



best companies™

Best Companies Accreditation

2011 Best Companies Accreditation Rules of Engagement

It is important that you read the Rules of Engagement carefully and fully. Best Companies Limited has put these rigorous measures in place to ensure a fair and consistent approach is maintained throughout the Accreditation process.

Best Companies will not disclose to any third party, details of companies that were approached but declined to participate, or took part but were unsuccessful in achieving the Accreditation standard.

Outlined below is a description of the rules by which Best Companies operates, and what is expected from organisations taking part in the Accreditation.

The Purpose of Best Companies Accreditation

Accreditation is an elite performance standard. It has been introduced to recognise and reward organisations that demonstrate high levels of Workplace Engagement. Successful organisations are encouraged to celebrate and promote their achievement and to create a forum for the sharing of best practice. Participating organisations are measured against eight key workplace factors to identify a Best Companies Index (BCI) score. This BCI score will determine their star rating against a fixed standard where:

- 1 Star – First Class
- 2 Stars – Outstanding
- 3 Stars – Extraordinary

Unlike a competition (where performance positions may change based on the overall number and standard of participants) Accreditation standards are constant and remain the same year on year.

Eligibility Criteria

Whether publicly quoted, privately owned, partnership, not-for-profit, or a governmental agency, any organisation may take part provided it meets the minimum eligibility requirements at 30th September 2010.

These are:

- The organisation must have been in existence as a legal entity for a minimum of three years on the 1st March 2011
- The organisation must have a minimum of 50 full-time (or full-time equivalent) employees working exclusively within the organisation's own workplace environment in the UK.
- Employees will have an employment contract and be paid by the organisation.
- At least 50% of employees must have tenure of over 6 months.
- At least 50% of employees must have tenure of over 12 months.
- Eligibility criteria extends to include Equity Partners of Professional Services firms within the overall number of employees.

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
 Rackery Lane, Llay
 Wrexham LL12 0PB
 T: 01978 856222
 F: 01978 855900
 E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk
www.bestcompanies.co.uk



Best Companies Accreditation

- Eligibility criteria specifically exclude Contractors, Freelancers, External Secondees, Implants or other employees not on the organisation's payroll. Any mergers, de-mergers or acquisitions not completed and fully integrated before 1st August 2010 must be notified to Best Companies in writing.
- Management buy outs not completed and fully integrated before 1st August 2010 must be notified to Best Companies in writing.
- Organisations involved in the processing of surveys or the editorial compilation of Best Companies lists and standards are ineligible to participate.

Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist understanding:

Full-time Equivalent: a full-time employee, or a combination of part-time employees whose combined hours are the equivalent of a full-time position. For the purposes of the process, Best Companies uses the following definitions:

Full-time = 35 hours or more per week
 Part-time = less than 35 hours per week

Contractor: an individual or organisation who may be carrying out work commissioned and under contract to a client. There is no employee status – the individual does not have a contract of employment.

Freelancer: where there is a contract for services. There is no employee status – the individual does not have a contract of employment.

External Secondee: where employees of the organisation are temporarily seconded to another organisation but retain employee status under a contract of employment with the seconding organisation and are included in payroll. The External Secondee experiences the workplace environment of the organisation they are seconded to.

Implant: where an organisation provides staff to another organisation under contract. Employee status is retained under a contract of employment with the providing organisation. The Implant experiences the workplace environment of the organisation that is receiving the Implant.

Multiple Entries

If a company is comprised of multiple trading divisions, it may enter in one of two ways:

1. As a Group of Companies or Divisions

Under this scenario all trading companies or divisions will need to be included in the survey process. The random sample of employees surveyed for Accreditation will need to include employees from all companies or divisions and any data provided in the overall submission must reflect the complete organisation as a whole.

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
 Rackery Lane, Llay
 Wrexham LL12 0PB
 T: 01978 856222
 F: 01978 855900
 E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk
www.bestcompanies.co.uk



Best Companies Accreditation

2. As Individual Trading Divisions

This requires that each trading company or division entered operates as a separate legal entity from any other company or division in the organisation complete with its own board of directors, managing director or CEO, and its own separate policies and procedures.

Important note - For organisations that choose to take part as a group of companies or a division, scores from the Employee Surveys conducted within all trading companies or divisions are used to calculate an overall score. This process amalgamates findings of the strongest and weakest trading companies or division. As a result, the company or division with the best workplace does not stand out as it would if surveyed in its own right.

Mergers and Acquisitions

Any mergers, de-mergers or acquisitions must have been completed before 1st August 2010. Any business changes which occur after this date will be reviewed case by case at the discretion of Best Companies.

Other Company Changes

Best Companies acknowledges that from time to time businesses may undergo major changes (i.e. large-scale restructuring exercises, downsizing, changes in trading name, etc) with little advanced notice. To help ensure research data collected from your company remains current and up to date and is reflective of the present environment found in your workplace, Best Companies must be notified of any significant changes in the structure or operation of a business that takes place after the submission of the surveys and before publication of results.

BCI Scores and Star Status

A Best Companies Index (BCI) score is awarded to each organisation that completes the Accreditation process. Each BCI score is derived from the organisations employee responses to the Employee Survey. The BCI score then defines whether an organisation has achieved 'Star Status'.

Cost of Entry

There is an administration fee for participation within the Best Companies Accreditation project. This fee is payable within 21 days of registering online. If a company is a registered charity the administration fee will be waived. We require the appropriate charity commission number to validate entries. Only charities that appear on the charity commissions' website can participate free of charge. An indication of the cost of entry is detailed below, however each organisation will be provided with a specific individual quote as part of the application process:

Number of employees	Cost
50 - 750	£500
1000	£625
5000	£2000
10000	£2500
25000	£4000
100,000	£11500

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
Rackery Lane, Llay
Wrexham LL12 0PB
T: 01978 856222
F: 01978 855900
E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk
www.bestcompanies.co.uk



best companies™

Best Companies Accreditation

The administration fee covers the following:

- Summary WIT™ Report – an interactive summary report of key workplace factors and average response profiles for an organisation
- Entry into The Best Companies Accreditation project
- Administration, supply, and return of employee surveys
- Determination of BCI score
- Best Companies staff support (phone and e-mail) throughout the project
- For Accredited organisations, a prestigious Best Companies Accreditation logo for use on stationery, advertising and promotions.
- For Accredited organisations an organisational profile, including Star Status and BCI score, published on the Best Companies' Accreditation website
- For Accredited organisations, an organisation recognition plaque for interior/exterior display.

Please note that the administration fee is the only obligatory payment that a company will be asked to make throughout the entire project. Surveys will not be distributed until the administration fee has been received.

Optional Value-Added Services

Optional value-added services available to all participating organisations at an additional cost:

- Additional Insights – the opportunity to survey a larger sample of the workforce.
- Fast Track - the opportunity to have your employee analysis available within 4 weeks of Best Companies receiving your employee survey returns.
- Upgrade WIT™– option to upgrade your free summary data to include scores, benchmarking and demographic breakdowns.

The following items are available for purchase to all organisations successfully accredited:

- Additional recognition plaques

Entries

Employee surveys, Company Questionnaire and supporting material must be submitted in accordance with the process defined within the Project Manager role and responsibilities. The deadline for nominations is 31st August 2010 and no entries will be accepted after this date.

Entry Acknowledgement

You will receive written acknowledgement confirming receipt of your entry and will be assigned a point of contact at Best Companies who will maintain liaison throughout the process.

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
Rackery Lane, Llay
Wrexham LL12 0PB

T: 01978 856222

F: 01978 855900

E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk

www.bestcompanies.co.uk



Best Companies Accreditation

Project Management

All participating organisations are required to nominate a Project Manager whose responsibility will be to ensure that the entry is completed within the timelines and in adherence with Best Companies' Rules of Engagement. It is an entry requirement that the Project Manager has access to both external e-mail and the internet to effectively manage the process. In the interests of confidentiality, Best Companies will only discuss entries with the Project Manager or nominated points of contact.

Best Companies TM Employee Survey

To elicit and measure the views and opinions of your employees a randomly selected group will be chosen to complete the Employee Survey. The number of surveys that an organisation will receive is dependant on the size of organisation but the following table is an indication:

Number of employees	Minimum no. of surveys
250 and below	All employees
750	500
1000	625
5000	2000
10000	2500
25000	4000
100,000 and above	11500

At the discretion of Best Companies some larger companies may be required to distribute an additional number of surveys.

There are two methods of surveying. Either method or a combination of the two may be employed:

Paper (for employees without an e-mail address and internet access)

All selected employees are provided with a paper survey and a pre-paid return envelope to post directly back to Best Companies. A web address (www.bestcompanies.co.uk/survey) is printed on each survey the respondent has the option to access and complete an on-line version by entering their unique survey code.

Electronic (for employees with an e-mail address and internet access)

E-mail addresses for selected employees must be provided to Best Companies, an individual link to our secure website is then sent to each employee, together with a unique survey code to enable them to log in and complete the survey on-line.

We would encourage Project Managers to choose the electronic option wherever possible – it's faster, increases the likelihood of achieving the required response rate and is environmentally friendly!

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
Rackery Lane, Llay
Wrexham LL12 0PB
T: 01978 856222
F: 01978 855900
E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk
www.bestcompanies.co.uk



best companies™

Best Companies Accreditation

Required response rate

A minimum number of surveys must be returned by its employees for an organisation to be eligible for Best Companies Accreditation:

Organisation Size	Required Returns
Less than <5000 employees	40% or 30 surveys whichever is greater
5000 and more employees	30%

Companies must not collect employee responses. In the event of unusual or unforeseen circumstances (e.g. postal strikes) please consult Best Companies before making any alternative arrangements. The Project Manager will be provided with appropriate communications for distribution to encourage increased levels of response. However, any additional activities from an organisation (such as targeting individual employees or undue pressure being exerted on employees) will lead to disqualification. Should an organisation fail to achieve the required response rate by the end of the survey process then it will be excluded from the Best Companies Accreditation project.

Best Companies TM Company Questionnaire

The Company Questionnaire supports the overall research and evaluation and also provides details to assist composition of editorial content for The Best Companies Guide. It consists of 4 sections:

1. Organisation
2. Profile of Employees
3. Pay and Benefits
4. Practices and Summary

Failure to complete and submit the Company Questionnaire by the final deadline will render an organisation ineligible for entry.

Workplace Visits

Visits are scheduled in the later stages of the research phase of the project when scores from the Employee Survey and Company Questionnaire have been determined. Organisations are short-listed for visits based on their overall results and will be notified in advance.

Measuring Performance

BCI scores are based on objective data we receive from the measurement process. Our intention when scoring companies is not to judge by what we think is best but rather to produce an accurate measure of what employees think. Organisations will be assessed on eight key workplace factors by measuring employee responses to 16 statements.

Best Companies' methodology details the process and measurement of performance. A detailed description of this methodology is available at www.bestcompanies.co.uk



Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
Rackery Lane, Llay
Wrexham LL12 0PB
T: 01978 856222
F: 01978 855900
E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk

www.bestcompanies.co.uk



best companies™

Best Companies Accreditation

Withdrawals/Disqualifications

Withdrawals

Should an organisation wish to withdraw from the project then they must submit their withdrawal request to Best Companies for consideration as early as possible prior to publication. Once the Best Companies Guide has been finalised for printing withdrawal is not possible.

Disqualifications

Although a rare occurrence, Best Companies reserves the right to disqualify participant companies from Accreditation at Best Companies' own discretion. Grounds for disqualification include any event or action that takes place within a company prior to publication of The Best Companies Guide which may affect their credibility as a good employer, the mishandling of survey materials submitted for Accreditation, or failure to abide by the rules, terms, conditions or spirit of the project.

We actively request employees of participating organisations to contact Best Companies if they have any concerns about the way the survey process has been conducted. All concerns are treated anonymously and will be investigated accordingly.

Best Companies reserves the right to refuse an application to enter as well as to remove any company from the project without explanation. We also reserve the right to retain all or part of the administration and survey fees.

Accreditation Publication

Decisions made by Best Companies are final and no correspondence will be entered into. Organisations will be notified in December 2010, as to whether or not they have been accredited.

PR

Best Companies and its media partners will seek coverage to publicise accredited organisations. This could include interviews with organisations and their employees and future contact by its media partners whilst an organisation remains accredited. All 'Star Status' and BCI scores for organisations participating in the 2011 Best Companies Accreditation process will be published in the public domain.

Recognition Award Presentation

Recognition awards will be presented at an awards event in January 2011 and successful companies will be invited to attend. Companies will receive recognition as a Best Company for a 12 month period only.

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
Rackery Lane, Llay
Wrexham LL12 0PB

T: 01978 856222

F: 01978 855900

E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk

www.bestcompanies.co.uk



best companies™

Best Companies Accreditation

Confidentiality

Best Companies provide a full guarantee to all employees that are invited to participate that their views and opinions will remain absolutely confidential:

- Employees will never be asked to provide their names on surveys or include any personal identifying data.
- Whilst each survey has an individual security code on the reverse we do not track individual responses.
- Should an organisation purchase the option to view employee comments, these comments will only be provided where the employee has indicated that they are happy for their comments to be viewed by the organisation. Comments will not be attributable to individual employees.
- E-mail addresses for electronic survey distribution are not disclosed to any other parties and are removed from our systems at the end of the project.
- We will not report back to organisations information based on demographic splits which contain the responses of less than six employees.
- Best Companies will treat all entries as strictly confidential and only details of the accredited organisations will be published.
- Best Companies will only accept surveys that have been individually returned by employees in individual envelopes or completed on-line.

Best Companies will not disclose to any third party details of any companies that were approached but declined to participate, or companies that took part but were unsuccessful in Accreditation.

Best Companies Limited

Hamilton House
Rackery Lane, Llay
Wrexham LL12 0PB

T: 01978 856222

F: 01978 855900

E: enquiries@bestcompanies.co.uk

www.bestcompanies.co.uk