

Accreditation



INTERIOR
PLANTSCAPE
ASSOCIATION

HOW TO GUIDE

For

Accreditation Application

Interior Plantscape Association

Version January 2023

What is Industry Accreditation?

Industry accreditation is a form of industry self regulation. Through significant consultation and review, industry sets the skill levels, qualifications, systems, procedures and experience that a business or individual within an industry should have to enable them to operate to an acceptable industry standard and preferably to an industry best practice standard.

A well developed, administered and marketed scheme can have a significant benefit to both an industry and also the accredited business or individual. These benefits can flow through in the form of higher quality work and productivity, better overall standards, greater professionalism and profile. Industry accreditation is a prerequisite for a contractor to tender or quote in some industries.

National Interior Plantscaping Association (IPA) Accreditation

National Interior Plantscaping Association, commonly known as the Interior Plantscape Association (IPA) Accreditation provides differentiation and recognition based on developed standards for the Indoor Plant Hire Industry in Australia and New Zealand. IPA Membership is compulsory to achieve IPA Accreditation.

IPA Accreditation promises a level of integrity and quality in Indoor Plant Hire businesses approach to its management practices, products and services through a process that examines many areas of the operation. The Accreditation process reveals publicly whether or not an Indoor Plant Hire company will hold the public trust and helps to ensure high-quality Industry supply and maintenance. Accreditation is a completely voluntary, non-governmental review process undertaken by Interior Plantscape Association (IPA) for the benefit of the public consumer and its members.

Company '**Accreditation**' identifies the business and its standing against its competition.

IPA accreditation application form is designed for ease of completion. This '*How to Guide*' for completing the application is provided to assist the applicants - Please refer to this guide for questions on related items.

Confidentiality

At all times confidentiality between the Applicant and the Association will be maintained. This document will be checked and filed in a confidential manner by IPA accreditation assessor, Paul Plant. Only IPA Accreditation Assessor will have access to these documents.

Points Rating

The appropriate points rating will be inserted by Interior Plantscape Association Accreditation Assessor and used to assess the levels of attainment that is available to your company.

A minimum of 80% of available points are required to achieve IPA company accreditation. These points are delivered under a predetermined template and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the point's allocation.

It is the responsibility totally of the applicant to ensure all areas on the application form are completed fully and correctly.

Evidence

In many sections it is not good enough to simply tick yes or no. You must supply evidence. For example, if you claim you have a formal process, you must supply documentation to support that process. If you claim you use a contract please supply a copy.

Remember No evidence = zero points.

Resubmission (including renewal)

The accreditation fee is made up of two parts, the IPA Accreditation payment and the processing fee that is paid to the assessor.

If an application scores 70 % or more IPA assessor will correspond with the applicant and point out where the points were lost, so that hopefully with a few corrections and maybe more detail they will achieve the desired 80% and gain accreditation.

If the application scores less than 70 % the application will be returned and the applicant will be required to resubmit the complete application and pay a second processing fee. The second processing fee is currently \$220.

An application that needs resubmission will remain open for 60 days. We consider this to be a reasonable time, after which it will be closed and a completely new application must be submitted along with the full fee.

Payment and Postal Details

This section explains how to pay and where to send the application and relevant documents.

Please note:

1. The application goes to the Assessor who is independent of IPA.
2. The payment (as per your invoice) goes to IPA Administration.

1. Application to Assessor

Send completed application form and necessary validated documents to
IPA Assessor Paul Plant:

Mail address: IPA Accreditation Assessor
Paul Plant
30 Killawarra Road
Lake McDonald Q 4563

2. Payment (fee structure detailed above)

Direct Deposit:

Account Name: National Interior Plantscape Association
Bank: Commonwealth Bank
BSB: 064 174
Account Number: 0090 0461

Accreditation Fee Structure:

Small to Medium business \$450 plus gst = \$495
Large Company \$1,200 plus gst = \$1,320
Franchise Companies \$2,250 plus gst = \$2,475

Accreditation is for **(2) two year period** and must be renewed 2 weeks before expiry date.

Renewal is the responsibility of the applicant.

LEGAL DOCUMENT DECLARATION

DECLARATION on page 9 will be required from the person responsible for the company. This application is a legal declaration that ensures all information included within the document is true and accurate.

NB. This legal declaration is a critical component of self-assessment and if is not witnessed, signed and dated it will not be processed.

TAKE A COPY

Before you post your application, take a copy of everything you send. Copy everything - certificates as well as your answers. You may need to refer to your copy when it comes time to renew (in two years' time). The documents you send will not be returned. The application and supporting documentation will be held on file by the third party Accreditation Assessor, for future reference.

ATTACHMENTS

Please label attachments clearly and use the same paragraph numbering as in the application.

IPA TEMPLATES AND CHECK LIST

There are several IPA templates that can be used if you need one. These can be downloaded from the member login page www.interiorplantscape.asn.au/resources a check list can be found on page 2 of the application to make sure everything has been completed before you post your application. This should be read before you start and when you have finished.

HELP

If you are not clear on something please contact or IPA CEO Elaine Tunn (M) 0452 590 255 or IPA Accreditation Assessor (M) 0437 184 828, they are more than happy to help.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE YOU TO COMPLETE THE APPLICATION?

If your company has all the documents available, this application should take approx 4 – 6 hours. Longer time may be required if your company does not already have these procedures and practices already in place.

PART A - CORPORATE ASSESSMENT AND DECLARATION

This section involves a check on the various aspects of business operation and the relevant information that should be automatically held by any quality business and therefore should not be hard to comply with. It only involves the copying of appropriate policy documents that are already held by the business and other accreditation status documents that may be applicable.

ITEM 1 (A) & (B) Business Documents

This section requires documentation relating to public liability, certificate of registration of a workplace, work cover policy and insurance details. If for some reason you believe that you are not required to have any of these particular business tools please provide a brief explanation on a separate sheet and attach it to the application. This will then be taken into account when the application is assessed.

ITEM 1 (B)

Some companies will have already undertaken independent third-party quality assurance certification or have been accredited by separate industry organisations and/or government authority. IPA does not wish to undertake its own accreditation “proof of certification” process and is prepared to accept certification provided the documentation is **certified** by a Justice of the Peace, lawyer, solicitor or accountant.

ITEM 2 Business information

This section is self-explanatory and requires the applicant to fill in the appropriate spaces and tick all questions in the checklist.

Declaration

This is a **critical legal declaration** by the applicant and must be read thoroughly signed and witnessed by the appropriate person that has the correct levels of authority.

By signing this declaration the signatory legally acknowledges that all components answered within the application are a true, up-to-date and correct record of the business applying for this company accreditation.

PART B - OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

All parts of the application are compulsory and must be completed. This section applies to business operations and its various forms and provides an overview of the company and its operational policies and procedures.

SECTION 1 – Business Operations

(A) Technology

This area addresses the level of technology utilised within the company. This area will be critical in the uptake of those areas working within guidelines of the Green Building Council in particular.

(B) Management

This area addresses the level of professionalism within the applying company's operations and it is self-explanatory.

(C) Contractual

This area addresses the area within the company regarding customer and supplier contracts under processes utilised by the company.

(D) Systems

Item D considers the areas of operational processes and systems, risk management and succession planning undertaken by the applying company in providing a quality product.

(E) Project Management (for Indoor Plant Hirers)

This item is for Indoor Plant Hire companies only and requires a Yes/No response. Product suppliers to the contract should go to the next item "F".

(F) Environmental

The areas of Indoor Plant Hire strongly relate to environmental controls and aspects. To be professional, environmental issues and the appropriate compliance plays a major part in the business environment associated with quality Indoor Plant Hire.

(G) Workplace Health and Safety

Workplace health and safety issues is now a critical part of any business. Issues of concern for this industry include bacteria, chemicals, pesticides and operator safety. This issue refers to the company's approach to its staff and attention to workplace health and safety issues.

The standard Template may be downloaded from the IPA Website in member's login section.

(H) Performance

This area is similar to others only and requires a simple Yes/No response.

(I) Qualifications

These two questions relate to ongoing staff training and innovation. It questions what the company is doing to maintain a professional level of competency.

The standard Template may be downloaded from the IPA Website in member's login section

(J) Staff Competency

This important area relates to staff training and identification of training needs and performance appraisals to ensure the company remains up to date with current practices.

The standard Template may be downloaded from the IPA Website in member's login section

SECTION 2 – Technical Assessment

Interior Plantscape Association (IPA) has identified three major areas on which assessment can be monitored they are:

- DESIGN
- INSTALLATION
- MAINTENANCE

This section is designed to provide the assessor with information on your company in relationship to the three areas above. IPA has utilised these three major areas to cover the companies applying for 'Company Accreditation' as they fit with the Interior Plantscape Industry's requirements overall.

In each of the areas below you are required to advise and provide documentation for the assessor on which areas of training has been completed, is this being undertaken currently, or is it planned to be undertaken within the next six months for management and staff of the business in relationship to the technical aspects of the Interior Plantscape Industry. This 'Technical' section is more about the individual technician and training of those individuals working within the Interior Plantscape business.

Many companies believe they are doing a professional job but in fact are providing the industry with a bad reputation due to the fact that they are not trained in the quality and professional aspects of Design, Installation and Maintenance. This accreditation process will differentiate a quality company with one that just goes through the process supplying and maintaining in an unprofessional manner. It will also assist in building the reputation of our industry as professionals.

(A) Design Competency

The following five items are considered important for horticulture suitability for live quality and well maintained interior plants. The applicant must comment on what technical training is provided to your staff that has been obtained in the following areas to assist in the design applications of these areas. This section relates totally to design competency.

26. Light

In the design area how does your company and staff investigate, research and advice on areas of light both internal and external.

27. Plant Species suitability

Plant identification and suitability is critical to a professionally designed Interior Plantscape. Please comment on the technical training provided to your staff by your company for this issue.

28. Density Requirements

Density requirements can mean the difference between a cosmetically appealing plantscape and one that places plants for the sake of having plants in the building. Please comment on the training your company provides your staff for this issue. This could be internal training or external training.

29. Benefits of plants

How does your company provide your staff with knowledge of the benefits of plants so that through their interaction with potential and existing clients it promotes the industry and the knowledge of your company and its benefit to the customer? Again this is similar to above and provides information to convince the assessors that your company understands the benefits of healthy well maintained interior plants to the workforce and your client.

30. Soil Types and Mulches

Much has been written about soil types and mulches causing bacteria for “VOC” removal within an interior plantscape. How do you continuously update and train your staff? What environmental training do you provide and what research do you undertake to support your staff?

(B) Installation

If the installation is not undertaken professionally with the correct plants and processes for maintenance the total interior plantscape will be a failure. The following two areas are those identified within the area of installation requiring comment from the applicant company. In two areas here there is the requirement to provide copies of documentation undertaken by the company in a professional installation.

31. Documentation

The installation procedure should be included in your quotation and therefore a copy should be provided easily.

32. Site Management, Impact & assessment

Site management and transport is critical to quality installation (if it doesn't arrive in good condition it can't be installed in good condition) you are required to provide evidence of appropriate documentation for site management, the different changes and impacts to the site that occurs. Photographic evidence should be provided of the site prior to and post project that can support the applicant company's credibility in this area. At the completion of a project a final project audit is usually undertaken by both the company and the interior plantscape contractor. All that is needed is a copy of a final project audit undertaken recently.

(C) Maintenance

Once the project has been designed and the installation undertaken the project is only half completed. Now comes the job of ongoing professional maintenance that maintains the plantscape in a quality manner that appeals to the client and the associated personnel utilising the space. Professional, quality maintenance leads to repeat business and enhances the reputation of the total Interior Plantscape Industry. In this area you need to advise on the technical training being provided or already obtained by your staff.

33. Location and density

After completion of the installation on many projects, plants are either removed or replaced by other species. Please provide details of a regular audit process undertaken by your company to ensure that the initial design remains in place. This can be taken from a copy of your maintenance program. It is important that you reference this issue C33 on your application.

34. Watering and cleaning

Watering and cleaning can be evidenced by a copy of your company's maintenance program provided to the client. It is important that you reference this section as C34 on your application.

35. Identification and control of pests

Describe your company's policy by attaching a copy from your quotation, of the identification and control of pests and diseases. It is important that you reference this section as C35.

36 Monitoring soil performance

Again this can be provided via a copy from your company's quotation detail and monitoring soil performance aspects of the project. It is important you reference this section as C36.

37 Quality control and replacement policy

Quality control of existing plants through maintenance and the replacement policy of your company needs to be provided and again can be done via a copy from your company's quotation. It is important you reference this section as C37.

38 Maintenance Plan

This item provides ongoing quality reputation to the industry and the company. It will result in repeat business. You are required to provide three testimonials from various companies you have serviced longer than 12 months that have utilised more than six species of plants in each project. It is important to reference these testimonials as C38.

FOR RENEWAL APPLICATION ONLY

SECTION 3 – SUMMARY OF CONTINUING PROFESIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

Accreditation Renewal is dependent on three things:

1. That all required insurances and certificates are current
2. That sufficient evidence has been supplied to validate processes and practices claimed in the Accreditation Application are in still place and being used
3. That there is evidence of CPD.

We are asking here for a quick summary of the improvements that have been made to the business in the last two years. This will help the assessor to assess your CPD status.

CPD may be in any area including for example:

- sales or marketing
- scheduling
- computers
- watering techniques
- training
- infrastructure or
- Green Policy