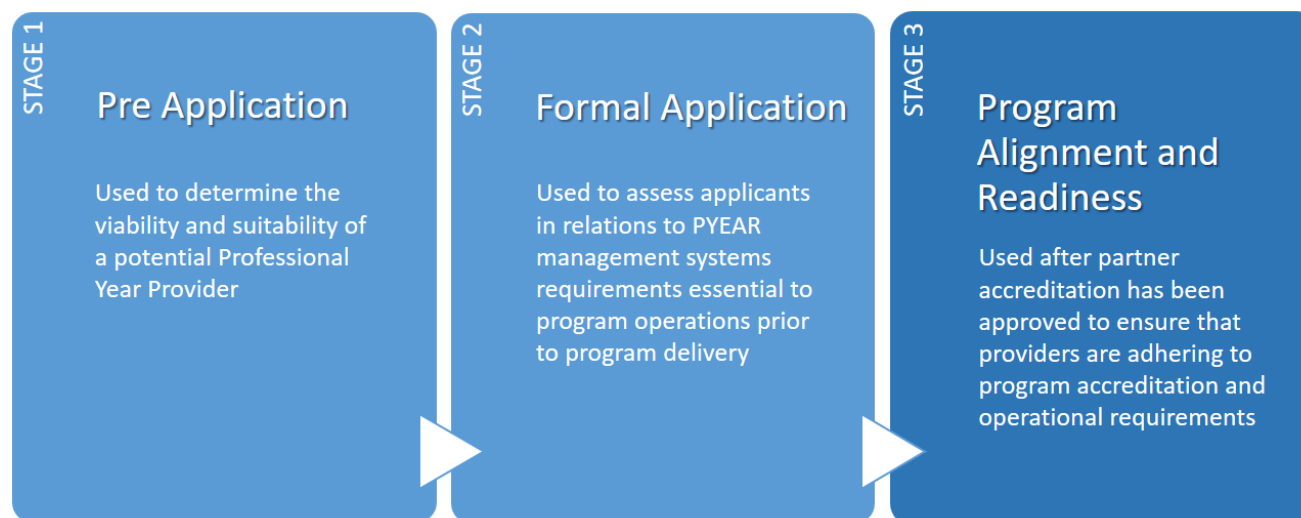


PROFESSIONAL YEAR PARTNER ACCREDITATION PROCESS

As the preeminent Australian ICT professional society, the ACS needs to ensure that all potential Professional Year partners are supportive of ICT professionalism and the advancement of the ICT industry. And as such accredited providers are required to demonstrate industry support of their application and their capability to provide quality training and internship placements to students undertaking the ACS Professional Year Program.

The ACS Partner Accreditation process is used to provide a standardised approach to partner accreditation and is aligned to the ACS Management Framework and the Nine ACS (9) Quality Principles.

The accreditation process implements the following three key stages:



The following document provides a detailed overview of the Professional Year Accreditation process and key requirements when undertaking each accreditation process.



STAGE 1 (Pre Application)

- Expression of Interest
- Pre Application Agreement and Fee Payment
- Due Diligence Specification
- Site Visit
- ACS Approval to continue to STAGE 2

Stage 1: Pre Application

This stage allows organisations to express interest in becoming an accredited Professional Year partner and is used to determine the viability and suitability of each applicant based on a Due Diligence Specification Review.

Steps Undertaken:

1. Potential candidates are required to send an email or letter expressing their interest in applying to become an accredited ACS Professional Year Partner. This correspondence should be addressed to the ACS Professional Year Manager (email: education@acs.org.au) and provide a brief overview of why they are interested in delivering the ACS Professional Year Program and the benefits that their organisation could bring to the program.
2. Once the expression of interest has been received by the ACS, a reply will be sent back to the candidate asking them to fill out a pre-application agreement which will require the applicant to acknowledge and review the terms and conditions prior to commencing Stage 1 of partner Accreditation (Please refer to page 2, reference A – Pre Application Terms and Conditions for further details).
3. Once the Pre Application agreement has been signed and returned to the ACS and the application fee has been paid in full, an electronic copy of the “ACS Due Diligence Specification” document will be sent to the applicant to complete. This process requires the applicant to submit supplementary evidence to determine the viability and suitability of the potential PYEAR partner and is used by the ACS Accreditation panel to determine the applicant’s eligibility to apply for formal partner accreditation (Stage 2: Formal Application).
4. During the review of the submitted Due Diligence Specification a scheduled site visit will be arranged between the applicant and ACS to provide both parties an opportunity to meet and discuss the initial pre application submission and to express any other queries or concerns each may have in relations to the Professional Year Program or the pre-application submission. The site visit is also used by the ACS to review the intended delivery site to ensure that it meets operational standards. Additional costs incurred as a result of undertaking a site visit will be charged to the potential provider.

- Once the Due Diligence Specification has been reviewed by the ACS Accreditation panel a formal email will be sent to the applicant to notify them of the outcome (approved, declined or request for resubmission). If the ACS accreditation panel deems the applicant a viable and suitable candidate, they will then be formally invited to apply for formal partner accreditation status. The pre application review process can take up to 2weeks to complete before a final decision is made.

Important Information:

Reference A: Pre Application Terms and Conditions

Stage 1: Pre-Application incurs a \$1650 fee which is one off and non-refundable. Additional fees may be incurred to cover additional expenses such as travel and accommodation.

Key Selection Criteria for Stage 1 approval:

Criteria:	Yes	No
Must be a registered RTO		
Minimum of 3-5 years RTO experience		
No evidence of prior RTO deregistration or restrictions		
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ACS Professional Year Program in relations to program delivery and program outcomes		
Experience in delivering ICT related courses (accredited and non-accredited)		
Demonstrate industry support of your application		
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current industry needs in relations to ICT and skills shortages		
Demonstrate capability to provide quality training and internship placements		
Demonstrate strategic alliances/business partnerships to sustain quality training and internship placements		
Demonstrate ICT professionalism and the advancement of the ICT industry		
Provide financial statements for last three (3) years		
Demonstrate financial viability and sustainability		



STAGE 2 (Formal Application)

- Non-Disclosure Agreement and Fee Payment
- Partner Accreditation Specification
- Desk/Site Audit *
- ACS approval to commence program delivery

Stage 2: Formal Application

This stage will only commence once applicants have been approved by the ACS Accreditation Panel and are deemed viable applicants to become a Professional Year delivery partner. If applicants are invited to take part in Stage 2 they will be invited to formally apply on the condition that they meet all of the program requirements as outlined within the “Partner Accreditation Specification” application. Submitting a formal application does not guarantee accreditation status.

Steps Undertaken:

1. Once an applicant has been invited to formally apply to become an accredited ACS partner they are required to acknowledge their intent to continue on to Stage 2 and are required to pay the set partner application fee.
2. Once the partner application fee has been paid in full an electronic copy of the Non-Disclosure Deed will be sent out for review and signing.
3. Upon receipt of the signed copy of the deed, ACS will provide a copy of the “ACS Partner Accreditation Specification” along with a copy of the “ACS Professional Year Provider Manual” so that the applicant can complete the formal application process.
4. Upon submission of the ACS Partner Accreditation Specification, a preliminary desk audit is undertaken to ensure that the formal submission meets all of the program requirements outlined within the Partner Accreditation Specification and the ACS Professional Year Provider manual. An additional site audit may be required to ensure that all of the necessary PY Management Systems requirements have been met as outlined within Section A of the ACS Professional Year Provider manual.
6. Once the formal application has been checked it is then passed on to the ACS Accreditation panel who review the formal application to approve or decline partner accreditation status. If the applicant is approved for partner accreditation status a partner agreement will be offered for review and acceptance. In the event that the formal application does not meet the required submission standard, applicants may be asked to resubmit their application to rectify non-compliance upon ACS approval. The formal application stage can take up to 2-4 weeks to complete before a final outcome is made.

Stage 2: Formal Application incurs a \$5000 accreditation fee which is non-refundable. This covers all application processing fees and includes the initial partner accreditation fee that is renewed at the commencement of each new partner agreement. All partner agreements expire and must be renewed every 3 years as stated within the ACS Accredited Partner Agreement. This fee is subject to change.

Key Requirements for Stage 2 approval:

Requirements:
Demonstrate knowledge and undertaking of the PYEAR Management Systems Framework in relations to the ISO 29990:2010 Learning Services for non-formal education and training – Basic requirements for service providers, and supplementary requirements added by ACS
Demonstrate knowledge and undertaking of the ACS Nine (9) Quality Principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality Principle 1: Admissions <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must administer their admissions and student administration processes through robust, consistent and legally compliant processes.</i> 2. Quality Principle 2: Program Structure, Content and Delivery <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must administer the PYEAR through an appropriate course structure, and deliver the program, including the professional internship component, in a manner achieving quality outcomes for all stakeholders.</i> 3. Quality Principle 3: Assessment <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must ensure robust assessment practices are applied consistently, providing assurance of quality and consistent student outcomes.</i> 4. Quality Principle 4: Evaluation <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must implement a range of stakeholder evaluation tools and act upon feedback to ensure an appropriate quality cycle is in place.</i> 5. Quality Principle 5: Human Resources <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must recruit, manage and develop an appropriately qualified staff cohort to ensure the delivery of a quality education program.</i> 6. Quality Principle 6: Facilities <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must provide a high quality learning environment with appropriate facilities and infrastructure to underpin the delivery of the Professional Year Program.</i> 7. Quality Principle 7: Marketing <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must ensure that their marketing and promotional materials uphold the reputation of the PYEAR and accurately convey key information to stakeholders.</i> 8. Quality Principle 8: Financial and Contractual Obligations <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must demonstrate that their financial administration and infrastructure enable the continuing delivery of the PYEAR in an appropriate manner.</i> 9. Quality Principle 9: Professional Internships <i>Standard: Prospective PYPs must demonstrate they are able to provide professional internship placements either through their own internal capacity or through a relationship with a third party which has experience in the placement and management of professional internships.</i>
Demonstrate adherence to ACS partner agreement
Demonstrate knowledge and undertaking of the ACS Professional Year Provider manual (Section B: PY Operational Requirements and Section C: ACS Quality Assurance Process)
Demonstrate adherence to ACS Professional Year Curriculum
Demonstrate knowledge and undertaking of the ACS Professional Year Internship Framework
Demonstrate adherence to all ACS Marketing and Promotional Guidelines
Demonstrate Adherence to ACS Policies and Procedures



STAGE 3 (Program Alignment and Readiness)

- Compliance Review
- Program Delivery

Stage 3: Program Alignment and Readiness

This stage ensures program compliance and quality assurance.

Steps Undertaken:

1. ACS Compliance will notify the accredited partner regarding an impending Quality Assurance Review (mini audit) to confirm program compliance and quality assurance. This is undertaken after 6 months of program delivery to ensure that core program operational and management requirements are in place or are being implemented to confirm quality management and delivery. If the newly accredited partner meets all program requirements, they will be deemed compliant and permitted to continue delivering the program. If the newly accredited partner does not meet program compliance requirements, they will be required to address the non-compliant items identified within 30 days to meet accreditation requirements.
2. At 18 months (or at the end of one full cycle of PYEAR delivery), a scheduled mini audit will be undertaken to verify that key operational and management systems are aligned to ACS Management Systems requirements and the nine (9) ACS Quality Principles outlined within the Professional Year Provider manual. If the accredited partner meets all program requirements, they will be deemed compliant and permitted to continue delivering the program. If the accredited partner does not meet program compliance requirements, they will be required to address the non-compliant items identified within 30 days to meet accreditation requirements. All partner agreements are valid for 3 years and accredited partners are required to undertake the PYEAR reaccreditation process to continue delivery of the ACS Professional Year Program. Six (6) months prior to the end of the PYEAR partner agreement a scheduled full Quality Assurance Review (QAR) will be undertaken to assess partner reaccreditation.

Any additional scheduled/non-scheduled site inspections/audits undertaken in Stage 3 will incur additional fees.

For any further information or enquiries regarding “ACS Professional Year Accreditation” please feel free to contact the ACS Education at education@acs.org.au or contact us on: 03 9249 6716