



Changes to accredited sponsorship arrangements for 1 July 2016

What is changing?

As outlined below, the required characteristics that you need to meet to become an Accredited Sponsor are changing on 1 July 2016. Additional benefits will also be associated with sponsorship accreditation.

What is an accredited sponsor?

457 sponsors who have a long history of good dealings with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) are able to apply to become 'Accredited Sponsors' – with their sponsorship then valid for six years, and visa and nomination applications receiving priority processing.

What characteristics do you need to meet to become an accredited sponsor?

In order to qualify for Accredited Status, a sponsor must meet all the requirements for standard business sponsorship and have **all** of the following additional characteristics:

- be a government agency, a publicly-listed company or a private company with at least AUD four million annual turnover for the last three years;
- have been an active 457 sponsor for at least three years (with no more than a six month break in the past 36 months), with no adverse information (based on monitoring, including formal warnings and sanctions);
- have sponsored at least ten primary 457 visa holders in the 24 months prior to the application for accreditation;
- have lodged an agreed level of decision-ready applications over the previous two years;
- have a non-approval rate of less than 3% for the previous three years;
- have Australian workers comprising at least 75% of their workforce in Australia;
- engage all 457 holders as employees under a written contract of employment that includes at least the minimum employment entitlements as required under the National Employment Standards (unless their occupation is exempt from this requirement);
 - a copy of a template contract used for this purpose must be attached to the application;
- have all Australian employees paid in accordance with an Enterprise Agreement or an internal salary table that reflects the current market salary rates for all occupations in their business;
 - a copy of the Enterprise Agreement or internal salary table must be attached to the application in addition to evidence and a description of how the business used the evidence to determine that the salary rates contained in the document reflect the current market salary rates for occupations in their business (for example: Awards, remuneration surveys, job advertisements, the Australian Government's Job Outlook);

- have provided details of all business activities undertaken by their business to the department;
 - evidence relating to the other business activities must be attached to the application (for example: profit / loss statements, Business Activity Statements, annual reports); and
- have provided details of all Principals / Directors of their business to the department
 - if the business is a company, a current / historical extract from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) must be attached to the application.

Are there any additional benefits associated with sponsorship accreditation?

In addition to priority processing of nomination and visa applications, sponsors approved with accredited status **after 1 July 2016** will also be eligible for streamlined processing of nominations where the nominated base salary is equal to or greater than:

- the Fair Work High Income Threshold and the occupation is classified as skill level 1 or 2 in the ANZSCO (**Note:** The current amount can be found on the Fair Work Ombudsman website: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/awards-and-agreements/award-and-agreement-free-wages-and-conditions> under the heading 'High income employees').

or

- \$75,000 and the occupation is classified as skill level 1 or 2 in the ANZSCO with the exception of the following occupations:
 - recruitment consultant
 - sales representative (industrial products)
 - customer service manager
 - corporate general manager
 - procurement manager
 - quality assurance manager
 - sales and marketing manager
 - specialist manager NEC
 - hotel/motel manager
 - contract administrator
 - information and organization professionals NEC

How do I get accreditation?

The Department will be writing to existing accredited sponsors and giving them an opportunity to upgrade their accredited status in June 2016 to enable them to access the new streamlined nomination processing arrangements. If they chose not to 'upgrade' or do not meet the new characteristics, they will continue to receive priority processing as per current arrangements until the end of their current sponsorship agreement.

The Department will, however, be reviewing existing accredited sponsors to ensure that they do meet the current criteria for accreditation, and may revoke accreditation where this is not the case.

If you are an existing sponsor who now meets the characteristics for accreditation, you can lodge a sponsorship variation application post 1 July 2016 and ask to be considered for sponsorship accreditation.

Where can I get more information?

The Department's website, as well as 457 sponsorship and nomination policy guidelines, are being updated for 1 July 2016 with more information on these new arrangements.