



# Sponsorship Accreditation Update

## Accredited Status for Standard Business Sponsors available from November 2011

As part of the Subclass 457 visa reforms, the Australian Government decided to introduce a sponsor accreditation scheme in 2011 for certain standard business sponsors.

Accreditation recognises that many Australian businesses have a long history of good dealings with the Department including lodging a high volume of good quality, decision-ready applications and an excellent record of compliance with relevant laws.

From November, Accredited status can be applied for either with a new sponsorship application or by varying a sponsorship. The sponsor will be required to meet certain additional characteristics which will then qualify them for priority processing for all future subclass 457 nominations and visa applications. If accredited, the sponsorship agreement will last for six years. Sponsors will be able to use the same form (electronic or paper) as for applying to become a standard business sponsors. If the characteristics for accredited status are not met, the application for standard business sponsorship will still proceed and be assessed in the usual way.

In order to qualify for Accredited Status, sponsors will have to demonstrate several characteristics above the standard sponsorship requirements at the time of application. These characteristics have been determined by the Skilled Migration Consultative Panel and the Minister.

The sponsor must:

- be a government agency, a publicly-listed company, or a private company, with a minimum of \$4 million turnover per year for the last three years; and
- have been an active Subclass 457 visa sponsor for the past three years (with a break of no more than 6 months, not due to any sanction); and
- have no adverse information known about them based on DIAC and DEEWR monitoring, including formal warnings and sanctions; and
- have had at least 30 Subclass 457 visa holders granted in the previous 12 months; and
- have lodged a high level of decision-ready applications over the previous two years; and
- have a non-approval rate of less than three per cent for the previous three years; and
- have Australian workers comprising at least 75 per cent of their workforce in Australia and a commitment to maintain this level.

If a sponsor fails to maintain these characteristics, Accredited Status can be revoked which means priority processing will be retracted. The validity length of the sponsorship can not be changed, however, and will remain at 6 years.