

CredAbility 2: Confidentiality

CredAbility is the Accreditation Board's forum for discussing its current thinking on concerns you as members have raised, and seeking your input as we work through the issues that arise on the road to accreditation. From the accreditation workshops already held (in the ACT, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Western Australia and NSW), it has become obvious that many editors see confidentiality as a problem.

Applicant confidentiality

Even though editors work in a broad range of areas, publishing often seems like a small world. Collegiality and broad editing networks have been and will continue to be encouraged. But to make the process of assessment as fair and objective as possible, accreditation applications will be sent interstate, to assessors experienced in the applicant's area of expertise but with no knowledge (personal or professional) of the applicant. An assessor who knows the applicant in any capacity will be expected to disqualify themselves from that particular application.

Applicants will not find out who assessed their applications; there will be no channels for contact between applicants and assessors. All applications and ongoing negotiations will be handled through the Accreditation Board.

The board is continuing to investigate other ways of ensuring the confidentiality of the process, such as the use of numbered applications and the removal of identifying markers. However, as participants at various workshops have pointed out, complete anonymity is not always possible, especially in the more specialised areas of editing.

Client confidentiality

Part B of your application for accreditation requires the submission of evidence demonstrating that you can meet the five Standards in *Australian Standards for Editing Practice*. This means that you will be submitting samples of your editing work (as well as reports, correspondence, etc.), and you will need to obtain permission from the clients, employers and authors involved.

Some editors have expressed concern that certain publishers or authors might be reluctant to allow edited drafts to be scrutinised. Many editors who work on classified or commercial-in-confidence material feel doubtful that permission to use drafts will be granted. Editors in the latter situation have the option of using a less restrictive project for evidence or even of seeking out such a job for accreditation purposes. In respect of documents that have already been published at the time an application is submitted, the Accreditation Board will be seeking clarification from the Arts Law Centre on whether the use of edited drafts constitutes a breach of agreement.

The board encourages you to discuss these matters with clients, employers and authors in the lead-up to accreditation. We suggest that you stress the following:

- The submitted material will be made available to a very small audience: the board's secretary, several assessors and, in the case of an appeal, members of the Accreditation Board and the IPEd Council. Everyone concerned will have signed a confidentiality agreement undertaking not to discuss applications or evidence with

anyone other than members of assessors' panels, the Accreditation Board and the IPEd Council.

- The number of pages of any one manuscript submitted may be as low as 20.
- Identifying information can be deleted from drafts, if requested.
- Applications and evidence will be stored securely while in the hands of the Accreditation Board and assessors, and evidence will be destroyed or returned after a specified period, still to be determined by the board. We will be seeking to minimise this period.

The Accreditation Board is preparing an information sheet, to be included in the kit for applicants, that will fully explain these arrangements and will serve as a declaration of the Accreditation Board's commitment to confidentiality and the integrity of the process. The information sheet can be filled in by the applicant and distributed to clients, employers and authors.

If you have any suggestions or comments on these matters, or any others, please contact your Accreditation Board delegate [delegate's details]. We welcome your input.