Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program Accrediting Organizations

What is an Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program?

Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs (IRAP) are a new innovative model of apprenticeship in the United States. An IRAP is a high-quality apprenticeship program that includes a paid-work component and an educational or instructional component through which an individual obtains workplace-relevant knowledge and skills. IRAPs will help businesses build the skilled workforce they need to be competitive, start apprenticeship programs based on standards set by industry, and receive recognition within their industry for sponsoring a high-quality program.

IRAPs will provide businesses with an alternative apprenticeship model, *and will be accredited by non-government organizations approved by US DOL.*

> ### *Why be an IRAP Accrediting Organization?*
>
> **By taking on this role, IRAP accrediting organizations will be leaders in their industry and will:**
>
> o Develop sector-driven standards that identify the skills required for the workforce and how best to teach those skills through apprenticeship programs
>
> o Drive the future direction and innovations in apprenticeship for their sector in the United States
>
> o Be known as a leader in building a pipeline of skilled talent to meet the needs of their industry sector

These organizations, known as accrediting organizations, will be a critical part of IRAPs. Accrediting organizations will assess programs operated by individual sponsors, such as companies, trade and industry groups, non-profit organizations, educational institutions, unions, and joint labor-management organizations, and accredit those that meet the high-quality criteria of an IRAP.

Who can be an IRAP Accrediting Organization?

We are not limiting the type of entity that may seek to become an IRAP accrediting organization, which may include industry associations, employer groups, labor-management organizations, educational organizations, and/or broad consortia of these and other organizations. They may be pre-existing entities or may be new entities created for the purpose of being an IRAP accrediting organization. Sector-wide consortia, bringing together expertise and services across an industry sector, are likely to be well-positioned to act as accrediting organizations and meet the technical assistance needs of IRAPs. (Given the high concentration of registered apprenticeship programs in the U.S. military and the construction sector, IRAPs will not initially be available in these two areas).

What is the Role of IRAP Accrediting Organizations?

IRAP accrediting organizations will play the critical role of reviewing apprenticeship programs and accrediting programs that meet the IRAP criteria. These organizations will also offer businesses and other sponsors uniform standards for apprenticeship programs that promote quality and portability. In addition, accrediting organizations are encouraged to offer off-the-shelf products or technical assistance resources to reduce the time and expense for individual sponsors to develop apprenticeship programs.

Office of Apprenticeship

What are the Requirements for IRAP Accrediting Organizations?

Entities seeking approval from US DOL to be an IRAP accrediting organization will need to demonstrate their capabilities and capacity in five areas that are critical to ensuring high-quality apprenticeships that develop a workforce with the skills and competencies needed by industry.

REQUIREMENT	DESCRIPTION
Validity in Setting Sector Standards	The organization has the capacity to use a consensus-based process involving industry experts to establish the classroom and workplace education requirements, structure, and curriculum for an apprenticeship program in a given industry sector.
Clear Policies and Procedures for Accrediting IRAPs	The organization has policies and procedures for accrediting high-quality apprenticeship programs, which are sufficiently detailed to ensure that individual sponsors of apprenticeships will receive equitable treatment and will be evaluated based on the merits of their programs.
Transparency and Accountability	The organization demonstrates that programs are transparent and accountable, such as making publicly available contact information and apprentice outcomes (e.g. completions and earnings) for the programs it accredits.
Impartiality, Objectivity, and Independence	The organization ensures that decisions and plans are based on objective criteria and do not benefit one population over another, and that strategies are in place to address potential conflicts of interest.
High-Quality Apprenticeship Programs	The organization ensures that the apprenticeship programs it accredits adhere to hallmarks of the highest quality, which include: o Paid work o Industry credentials o Work-based learning o Safety and supervision o Mentorship o Equal employment opportunity o Educational and instructional component

What is the Application Process for IRAP Accrediting Organizations?

US DOL will release an application form that interested entities may use to apply to be an IRAP accrediting organization. This application will require prospective accrediting organizations to describe their policies and procedures for developing and validating standards and accrediting high-quality IRAPs. The proposed application form is currently available for public comment and may be viewed at www.regulations.gov/docket?D=ETA-2018-0001. Until the final application is released in the coming months, organizations who intend to take advantage of this opportunity may choose to develop plans, structures, and processes that incorporate impartiality, confidentiality, and objectivity, as well as key partnerships that will lead to the development of high-quality apprenticeship programs.

Questions? If you have questions about IRAPs and IRAP accrediting organizations, contact the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship:
Visit www.apprenticeship.gov | Call 202.693.2796 | Email apprenticeship@dol.gov

Office of Apprenticeship