

CredAbility 6: Accreditation milestones

The national editors conference recently held in Hobart marked a significant stage in the introduction of a national accreditation program. All societies have now voted on motions to endorse the amended accreditation proposal, and the results of the vote were announced at the IPEd/Accreditation Board plenary session on 11 May. Overall, the vote in favour of the revised accreditation model amounted to 85% — an overwhelming endorsement.

Society	Number of votes	Votes for	%	Votes against	%	Abstentions
CSE	89	72	81	15	17	2
NSW	26	18	69	6	23	2
Qld	31	28	90	1	3	2
SA	48	40	83	8	17	0
Tas	44	39	89	2	5	3
Vic	58	50	86	4	7	4
WA	20	19	95	0	0	1
Total	316	266	85	36	10	14

During the plenary session, Shelley Kenigsberg also reported on developments to date and Renée Otmar presented and discussed the sample exam prepared by the assessors. Vigorous questioning from conference delegates followed, particularly on aspects of the exam, including the range of options in Section 3 and the possibility of taking the exam on screen. Participants expressed overwhelming support for this option. The problem of confidentiality for some editors at the portfolio stage was also raised.

The Accreditation Board considered these comments during its conference meeting, and is also currently collating other comments received from conference delegates through the comments box.

The on-screen option represents a significant departure from the exam model on which the Assessors Forum and the Accreditation Board have been working since last December. The board has no wish to disadvantage potential applicants who do all or most of their work on screen or online, and we are well aware that this provision could affect a large number of editors. We are preparing an issues paper on all the ramifications of this option, which will be posted on the IPEd website by the end of June. This is an important question for potential applicants; please be sure to read the issues paper and pass on your views to the Accreditation Board through your society's delegate.

The sample exam is to be placed on the IPEd website and will provide the basis for workshops for potential applicants conducted by societies. If you would like to try 'sitting' the exam, to test your strengths, weaknesses and timing, you are welcome to do so.

The board is currently preparing the text of its Operations Manual, consisting of guidelines for applicants, assessors, the Examination Coordinator, board delegates, societies and invigilators, as well as guidelines for appeals. Board members are investigating the availability and cost of exam venues and invigilators, and the most cost-effective method of organising the exam. Planning for the training of markers has also begun.

Following the incorporation of the Institute of Professional Editors, the first exam will be held in March 2008. This exam will include extra options in Section 3 for maths/science, corporate and generalist editors, as well as other amendments, to meet the needs of potential applicants working in a wide range of areas. The board will give at least four months notice of the actual date.

To help the board's planning, all society members have been asked whether they intend to sit the exam in 2008, 2009, later or not at all. You have also been asked to provide your postcode, so we will know whether there is any demand for holding the exam in regional areas.

The application fee for the exam must cover all costs, including preparation, training of markers, administration, hire of venues and invigilators, backup services, public and professional liability insurance, marking and appeals, printing and postage. Provision of the on-screen option will increase the costs and therefore the fee. The board will provide figures as soon as they are available; we will do all we can to keep the application fee to a minimum. Applicants who are current financial members of an editors society will receive a discount on the fee.

As editors, you know that the devil is in the detail, so board delegates have a crucial job ahead of them this year. The Accreditation Board's primary commitment has always been to deliver a workable accreditation system that meets your needs. Your feedback — on your intentions to take the exam, the substance of the sample exam, and the issues paper — will help us achieve this goal.