about not just within the Accreditation Board, but in the Standing Committee for Professional Development, which I'm also currently chair. But there's a whole lot of things that need to go into place before that can happen and how it does. So we hope eventually there will be a CPD system. But we're not there yet. So, one day, we hope. It will make things so much easier for everybody.

Katie: The second question was from Sarah. When and where will the accreditation exam be held?

Linda: We hold it simultaneously in all major Australian cities. And for the first time, this year, there will also be one in Wellington, New Zealand. We've also got to keep an eye on the coronavirus situation. We're still planning for the exam in August. However, it might be that one venue or other doesn't happen, but at the moment we're planning for Brisbane, Adelaide, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Wellington, where the exam will be held. And 15 August is the date.**

* Information about workshop dates omitted because all workshops were cancelled or postponed.

** The exam was postponed and no new date has been set as at publication of this transcript.

Katie: Okay. Question number three from Susie, is there a fee to renew? Now, this has been answered in the chat from somebody who renewed in 2018 for anybody who wants to skim through that. But Linda, did you want to explain the process?

Linda: It's \$200 for members – Australian dollars. And that's five years of accreditation. So you can look at it as \$40 a year. There's a different fee for non-members. I can't remember off the top of my head. But yes, there is a fee, because we have to spend a fair bit of time assessing each renewal. So the fee covers the assessment process as well.

Katie: A question from Cecille, about whether the test is screen-based, and is it at a test centre on a computer or on hard copy? I believe it was Helen who went through that part of it. So that's pretty much been answered. Cecille, feel free if that didn't answer your question to your satisfaction to let me know in the chat and I can put something together.

Linda: I'll just clarify that. It's at a test centre and it is on screen, on the venue computers, which are PCs unless someone has requested a Mac, in which case we get a Mac in. There's always about 5% of people on Macs.

Katie: The fifth question was from Anne: do you have a sense of how many exam candidates or Accredited Editors work in allied fields such as technical writing, guidance, writing things like codes of practice etc., rather than focusing solely on editing?

Linda: No, we don't. So no. The registration form asks for a lot of information about the candidates for the exam, to try and get a bit of a profile of who is sitting. But it is an optional part of the registration form that not everyone fills in. It asks things like how much experience you've got, so we can get an idea if the people sitting are new to editing or have been doing it for a while. It does ask if you're part time. So I guess you get an idea of whether people are doing full-time editing versus part-time. And I suppose someone in the writing field might consider themselves only part-time, but we don't ask that the main part is, what their other work involves if it's only part-time. I guess we could – but the form's a long enough form as it is. I mean, there's only so much you can answer. I think those sorts of things tend to come across from IPEd members surveys in a general sense; the survey covers those broader areas, not just accreditation.

Katie: Next question, which I think is probably the last one. With the parts of the exam that are PDF, are there fields to be filled in or will PDF markup skills be required?

Linda: That's what the tour of the accreditation exam documents [webinar] will demonstrate. But I'm happy to say you do not need PDF markup skills. You do

not need any special PDF skills. Any markup that is done is in the Word part of the exam will use normal track changes – that’s in the MANUSCRIPT part. The other parts that use PDF are multiple choice – so clicking a button – or short answer; there’s text fields where you just type into the space. There isn’t any actual markup in the PDF.

Katie: Nat has asked, how many hours is the exam?

Linda: The actual answering the questions is three hours. But there’s obviously preparation time before that. There’s reading time. And before the reading time there will be time to make sure that you have opened and saved all of the documents using your candidate number. So, you know, four hours. The *Guide to Candidates* will give you more information, and the information that goes out to candidates with their candidate number will also give you very specific times on that.

Katie: And the next one from Helen; this is going to be a bit of a movable feast, I think. Do you have any thoughts on the coronavirus and workshops in the lead up to the exam?

Linda: We actually had a meeting about this and we were discussing strategies to deal with the coronavirus. The IPEd Board is meeting tomorrow about the workshops. But basically at the moment, it’s large groups that aren’t meeting. And we think at the moment things will go ahead unless things are taken out of the workshop organisers’ hands – that is, if the centre where it’s being held is closed or something.

We’re going to have to review cancellation policies with the various venues. It’s a little bit play it by ear at the moment. I’m not sure there’s much else we can do. We are developing the exam prep workshop to be held online for people in the smaller branches and remote areas. If other branches close down and are unable to hold the workshops, we could look at running those again if the first one is successful. So I guess we’ll see what happens there. Things seem to be changing on a daily basis. So I would say at this stage, unless your city’s in lockdown – and I don’t think any of them are actually locked as yet – and you’re feeling healthy, I don’t see a reason for a workshop not to go ahead.

Katie: Elizabeth has asked, have we done any research into the proportion of businesses that seek out Accredited Editors?

Linda: I don’t think we have any research into the *proportion* of businesses that seek out editors, let alone accredited ones. I’m not sure how you do that. We do know that certainly in government circles – and it’s mostly anecdotal unfortunately, it’s not quantified research – people are asking for at least professional membership and in some cases accreditation. It’s becoming more recognised. That’s part of what we’re trying to do here, is to promote it. It’s still something not enough

people even know about, even within IPEd. Hence this free forum. That's partly what the ambassadors program that IPEd rolled out has been doing – going out and telling people about IPEd and about accreditation. So we don't have quantified research and it would be lovely to be able to get some. I'm not sure how we would even do that – please send me your suggestions!

Katie: The next question is from Cecille. Could we please give examples of experience that most [editors] have when they become accredited?

Linda: I don't know if we could, about *most* – we can only ever speak to our personal experiences. So I'm not sure. We might come back to that question – it's something we could include in the transcript, a little bit about our personal experiences, maybe.*

Katie: I'd probably only add to that, that the recommendation is that before you sit the exam you have two to three years' worth of solid professional editing experience before attempting it. And that's the base level that is recommended generally. So, we could include our personal experience if that would be helpful in the transcript.

Linda: I guess I'm not actually sure that [the question] means the experience of sitting the exam or the experience of being accredited after they've passed the exam actually. Cecille, could you please clarify?

Katie: The next one we've got from Lerae is, is Janet McKenzie's *Editor's Companion* a good resource?

Linda: Of course it is, especially on editing practice. Yes. Go buy it. Read it. I will qualify that – since Janet passed away, IPEd now receives her royalties. So I should disclose that! She bequeathed her royalties to IPEd. So sales will also help IPEd.

Katie: We have a follow-up question from Anne regarding the people in the allied fields. How does working in allied fields, such as the technical writing and so on, how might that affect the renewal?

Linda: So there's a part in the renewal application where you have to explain how you've kept up with editing practice, continuing work, etc. I would say that working in those fields does make you a full-time editor.

Katie: But her phrasing is 'not a full-time editor'. So how do they go about filling it in to the Accreditation Board's satisfaction?

Linda: You don't have to be a full-time editor. You just have to show that you are still involved in the profession. You give, I think is it, three or five examples of projects you've worked on over a period of five years. As well as at least three examples of professional development activities – it's really not very onerous.

* Provided at the end of this transcript.

In five years, if you haven't come up with that, then maybe you've actually left the profession [and] so you don't need to be reaccredited. The guidelines are now on the website. What you need to do so in five years is attend a few IPEd meetings, go to a conference, do a workshop, even if it's more writing focused. If there's something that's related to editing, it'll count.

Desolie: It's not just the structural or copy editing that we're looking at; you could be supervising other editors or writers, or a project manager. Right from the minutest to the broadest range.

Katie: From Claire. Are the preparation and style sheets webinars available via the IPEd website? She can currently only see the tour of documents one so far. Or are these yet to come?

Linda: No, they're up there as recordings that you pay to access. I'm not sure where you're looking, but if you go to the website under Professional Development, there's an IPEd webinars page. There should be links to those on that page.

Katie: Question from Joan. The standards mention a particular style sheet for the exam. Could we get a copy, please?

Linda: Do you mean a style sheet or style guide? The set text is the Style Manual. But you have to buy that one. If you mean a style sheet, that is something that you actually create during the exam. So I'm just not actually sure what it is you're trying to get. If you could clarify that one.

Katie: Where can you purchase the Style Manual?

Linda: I think online. Or directly from Wiley. Presumably you can still do that. It should be the 6th edition *Style Manual* – that's currently the set style manual. There's two new style manuals under development, but they're not out yet. So until they are, we can't really set those or recommend them.

Katie: Jen has asked, is it the *Australian Standards of Editing Practice*, second edition?

Linda: Yes, that's right. It's the second edition from June 2013.

Katie: And Elizabeth has asked, is this the stylesheet in the practice exam collection, isn't it?

Linda: Yes. Yes, there is a template of a completed one in the sample exams. You can use your own style manual by the way, you don't have to use the *Style Manual* as long as you specify what alternative style guide you're using in the exam.

Katie: Alison asks, is the information session in Melbourne on the 26 March covering the same information as this forum? This question is for me.

That info session is intended to be of assistance to people who are not sure about whether or not they want to sit the exam. So it's going to be a Q&A kind of format. I've got a couple of recently Accredited Editors who'll be there

with me and there are some commonly asked questions, things like: How did you know you were ready for the exam? What did you do to prepare for the exam? It's more of a personal experience, in order to help people who are not sure about whether this is the right thing or not for them. For those who are in Victoria or Melbourne, after that information session, there is a workshop on 2 May, and that will be the curriculum-based workshop that was mentioned earlier. So feel free to if you've got further questions, feel free to email me and I can clarify.

Linda: If you have any questions, again, please contact your local delegate. Or you can contact me. I hope everyone takes an interest and eventually, if not this year, sometime seeks accreditation. Thank you, everybody.

Additional notes on pre-exam experience

Catherine: After about 20 years of editing and rewriting social impact assessment and community development reports, as I was the only native English speaker in the team, I decided I would like to become a professional editor. I already have a PhD, so I didn't want another university qualification. I took some online copyediting and proofreading courses through the SfEP (now CIEP) in the UK and studied and practised hard for the exam, which I sat in 2018. Added up to full time, my prior editing experience would have been about three to five years.

Desolie: Although my background is in primary education, I found when I set about getting an editing qualification, so much had changed. I took several other editing courses to supplement my advanced diploma. I sat the exam in 2008 after about five years part-time freelancing.

Linda: I did an English literature degree and a PhD in history (of texts) before deciding I wanted to work in publishing. In 1997 I got an introductory-level job as a book editor at a law publisher, where I received extensive in-house training in legal editing and publishing generally. Over the next 10 years I so I had various roles in publishing, including at a small publisher, some specifically editing roles and some not, before I went freelance in 2010. I investigated sitting the exam in 2014 but it was still on paper then and I'd been editing exclusively on screen, in various applications, since that 1997 beginning. I sat (and passed) the first on-screen exam in 2016.