Overview of IMA Accreditation

The International Mentoring Association (IMA) provides accreditation of mentoring programs to identify those programs that meet rigorous mentoring program standards based on years of research and practice in the field of mentoring. Accreditation confers recognition that the mentoring program is well designed, meets participant developmental and growth needs, and achieves the program's purposes.

Much like accreditation for academic institutions or professional organizations, accreditation for mentoring programs provides many benefits.

- Accreditation gives potential participants the assurance that they will receive the support and services they desire.

- Accreditation provides organizations with a competitive edge for attracting new and high-quality candidates and applicants.

- Accreditation provides organizations with a means to promote their focus on worthwhile goals, as well as their attention to human needs, through providing an exceptional mentoring program.

- Accreditation helps programs gain or maintain funding by confirming their value.

- Accreditation communicates to potential participants, funders, and organization leadership that the mentoring program benefits all participants and the organization.

The Accreditation process also benefits mentoring programs. The accreditation process represents a significant opportunity for program leadership to strengthen and enhance the mentoring program through a self-assessment of program design, implementation, and success.

Mentoring reflects a commitment to participants' long-term, continuous improvement. When you submit an application, you affirm your commitment to excellence, to continuous improvement, to providing exceptional services to participants, and to accomplishing meaningful goals and clearly defined objectives.

Mentoring program accreditation is granted after IMA review of program documentation, during which reviewers examine evidence that the program is implementing critical program elements and is meeting program goals and participant needs. For high scoring programs, the accreditation process will continue with interviews of key personnel and program representatives.

All programs that receive accreditation are successful, effective programs and have the privilege of using the IMA accreditation logo to announce their status.

Overview of Accreditation Application Process

There are 100 points available that will determine the level of accreditation programs receive. Below is a description of the required information, documentation and evidence to support an application. It is recommended that programs applying for accreditation follow the RFA to ensure all information, documentation and evidence are provided along with an estimated timeline for IMA review.

Required Documentation, Information and Evidence:

- Cover Sheet and Table of Contents
    - Program name
    - Host organization
    - Contact information
    - History of program

- Executive Summary worth 13 points
    - Program Goals
        - Clearly state the purpose of the program providing identified program goals
    - Program objectives
        - Clearly state the desired measurable program outcomes, as related to the program goals, against which program success is measured
        - How were they determined?
    - Program scope
        - Whom does the program serve?
        - How many mentors and mentees/protégés are in the program?
    - Program accomplishments:
        - Briefly, what accomplishments has the program achieved to demonstrate success, as related to program objectives?

- Personnel & Program Structure worth 10 points
    - Evidence of a qualified director/leader of the program:
        - Provide a narrative description of the program leadership and submit a résumé of the program director.
        - Resume should describe role and function within the mentoring program
    - Sufficient staff to implement the program efficiently
        - Describe the management and personnel structure of the program.
    - Evidence of sufficient fiscal resources:
        - Does the program have the necessary funds for effective program implementation?
        - Example evidence: copy of annual operating budget
    - Resources used to guide program development
        - Reference to resources need to be clearly stated and cited
        - Example evidence: IMA conference attendance, research studies, expert advice, reference guides, case models, model programs, internal research

- Induction and Establishment of Mentoring Relationships worth 22 points
    - Mentor induction and screening
        - What process do you use to identify mentors?
        - What qualities are you looking for in mentors and how do you find potential mentors?
    - Mentor assessment
        - Evidence of a process to determine mentors' interests and the strengths they can offer the mentees/protégés.
    - Mentee/protégé induction and assessment:
        - Evidence of a process to assess mentee/protégé developmental needs
        - (Example evidence: skills assessments, surveys, interview protocols, self-assessment)
    - Process for matching mentors and mentees/protégés:
        - How do you determine which mentors and mentees/protégés will work together?
    - Evidence of orientation and training for mentors and mentees/protégés
        - How do you help mentors and mentees/protégés understand mentoring process, roles, responsibilities, expectations, and purpose?
        - How do you help them start developing their relationship?
        - Example evidence: agendas, training materials, presentation files, resource library

- Program Support and Monitoring worth 9 points
    - Process for identifying barriers:
        - How do you know when the relationship isn't working and why it isn't working?
    - Process to resolve barriers:
        - What strategies do you use to mitigate and resolve problems?
        - Example strategies: mediation, conflict resolution, cognitive coaching, change of placement, training
    - Evidence of interventions to resolve barriers:
        - How have the intervention processes been used successfully?
        - Submit representative case studies.

- Mentoring Process worth 23 points
    - Evidence of on-going mentoring and support
        - How do you know that mentoring is occurring?
        - Example evidence: contact logs, site visit reports, correspondence
    - Evidence of reporting process to program leadership:
        - How does the program leadership know what is happening in the mentor and mentee/protégé relationship?
        - Example evidence: contact logs, regularly scheduled mentor reports
    - Evidence of a process to determine how well the mentoring relationship is helping mentees/protégés resolve developmental needs:
        - What information do you collect, how do you collect it, and how do you analyze it?
        - Example evidence: surveys, case studies, pre- / post-needs assessment, coded interview transcripts, analysis of variance

- Evidence that mentoring relationships are helping mentees/protégés resolve developmental needs
  - To what degree are program's mentees/protégés, as a whole, progressing towards their individual desired outcomes?
  - Example evidence: average changes in self-assessment survey scores over time; graphs demonstrating changed in mentees'/protégés' skills, anecdotal evidence

- Program Evaluation worth 23 points
  - Evidence of a process to determine whether the mentoring program is meeting program objectives:
    - How do you know whether your program is meeting its objectives (i.e, evaluation process)?
    - Example evidence: pre- / post-self-assessment surveys, mentor assessment of mentee/protégé skill set, interviews
  - Evidence that the mentoring program is meeting program objectives:
    - Is the program meeting its objectives?
      - Results of the process
      - Example evidence: graphs of mentee/protégé retention rates over time, effectiveness assessment graphs, results of interviews regarding mentee/protégé satisfaction
  - Representative Interviews by IMA Reviewers
    - Program Leadership
    - Mentors
    - Mentees

Review Process:

- Submission
  - Timeline is year-round
  - Application fee: $2,000.00
  - Silver Accreditation awarded
    - No additional fees
  - Gold Accreditation awarded
    - Additional $3,500.00 fee
    - Mid-cycle review required at three years to maintain accreditation status
- Timeline
  - Begins one week following receive of application with documentation and evidence
  - Weeks 2-3: Accreditation Committee reviews materials
  - Weeks 3-4: Representative interviews are conducted
  - Weeks 4-5: Report development
  - Weeks 5-6: Board review and determination
  - Week 6: Program notification
- Scoring Guidelines
  - Total of 100 points available
  - Gold Accreditation: 96-100 points
  - Silver Accreditation: 85-96 points

For the full Request for Application (RFA) email info@mentoringassociation.org