



Accreditation of External Professional Development Opportunities (PDO) Guidelines

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ESSA Continuing Professional Development Requirements

ESSA's [Continuing Professional Development requirements](#) reflect an expectation from the public that ESSA accredited professionals are committed to best practice and keeping their professional practice abilities current. ESSA's requirements are based on the minimum professional standards for ongoing learning.

ESSA is committed to supporting its professionals to choose quality, best practice professional development activities that are in line with industry standards and offers a professional development opportunity (PDO) accreditation process in line with this commitment.

ESSA only accredits learning activities that are:

- within, or advancing on the scope of practice of an individual's ESSA accreditation/s, or are on business related topics; and
- presented and developed by someone with appropriate formal qualifications/experience that are in line with the activity; and
- evidence-based; and
- promotes ethical, compliant, and professional practice; and
- at least one hour in duration

Professional Development providers must also demonstrate that the learning activity:

- is well structured; and
- is an appropriate amount of content; and
- allocates enough time for discussion; and
- has an assessment that matches planned learning outcomes; and
- has an appropriate participant evaluation

ESSA Professionals

ESSA represents four professional groups:

[Accredited Exercise Scientists \(AES\)](#) – use exercise to improve health, well-being and fitness

[Accredited Exercise Physiologists \(AEP\)](#) – use exercise to help manage chronic conditions, disability and injuries

[Accredited Sports Scientists \(ASpS\)](#) – use exercise to improve sporting performance

[Accredited High Performance Managers \(AHPM\)](#) – manage a range of performance services for elite sport

For more details on these professionals, please see the [ESSA website](#).

Benefits of PDO Accreditation

- Assurance to ESSA members that professional development meets minimum quality standards and will support their practice.
- Access to branding- including use of ESSA Accredited Professional Development Opportunity logo
- Direct marketing to ESSA members through Event Tile on ESSA's website
- Access to advertising opportunities only accessible to accredited PDOs (additional fees apply)

Provider Roles and Responsibilities

Providers are responsible for full organisation of the PDO, including:

- Administration/logistics
- marketing
- registration
- budgeting

Providers must also agree to deliver PDOs in line with the expectations outlined in [ESSA's Code of Professional Conduct and Ethical Practice](#).

ESSA will market the PDO via communication channels including the website [ESSA Professional Development Centre/ External Professional Development](#) and a monthly professional development electronic direct mail.

Accreditation Process

All PDO applications are reviewed by member/s of ESSA's Professional Development Committee (PDC), including someone with experience directly relevant to the content of the PDO to confirm minimum standards are met. Additional information may be requested by ESSA where these minimum requirements are not satisfactorily demonstrated. Please allow a minimum of 8 weeks for the review process.

ESSA may request evaluations at any time. If significant concerns are raised by participants ESSA reserves the right revoke accreditation status of the PDO.

Accreditation is valid for 1 year.

PDO formats

PDOs can be delivered in various modes e.g. workshop or web based and are classified as either *contact* or *non-contact*.

- *Contact*: delivered face to face by a presenter e.g. workshops, seminars. All contact PDOs should have a practical orientation/component where possible
- *Non-contact*: activities that are not face to face e.g. e-learning

PDO Minimum Standards

Content developers and presenters

Presenters and content developers must have appropriate formal qualifications and/or relevant expertise (at least 3 years) in the subject matter. Where presenters are not the same person as the content developer details for both must be provided.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- An ESSA accredited person, who presents within their scope of practice
- A recognised qualification* relevant for the activity they are presenting on
- A minimum of an AQF level 7 qualified allied health professional with experience in exercise (e.g. exercise physiologist, physiotherapist, cardiac care nurse, occupational therapist, doctor, clinical nurse consultant)
- A state, national or international level sports coach
- An Australian Strength and Conditioning Association (ASCA) level 2 or 3 coach

- Business qualifications for a business PD

*A qualification recognised or endorsed by a regulating authority such as a national association.

Presenters with experience or formal qualifications (e.g. Certificate IV in Workplace Training Assessment) in delivering education materials will be highly regarded.

If the presenter/content developer do not hold the relevant qualifications/experience, ESSA reserves the right to not accept the application.

Relevance to ESSA Professionals

PDOs must:

- be related to the scope of practice of ESSA profession/s or be on business related topics; and
- have defined learning outcomes that clearly identify what an attendee will know or be able to do upon completion; and
- support the ESSA professional in their professional practice- the PDO promotes best; and practice, aligns with ethical practice, is compliant with any relevant Code of Conduct/legal requirements and supports consumer centred practice.

Structure and Content

The PDO must:

- not promote company/presenter products. Providers can refer to availability of products but in no way advocate that ESSA has endorsed the product
- have a reasonable amount of content for the delivery timeframe
- allow enough time for questions/discussion
- be well structured, with a logical flow
- have an appropriate evaluation allowing attendees to provide feedback
- have a relevant assessment that aligns with learning outcomes

Referencing

All PDO applications must:

- include a reference list of contemporary, recognised, quality sources
- present references in line with academic standards (e.g. APA style)
- have reference list available for attendees (either as a separate list or embedded within materials)
- Include a broad list of references appropriate for the amount and type of content*

*For example, a best practice exercise prescription PDO should have scientific articles from reputable journals that include references from the past five years.

Points allocation

One Continuing Professional Development (CPD) point is allocated per **learning** hour up to a maximum of 15 CPD points per PDO.

Fees

A non-refundable administration fee is charged to each PDO. Fees are dependent on PDO type (detailed below). Fees are once off payments for the accreditation period (1 year).

1-2 points	3-5 points	6-10 points	11-15 points
\$220.00	\$290.00	\$370.00	\$445.00

Please note: All prices include Australian GST. Fees are valid until 31 December 2024. Fees are subject to increase at any time without notice.

Appeals process

If the provider is dissatisfied with a decision made by ESSA, they may lodge an appeal. The provider must submit to ESSA an outline of their grievance, together with the appeals fee of \$250.00. Once the fee has been received the PDO will be reviewed by ESSA and additional information may be requested. ESSA's decision is final and no further appeals can be lodged by the provider for this PDO.

Submission requirements

A full and complete application in softcopy format must be submitted together with payment. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted. A full checklist of requirements is included within the application. If any of the requirements are not met, the application will not be reviewed. An application is available via request from ESSA National Office.

Changes to PDO

The PDO provider can amend up to 20% of the content/program without advising ESSA. If a program amends more than 20% the provider must notify ESSA and submit a full new application to maintain accreditation.

If a change in presenter is required, an External Change/New Presenter Application is to be submitted to ESSA.

Repeat delivery of any PDOs

An accredited PDO can be delivered unlimited times across the 1 year period provided that:

- Evaluations from the first delivery are submitted to the PDC and considered favourable
- There have been no significant changes to the PDO. See "Changes to PDO" above.

Auditing

For quality assurance reasons, any PDO accredited through ESSA may be audited at any time during the accreditation period.

Revoking accreditation

ESSA reserves the right to revoke the accredited status if the provider fails to deliver the PDO as outlined in their application. If revoked, participants will not be able to claim CPD points from the date the PDO is revoked.

Re-accreditation

At the end of the 12 month accreditation period the PDO provider can apply for re-accreditation using the re-accreditation application. This will be provided to the PDO provider via email advising of an upcoming expiry of the PDO. The PDO re-accreditation application must be submitted in its **entirety**, and in softcopy format. Hardcopy applications will not be accepted. A full checklist of requirements is included within the application.

If more than 20% of the content has been added, removed or altered, including duration, the PDO provider will be required to submit a full application as per the submission requirements.

If any presenters have been added or removed the PDO provider is required to advise ESSA and if applicable provide ESSA with a copy of the new presenter's CV and insurance.

Upon approval of a re-accreditation application the non-refundable administration fee will be charged.

At the end of the re-accreditation period the PDO provider will be required to submit a full application as per the submission requirements outlined in this guide.

Ongoing accreditation requires a full application one year, followed by reaccreditation the following year and full application the next year in an ongoing cycle.