



# ACE provider procedures

## ACE applications – getting started

Applications must be completed and submitted using the ACE online application portal. Access to [the application portal is available online](#) and user guides are provided in the ACE provider appendix of the ACE handbook.

Review the [ACE handbook](#) before applying to make sure your organization and course samples meet ACE standards. Application fees are non-refundable.

## ACE prequalification request

CE providers interested in applying to ACE to become an ACE provider must complete a request for prequalification and pay a fee. ACE will then make an eligibility determination, required before a CE provider may apply for provider approval. Prequalification requests require a \$25 fee upon submission.

- To be eligible to apply for ACE provider approval, applicants must meet specific criteria.
  - Have been operational for at least six months.
  - Have planned and presented at least three educational activities appropriate for social workers.

If the organization has not been operational for at least six months and presented at least three educational activities, the organization can submit a prequalification request and courses to ACE for individual course approval and may then later apply for provider level approval once three educational activities have been planned and presented. Compare ACE approval types [here](#).

- Prequalification requests include the following:
  - Provider demographics (CE provider name, address, phone number, email, website(s), organization and CE program descriptions, business type, etc.
  - Accreditation information to include if the organization is approved or has been denied by another accrediting body.
  - Specifics regarding the development, delivery, and administration of continuing education
  - Provider staff
    - Reference standard 3.2 provider staff in the ACE handbook for the responsibilities of each provider staff role. The following staff roles are required.

- Business owner/ CEO
  - Primary contact for the organization
  - Continuing education director's resume and license information (if licensed)
  - Social work consultant resume and required license information
- Payment of \$25.00 prequalification fee

## ACE new provider application

Once prequalification of the CE provider is met, the provider may submit a provider approval application to the ASWB ACE program for consideration of provider level approval.

- All new ACE provider applications must include the following:
  - Completion of questions relating to
    - Course topics
    - Number of courses offered annually.
    - Course development process and professions that continuing education is offered.
    - Description of the CE Director and Social Work Consultants role in planning, administering, and monitoring continuing education courses
    - Identification of the method(s) used for choosing and vetting course instructors.
    - Quality of the CE program and evaluation of courses
  - Selection of the course delivery formats the organization is seeking approval for. Reference the addendum in the ACE handbook for the formats ACE will consider for approval.
    - A course sample must be submitted for each delivery format sought for approval. All course materials must be mocked up to meet current ACE standards. Examples of mocked up materials can be found in the [appendix](#) of the [ACE Handbook](#).
    - Reference the course sample section of this document below for further details and requirements for course samples.
  - Organizational chart (upload)
  - Grievance policy (upload)
  - Payment of new application fee. Reference the fee schedule in the appendix of the ACE handbook.
  - New provider agreement initialed by the CE director and signed by the CEO/department head, CE Director and Social Work Consultant.

## Course samples

When applying to become an ACE provider, applicants must submit a different course sample for each delivery format in which the organization is seeking approval. All course materials

must be mocked up to meet current ACE standards. Examples of mocked up materials and a can be found in the [appendix](#) of the [ACE Handbook](#).

- A course sample consists of all applicable course materials including, but not limited to:
  - Promotional material (if the sample is a conference session, full conference promotional material is required) (standard 6.1)
  - Timed agenda/ outline (for courses or conference sessions over 2 hours) (standard 4.8)
  - Bibliography (standard 4.2)
  - Qualified instructor current resume (standard 4.5)
  - Attendance documentation: sign-in and out, attestation, etc. (required for in-person and live distance learning) include details, if necessary, to explain how attendance is tracked (standard 7.5)
  - Course materials (handouts, power points, articles, etc.) (standard 4.6)
  - Posttest (required for distance learning: asynchronous or non-interactive synchronous courses) (standard 4.10)
  - Pilot test (individual pilot test responses and a summary are required for: courses that include reading, where the provider wishes to pilot test instead of using ACE allowed credit amounts based on word count; any asynchronous course that is interactive with technology in such a way that determining credit amount is not possible based on word count and/or recorded time alone; or any distance learning course where the CE credit includes the time it takes to complete the posttest) (standard 4.9)
  - Evaluation (standard 7.4)
  - Certificate of credit (standard 7.5)

## Fees

Review the fee schedule form in the [appendix](#).

- The nonrefundable application fee entitles a provider to application review and does not guarantee approval.
- Applicants are responsible for reviewing the fee sheet and submitting the correct payment amount based on the number of courses offered in the initial approval period. Overpayments will not be refunded.
- Payment methods
  - Check or money order payable to ASWB
  - Credit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover)
  - Applicants from outside the United States must pay by money order or credit card.
- Fee submission
  - Credit card payments may be made within the application portal.
  - Mail money orders or check to:  
ASWB ACE Program, 17126 Mountain Run Vista Ct. Culpeper, VA 22701

## Application review process

The entire application review process usually takes a minimum of four months. The average time is four to six months from the receipt of a complete application until approval decision. ACE does not offer an expedited process.

- Applications are reviewed in the order received. If an incomplete application is received, the application will be returned to request missing items. Only when all items, including payment, have been received will the application be considered complete and ready for review.
- Once the completed application(s) and course material have been reviewed, if deficiencies are identified, an email will be sent detailing any areas that do not meet ACE standards and actions the applicant must take to comply with ACE requirements. Applicants must access the ACE online application portal to correct deficiencies or to respond to requests for additional information.
- Application fees include three reviews of submitted materials. If additional reviews are needed, applicants must pay an additional application review fee for ACE staff to review responses or revised materials. Reference the fee schedule for additional review fees.
- If ACE determines at any point in the review process that an applicant's program is not relevant to social work, no additional revisions will be allowed.
- Occasionally, the ACE review team encounters an issue with an applicant's program that is not covered in the [ACE Handbook](#). ASWB reserves the right to interpret or create a policy based on best practice to address the provider's unique circumstances and to require the applicant adhere to the decision.
- The review process must be completed within one year from the date of the initial application. Applicants who are not approved within a year will be denied approval and, if they wish to continue the application process, must reapply as a new applicant.
- If approved, the provider will be notified via email.
- If the applicant is not approved as an ACE provider, the applicant may appeal the decision.
- When reviewing an application, the ACE review team reserves the right to seek expert advice and relevant information from external sources, provided that such information is kept confidential by the review team and the adviser.

## Appeals

When an applicant or provider disagrees with an approval or revocation decision, the applicant or provider may appeal the decision to ASWB's Board of Directors.

- An applicant or provider may request an appeal if
  - Initial ACE approval is denied.
  - ACE approval is revoked.
  - Renewal is denied.
  - An approved format has been removed from a provider's approved format list.
- Appeals must be made in writing to the CEO of ASWB at the association's current address.

- Appeals must include the nonrefundable administrative appeal fee. See fee worksheet and payment form for more details.

## Remaining in good standing with ACE

After ASWB grants approval, the provider must comply with ACE standards to stay in good standing.

- Each ACE provider must complete an electronic provider agreement when initially applying and at every renewal.
- Providers who are found to be out of compliance with ACE standards and are unable to come into compliance within the designated time frame will be determined to non-compliant and will be subject to adverse action by ASWB ACE.
  - The specifics of the adverse action are determined on a case-by-case basis and may include probation, suspension, or revocation of the ACE provider approval.
  - When a provider is found to be out of compliance with ACE standards, ASWB ACE will send a written report or statement that details why the provider has been found to be out of compliance, what actions ASWB ACE is taking, what the provider must do to come into compliance if ASWB ACE allows, and the deadline for completing required actions.

## Adding a format

ACE providers may offer courses only in the formats for which they have been approved. Providers wishing to offer courses in a new format may submit an ACE provider add format change request, course sample and fee at any time during their approval period. Refer to the user guide in the appendix for detailed instructions. The following applies when adding a new format to a provider's ACE approval:

- A fee is charged for each new delivery format. See the fee schedule in the appendix for more details.
- Payment of the fees and application submission does not constitute an approval. The add format fee covers consideration of the request and review of materials only.
- The provider may not offer courses in the new format until ACE grants official approval.
- New formats approved will be effective on the date approved and for the remainder of the CE providers current ACE approval period.
- If the new format is approved, email notice of the approval will be sent to the provider's primary contact and the CE director. An approval decision takes approximately 90 days.

## Renewals

New ACE providers must renew one year after initial approval. Following the first-year renewal, providers must renew every three years. A renewal email notice will be sent to the primary

contact and CE director sixty days and thirty days prior to the due date. Renewal due dates are one month prior to the current approval period's expiration date.

ACE providers must submit a renewal application and all required materials and fees by their renewal due date. Providers who do not submit all required materials and fees by the due date may be subject to late fees.

- Late fees are assessed for renewal packets submitted more than 10 days after the due date.
- Reinstatement fees, in addition to late fees, are assessed for renewal packets submitted 90 days or less after the current approval period's expiration date.
- A new provider application is required when providers are more than 90 days past the expiration of their provider approval period.
- The ACE provider's approval status remains active if the complete renewal application, required attachments, and payment is received by ACE by the renewal due date.
- ACE may audit and request course samples or materials in addition to what is required in the renewal application at any time during the approval period. All information requested by ACE must be provided by the due date specified by ACE to maintain approval.
- Required with the renewal application is a list of courses and conferences offered during the current approval period for ACE credit. Providers may use the excel template located in the [appendix](#) or in the system files located in the application portal to list courses and conferences or providers may use their own format if the following required information from the lists below is provided.

List of courses

- Course title
- ACE specific course delivery format(s) (reference standard 5.1 in the [ACE Handbook](#))
- Course date(s) (if live in-person or live distance learning)
- ACE CE credit amount
- Credit type
- Number of certificates awarded with ACE credit.
- Identify if the course was a hybrid (integrates two or more delivery formats)
- Identify if the course was offered as a conference session and, if so, provide the conference title
- Identify if the course or conference was cosponsored and, if so, list the name of the cosponsor

### List of conferences

- Conference title
- Conference date(s)
- Total number of social work credits possible for full attendance
  
- All ACE provider renewal applications must include the following:
  - Verification of provider staff (CEO/ department head, primary contact, CE Director, and Social Work Consultant)
  - Identification of delivery formats for renewal
  - Information for how courses are promoted
  - Accreditation information to include if the organization is approved or has been denied by another accrediting body.
  - Specifics regarding the development, delivery, and administration of continuing education
  - Quality of the CE program and evaluation of courses
  - Course and conference list (upload)
  - Current grievance policy (upload)
  - List of grievances received during last approval period (if any) including date of grievance, description of grievance, resolution/results of grievance review and any CE program changes made (if any) as result of the grievance (upload)
  - Attendance certificate (name redacted) that was awarded to a social worker with ACE credit for each course delivery format approved and offered in the last approval period (upload)
  - Attendance certificate (name redacted) that was awarded to a social worker with ACE credit for a conference (if any) held in the last approval period. (upload)
  - Completed closing or selling the business change request if ownership changed during the last approval period. This is required if the notification was not submitted to ACE at time of the ownership change.
  - Completion of renewing provider agreement initialed by the CE director and signed by the CEO/department head, CE Director and Social Work Consultant.
  - Payment of renewal application fee(s). Reference the fee schedule in the appendix of the ACE handbook

*Note the following regarding renewal fees and number of courses paid for: If the organization offered more courses/conference sessions than were paid for with the last approval/renewal, the difference in fees must be paid for at renewal (see the ACE fee schedule for specific details).*