

National Home Inspector Certification Council

COURSE or PROGRAM ACCREDITATION FOR THE NHICC - NATIONAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Accreditation of a course or program for the National Certification Program can be difficult to oversee, and may possibly present a potential conflict of interest. To assure open independence, the responsibility of reviewing and recommending accreditation, the NHICC delegates the review of all accreditation applications to an external Accreditation Consultant with expertise in accreditation.

Equally “The certification body shall not offer or provide training, or aid others in the preparation of such services, unless it demonstrates how training is independent of the evaluation and certification of persons to ensure that confidentiality and impartiality are not compromised.” “The certification body shall employ or contract enough people with the necessary education, training, technical knowledge and experience to perform certification functions relating to the type, range and volume of work performed, under a responsible management.” Source – CAN-P-9

Defining “accredited” training

Accreditation is the process a certification body uses to determine whether the courses or programs offered by a training provider meet some or all of the skill and knowledge requirements of a (NOS) National Occupational Standards. It also involves an assessment of a provider’s ability to provide a consistent standard of training. For home and property inspectors seeking to gain NHI (National Home Inspector- Canada™) status, accreditation will be the responsibility of a NHICC Certification Council.

“The main reason for accreditation is to demonstrate the academic credibility of an educational course of study.”

The steps in the accreditation process review

1. Establishing the *bona fides* (evidence of good faith) of the training provider - at a minimum, training providers must demonstrate that they are legitimate and can demonstrate adequate processes for maintaining instructional standards and maintain adequate processes for verifying the competence of trainees.

Documentation required (support documentation by applicant)

1. is a legal entity registered within its jurisdiction
2. has been in operation a minimum of three years, and
3. is financially solvent, and likely to remain so
4. provide documentation of how they determine the standards required for teaching
5. specify what processes they have in place internally to ensure these standards are being met

2. Gathering information regarding specific courses or programs provided by the training provider.

Documentation required (support documentation by applicant)

1. information about the learning objectives of courses and programs
2. information can be provided by the training provider as part of a submission of accreditation, or gathered by the organization independent of the institution

3. Mapping course or program topics to the requirements of the (NOS) National Occupational Standards. A copy of the National Occupational Standards may be downloaded from the NHICC Web - Home Page.

Documentation required (support documentation by applicant)

1. Courses and programs must be mapped or linked to specific tasks in the NOS. The linkages may be apparent - for example, a program may have an obvious link to an NOS element, and this may be apparent in the name of the course (“Visual Inspection of Concrete Foundations”). In other cases the link may be a bit more tenuous - for example, a course/program may require a trainee submit a written or verbal report (part of testing) that may satisfy a requirement under an administrative component of the NOS.

Course mapping is conducted using a standard form. A working copy of the form can be found on page 4 of 8 of the Application for Accreditation from the NHICC. A copy of this application may be downloaded from the NHICC Web – Accredited Page.

4. Determining skill and/or knowledge levels delivered by a course or program.

Documentation required (support documentation by applicant)

National Home Inspector Certification Council - NHICC

1. Elements of a course or program that map to specific elements of the NOS were analyzed to define the level of skill and/or knowledge acquired by successful trainees. Skill and knowledge levels were determined by analyzing the wording of learning objectives for course modules.
2. A taxonomic analysis will only determine what level of skill or knowledge has been designed into a program – only an audit can determine whether these levels are actually delivered.

Note: Benjamin Bloom (1956) developed a classification of levels of intellectual behaviour in learning. This taxonomy contained three overlapping domains: the cognitive, psychomotor and affective. Within the cognitive domain, he identified six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. These domains and levels are still useful today as you develop the critical thinking skills of your students.

5. Determining the degree of compliance with the elements of the NOS. (This step is for information purpose only.)

To address Step 5, a comparison is made (by the Accreditation Consultant) between the required skill and knowledge level of the NOS and the design levels of a course or program. Once analysis is complete, the reviewer could make a statement like:

“The course is designed to meet the skill and knowledge requirements for Task 18 of the NOS” OR “The course is designed to meet the knowledge components of the NOS, additional training and/or experience would be required to fully meet the skill requirements of the NOS”.

6. Auditing courses or programs. (This step is for information purpose only.)

To address Step 6, an audit process is utilized in the NHICC Accreditation Process for auditing a course or program to verify that it delivers in accordance with its design goals. This is normally done on a random basis as a quality control mechanism, as well as performing an audit in circumstances where the NHICC and/or the Accreditation Consultant has reason to believe that there may be a problem with maintaining the standard of accreditation. Such circumstances could include complaints from trainees or the public, or the discovery of competency gaps in trainees of a course or program.

Periodic audit of programs is a prerequisite for granting and also maintaining the accreditation. All accredited courses/programs will be reviewed on a periodic basis to ensure they are still in compliance with the criteria for accreditation. At a minimum, this review will occur following any change to the NOS.

7. Reviewing program participants for satisfaction and competency. (This step is for accreditation administrative information purpose only. It will be used as reference documentation for courses/program that undergoes an accreditation audit.)

The last element of accreditation is a review of program participants, including current trainees and recent trainees that have completed their studies. This can be accomplished through a survey tool administered after completion of a course to determine both the trainees' level of satisfaction with the training course or program, and the degree to which they believe the training is meeting their needs.

Guiding Principles

In order to accomplish this, the key guiding principles for accreditation is recognition of a course/program that provides:

1. Course/program syllabus that contain clearly articulated learning outcomes.
2. Course/program material must provide the necessary knowledge and skills identified in the (NOS).
3. Assures that the course/program learning outcomes are based on providing the necessary knowledge and skills identified in the (NOS).
4. Course/program syllabus clearly identifies assessment procedures (tests, exams, reports, etc).
5. Training provider assures that the instructor/facilitator is an experienced and qualified practitioner from the profession.
6. A fair determination of the actual hours of credit directly related to the subject material covered in the course/program that directly relates to the development of knowledge and skills specified in the NOS.
7. Clear identification of the course owner if this is not the same person or organization as the course/program developer.
8. Submitting the course/program and the accreditation review fee.
9. Commitment to ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the course/program once it is accredited and is being delivered.
10. A feedback and complaints procedure (internal and external).
11. The freedom to conduct an external audit, or verification of course/program materials (if and when warranted).

Assuring National Consistency

Any training course/program put forward for accreditation must comply with the National Standards for the occupation. The NHICC provides a reference link to the (NOS) National Occupational Standards for Home and Property Inspectors both in English and French on its website. The NOS provides the training framework guidelines for learning outcomes for course/program developers. This

National Home Inspector Certification Council - NHICC

document provides a template and clear guidelines on the required learning outcomes and content for recognition of an accredited course/program. The training providers is tasked with mapping the course/program content and learning outcomes with a comparative analysis with the NOS, prior to submitting their course/courses for review.

The submission is reviewed independently by a qualified NHICC an experienced Post Secondary Educational Accreditation Consultant and a recommendation report is submitted by the consultant to the NHICC Certification Council for a final decision on granting accredited training status. Note: some applications have been delayed and/or denied based on incomplete documentation.

The NHICC accreditation review process ensures that all course/program materials first and foremost meet the nationally endorsed National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Home and Property Inspectors learning outcome based skills guidelines for academic quality and professionalism. In addition, our Accreditation Standards prevent conflicts of interest during the accreditation process, by having accreditation reviewed independently.

General Outline of Terms of Accreditation

1. The details regarding the number of hours accredited will be specified.
2. Certain administrative obligations are required of accredited training providers.
3. Courses/programs are normally accredited for up to three years. If it is expected that the training needs of an industry sector will be changed in the near future, or revisions to an existing course/program anticipated, accreditation will be approved for a shorter period of time.
4. An accredited course/program can be delivered only by the registered training organization with the scope to deliver that exacting course/program.
5. A registered training organization can only deliver courses/programs under the care and instruction of an NHICC approved home inspector.
6. Certain terms are specified regarding loss of accreditation.
7. An annual accreditation maintenance renewal fee is charged for accredited courses/programs. Fees are also charged for a re-evaluation of accredited courses/programs.

Achieving Accreditation

Note: When a course/program is accredited, it will be listed on NHICC website as well as offered to organizations who are engaged in an Administrative Contract for Education and Training development program (ACET). The final decision on granting “accreditation” is under the administrative function of the NHICC Certification Council and based on recommendation from the Accreditation Consultant.

Right to Audit

The NHICC and/or the NHICC Accreditation Consultant reserves the right to audit or inspect the training provider's courses, programs and records, with a minimum of 10 days business notice; should conditions arise that would cause the NHICC or the “Consultant” to question the accreditation granted. The NHICC Certification Committee will carry out periodic audits to assure quality of delivery of training. Audits help to ensure compliance with the stated goals, criteria, competencies and standards of the education and training program.

An audit fee deposit will be assessed, and be payable to the NHICC representing approximately 50% of the anticipated audit costs. If such an audit reveals that the training provider has breached the agreement, then such an audit will be at the complete expense of the training provider.

Fees for Accreditation

A fee is charged for accreditation to institutions and training providers who seek accreditation. The fee is a reflection of the time and effort required to effectively determine whether a course or program meets the needs of the National Program. The logic is that accreditation provides a marketing advantage to organizations that achieve it; that is, they will be able to attract more students/trainees (or charge higher rates) if they can show that their product is accepted as part of the National Certification Program for an occupation.

An application for NHICC Accreditation may be obtained from the Web Page for NHICC – Accredited. Review time may take 90 days.

Note: Accreditation Fees are listed on the Web Page for NHICC – Certify (NHICC Fee Structure). Accreditation costs are based on the required time to technically evaluate the courses or program of study. Annual Fee - covers the cost of maintaining the accreditation. Audit, Travel Expenses – (where applicable) are charged to the client as occurred over and above the application and renewal fees.