



ASSISTANCE DOGS INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the first step to learning about ADI Accreditation?

The first step is to review the information posted on the ADI website: www.assistancedogsinternational.org. The website has extensive information about ADI. Specific information about accreditation is available in the Members section under the sub-tab Accreditation.

The Accreditation documents are available upon request to info@assistancedogsinternational.org :

- Accreditation Process Chart
- Accreditation Procedures
- Accreditation Manual Part 1
- Accreditation Manual Part 2 Compliance Demonstration Guidance Notes
- Instructions for Pre-assessment Paperwork
- Paperwork Summary Chart
- ADI Minimum Standards and Ethics

These documents will provide details about the entire accreditation process and must be read carefully and completely.

What are the ADI Minimum Standards and Ethics?

Assistance Dogs International originally developed minimum standards and ethics which all member and candidate programs must agree to follow *when they join ADI*. These standards and ethics are distributed annually to the membership and also help form the basis of the ADI accreditation standards and process.

Does ADI offer guidance and support for programs seeking accreditation?

Yes. ADI staff, Accreditation Standards Committee Members, Accreditation Review Committee Members, and volunteers from ADI member programs are available to assist programs seeking accreditation. After you have thoroughly reviewed the accreditation documents noted above, please contact the ADI Accreditation Coordinator accreditation@assistancedogsinternational.org. The coordinator will contact you to answer your questions and to provide support throughout the accreditation process. Programs must take the initiative to seek assistance from ADI as needed, recognizing the importance of starting the process to seek accreditation *well before* the program's actual accreditation deadline.

What are some key steps that should be undertaken to help prepare for accreditation?

First, review the Accreditation Procedures document and Process Chart so you have an understanding of the steps you will follow. At the beginning, it will also be very important to do a *baseline self-survey* assessment of your program. To determine if your program is in compliance, review the accreditation manual section by section and item by item, reviewing every standard and requirement to the best of your knowledge. This will help you develop a plan for the accreditation process and how you will improve any areas not currently in compliance.

The next key step is the preparation of your Pre-assessment Paperwork documents. Please read the paperwork instructions and paperwork summary chart and use these as the guide to prepare your materials.

Although compiling the paperwork binder is a detailed and time consuming process, it is a very effective and efficient method to assist the ADI assessor in evaluating your program. It also gives the assessor more time for the portions of the survey that can only be done during the on-site visit, such as interviews and inspections.

What is a Mock Accreditation Survey?

ADI strongly recommends that all programs that are working toward accreditation have one or more Board Members or other knowledgeable volunteers conduct a Mock Accreditation Survey after the program has completed its preparation process. This is like a dress rehearsal and is an excellent method to determine if the program is truly ready for the survey. It will also provide additional education and training opportunities for staff, volunteers, puppy raisers, clients and others who may participate in the actual ADI survey. If there are deficiencies when the Mock Survey is done, the program has the opportunity to correct them before the pre-assessment paperwork binder is submitted to ADI and before the actual on-site survey visit occurs.

What will the survey schedule agenda be like?

The assessor will work with the program's Executive Director (or equivalent) to set up a schedule agenda for the survey visit. This varies depending on the size of the program, location, type of services provided, training and placement procedures, etc. The assessor will provide you with a final survey schedule agenda at least two weeks prior to the survey visit. Surveys generally take two to four days to complete, depending on the size and scope of the program.

Will Board Members be interviewed?

Yes, the assessor will interview Board Members. This may be done either individually or as a group, depending on the schedule and items the assessor needs to discuss with the Board Members. You will be made aware of the assessor's plan in advance.

Who else will be interviewed during the survey?

When you review the Accreditation Manual, make note of all standards that require interviews and observation of training. This will help you determine the people within the program (staff, clients, board members, puppy raisers, other volunteers, etc.) who will be included in the on-site survey interviews. Be sure to review the information in the Compliance Demonstration Guidance Notes about on-site Observation of Training which has details about that portion of the survey.

If the program works with a prison system or school system, are there special requirements for the survey?

The program will need to provide a copy of their Cooperative Partnership agreement(s) for review by the assessor. For programs that have prison programs, there are specific standards and requirements in the Accreditation Manual Part 1 Section 7 and Part 2 Section 7. The assessor will determine if they will interview individuals within the prison systems or school system in person or by telephone, depending on the particular circumstances. A visit to these facilities during the survey process is usually also necessary, depending on the proportion of puppies and dogs that receive some training at these facilities. This will all be discussed in advance of the survey.

What about programs that provide certification testing for owner-trained or private-trainer-trained teams that were not originally part of the program?

In July 2012, ADI approved standards for ADI programs that provide this type of service. Please see Accreditation Manual Part 1 Section 8 and Part 2 Section 8 for details on these standards and requirements.

Who decides if the program passes accreditation?

After the assessor has completed all parts of the survey, the survey report and recommendation are submitted to the Accreditation Review Committee (ARC). The ARC reviews the information at their next scheduled meeting. If there are no questions that require additional discussion, the ARC may approve or deny the survey. If there are questions, the survey *may* be reviewed by the full Accreditation Standards Committee, in closed session, at their next quarterly meeting and they will approve or deny the survey.

Programs that *do not pass* also have the option to appeal the decision. This must be done in writing to the ADI Board of Directors. The decision of the Board by a majority vote is final. Instructions for submitting an appeal will be provided upon request.

When will the program be notified of the outcome of the survey?

The Accreditation Coordinator will initially notify the program about the outcome of the survey following the Accreditation Review Committee meeting. The official notification from ADI will be sent via email with an attached acknowledgement letter from the ADI President. This is usually done within two weeks of the decision. ADI will also issue an Accreditation Certificate to all programs that successfully achieve accreditation.

Once a program's survey is approved, when will the ADI website be updated?

Website updates are determined by the schedule of the ADI Website Coordinator, but in most instances the update will appear within two weeks.

When can a program publicize that they are ADI accredited?

Programs may publicize their accreditation after they receive the official notification letter from ADI.