

Professional Tour Guide

Accreditation Program

Application Kit



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Introduction

The **Professional Tour Guide Accreditation Program** is a national accreditation program originally designed by Guiding Organisations Australia and now administered by **Tour Guides Australia**. The program provides a skills benchmark for all tour guides in Australia. It is suitable for all types of tour guides located anywhere in Australia and engaged in any sector of the tourism industry.

There is a range of tour guide titles throughout Australia and around the world. Below is a sample of some of the titles or roles that tour guides may undertake:

- City Sights Guide
- Walking Tour Guide
- Meet and Greet Guide
- Driver Guide
- Tour Guide
- Tourist Guide
- Urban Guide
- Language/Linguist Guide
- Auslan (Sign Language) Guide
- Vision or Mobility Assist Guide
- Site Guide
- Step on Guide
- Business Guide
- Heritage Guide
- Adventure Guide
- Forest/ Wilderness Guide
- Wildlife Guide
- Birding Guide
- Nature/Eco Guide
- Special Interest Guide
- Cruise Guide
- Overlander Guide
- Tour Escort
- Tour Manager
- Tour Director

Tour guides work in a variety of locations, in cities as well as in regional and remote areas, in natural, historical and culturally significant environments, and they may conduct tours of varying length from 30 minutes to extended tours of up to 30 days or more.

The **Professional Tour Guide Accreditation Program** uses the term 'tour guide' to mean any person who leads or presents to a group of tourists on an organised tour or activity of any length, regardless of their employment status.

Benefits of Professional Tour Guide Accreditation

Using professional tour guides is of benefit to the whole of the tourism industry. The **Professional Tour Guide Accreditation Program** ensures tour guide compliance with a high level of knowledge, skills, training (including first aid) and adequate insurance. Through **Tour Guides Australia**, tour guides are also provided with ongoing professional development, networking and job opportunities. Many stakeholders benefit from the raised level of skills and knowledge, including:

- Tour guides
- Tour operators
- Tourism councils
- Industry organisations
- Training organisations
- Visitors & tourists

To the individual tour guide

- National recognition of practical skills and professionalism
- Competitive edge for employment
- Access to professional development opportunities
- Regular news updates from **Tour Guides Australia** and other industry associations
- Identifiable as a professional tour guide (photo ID provided)
- Listing on the **Tour Guides Australia** 'Find a Guide' page
- Access to discounted group insurance

To the tourism industry

- Provides a high level of assurance of the skills and knowledge of the professional tour guides for employers
- Improves the safety standards for tourists
- Improves customer service satisfaction ratings
- Potential for increased visitation and business opportunities for agencies using professional tour guides

To stakeholders

- Provides high benchmarks for protected areas or sites with special access arrangements
- Establishes clear and recognisable high standard benchmarks of required tour guiding skills
- Improves professionalism among tour guides and the frontline staff of the tourism industry

To tourists

- Receive a greater understanding and appreciation of the cultural, and natural values of Australia
- Increases the level of visitor satisfaction, engagement, connection and excitement.
- Improves the level of safety for tourists

Accreditation procedures & requirements

Eligibility

It is recommended that you read through this *Application Kit* in full before completing or submitting any documentation, to ensure you are fully eligible for accreditation. Accreditation will only be granted to applicants who successfully meet all the requirements.

Tour guide qualifications

The **Professional Tour Guide Accreditation Program** makes use of the *National Tourism, Hospitality and Events Training Package*, which includes competency standards and national qualifications for tour guides.

There are three relevant certificates:

- Certificate III in Guiding
- Certificate IV in Guiding
- Certificate IV in Tourism

Tour Guides Australia supports Registered Training Organisations in the training of tour guides to achieve Certificate III or IV in Guiding or Tourism and encourages them to assist with Recognition of Prior Learning for accredited tour guides.

Initial accreditation requirements

You must meet ONE of the following three options:

1 No training

- 100 full days (800 hours) experience as a tour guide throughout your career
OR
- 60 full days (480 hours) experience as a tour guide in the past 6 months

2 Completed a Tour Guiding Fundamentals course

- Completed the Tour Guides Australia Tour Guiding Fundamentals micro credential course
PLUS
- 60 full days (480 hours) of tour guiding throughout your career

3 Completed a Certificate course

- A completed Certificate III or Certificate IV from a Registered Training Organisation in Guiding, Tourism, Eco-tourism, or other relevant course as per above.
PLUS
- 30 full days (240 hours) experience as a tour guide.



Evidence of your tour guide experience is to be documented in the *Tour Guide Activity Logbook* (Appendix G).

In addition, you must have a current Level 2 First Aid and CPR certificate.

Application

Please include the following:

- Completed *Membership Application* form to **Tour Guides Australia** (available on **Tour Guides Australia** website www.tga.org.au/join-tga/)
- Passport sized digital photo for professional tour guide ID Card (your name on the back)
- Signed *Tour Guide Declaration* (Appendix A)
- Signed *Code of Conduct for Tour Guides* (Appendix F)
- Copies of:
 - Relevant tour guide, or equivalent, qualifications (if applicable)
 - *Tour Guide Activity Logbook* (Appendix G)
 - Current Level 2 First Aid Certificate including CPR
 - Resume with relevant guiding experience or similar
 - Proof of identity (passport photo page, driver licence, or birth/citizenship certificate)
 - Plus, for non-Australian citizens, your current visa or Medicare card

When your application is received by **Tour Guides Australia** you will be sent an invoice. (See **Tour Guides Australia** website www.tga.org.au/join-tga/categories-fees/ for the current assessment fee.)

When the assessment fee is paid, your application will be reviewed by a **Tour Guides Australia** assessor. If deemed satisfactory, you will be contacted to undertake an onsite assessment.

Onsite assessment

1. The assessment will be conducted by a **Tour Guides Australia** appointed accredited independent assessor. Assessors are Cert IV qualified and experienced with extensive knowledge of tour guide qualification requirements, plus experience in workplace assessment.
2. A fee will be charged for assessment upon application, as shown on the **Tour Guides Australia** website www.tga.org.au/join-tga/categories-fees/. This fee may change according to circumstances and additional travel costs. You will be advised of any additional costs prior to the assessment.
3. The onsite assessment is based on the *Tour Plan* (Appendix B). It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the tour plan is provided to the assessor at least 24 hours before the assessment, so the assessor may have time to familiarise themselves with tour locations/venues and activities.

4. Note that as a tour guide, you are required by law to ensure that you provide all activities as per itineraries set out by the tour operator. A tour plan helps you to establish what you will talk about, when, and what props you will need along the way. It helps you to tailor the tour to the expected tourist group. It also aids in your review afterwards. The *Tour Plan* (Appendix B) template allows you to demonstrate your planning for the assessment.
5. The duration of the onsite assessment should last approximately one hour.
6. The assessment shall be conducted in a real tour experience with at least 2 tourists arranged by the applicant.
7. Applicants must meet the required criteria as is set out in the *Onsite Assessment Criteria* (Appendix C).
8. A *Self Assessment & Customer Feedback* (Appendix D) is provided. It is recommended that you complete this document immediately following the onsite assessment and present it to the assessor. The assessor will review the applicant's *Self Assessment and Customer Feedback* form as part of the assessment process.
9. The applicant is encouraged to provide feedback via the *Applicant Feedback on Accreditation* form (Appendix E).
10. The assessor will complete a recommendation form and will advise the applicant of the outcome.
11. If the applicant fails to meet the **Professional Tour Guide Accreditation Program** requirements in the onsite assessment, then a written explanation will be given to the applicant together with suggestions for further training.
12. Once ready, an applicant may reapply for accreditation.

Note. In cases where onsite assessment is difficult or impossible, Zoom or Skype will be offered. Alternatively, a simulated tour reflecting real circumstances may be evaluated. This will require a video with audio recording of at least 30 minutes duration.

Successful completion

1. Upon successful completion of all requirements, **Tour Guides Australia** Management Committee will consider your application.
2. If approved, you will be invited to pay the **Tour Guides Australia** Professional Guide membership fee (pro rata for the remainder of the current membership period).
3. When paid, a *Membership Kit* including a **Tour Guides Australia** photo ID card will be forwarded to you. A reminder that your submitted photo should be a digital image, passport style & size, reflective of you as a guide.
4. Make sure to always display your card prominently so that tourists and the industry can identify you as a **Tour Guides Australia** accredited professional tour guide. For card replacement please contact **Tour Guides Australia** at office@tga.org.au

Appeals and feedback

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your onsite assessment, a formal appeal may be lodged in writing to **Tour Guides Australia** within 14 days. A different independent assessor will be assigned to consult with you and the initial assessor. A second onsite assessment may be required.

Annual renewal & maintaining accreditation

To maintain your professional tour guide accreditation, your **Tour Guides Australia** Professional Guide membership must be paid up at all times. Fees are due annually. A grace period of 30 days applies, after which time the accreditation is cancelled, and you must reapply for accreditation again.

As a professional tour guide, you are expected to engage in ongoing professional development every year and maintain a record of this on a *Professional Development Points* form. You must also keep your Level 2 First Aid and CPR certificates current and uploaded to the member portal on the **Tour Guides Australia** website.

Tour Guides Australia holds regular professional development activities for its members. Benefits of the professional development program include:

- continual enhancement and growth of your skills and knowledge
- networking, providing you with additional job opportunities.

Information about national and international professional development events and job opportunities are provided through the **Tour Guides Australia** communications via emails & newsletters.

To ensure continuation of your accreditation, please ensure any changes to your contact details are updated on your member profile in the Member Zone of the **Tour Guides Australia** website.

Tour Guide Declaration

I have attached the requested documents with my application – including a resume, copies of training certificates, *Tour Guide Activity Logbook*, a signed *Tour Guides Australia Code of Conduct*, current Level 2 First aid and CPR certificates, and a photo.

I declare that the information I have supplied in this application is true and correct, and I will continue to supply accurate information should any additional information be required. Should my circumstances or contact details change, then I shall notify **Tour Guides Australia** immediately.

I understand that once I have successfully completed the accreditation process, I will be able to list my details on the *Find a Guide* section of the **Tour Guides Australia** website, providing me with exposure to job opportunities.

Please tick you preferred choice:

- **YES:** I would like to take advantage of the offered listings and hereby give permission for my contact information to be displayed on the **Tour Guide Australia** website.
- **NO:** I elect not to have my details shown on the **Tour Guides Australia** website.

I agree to abide by the **Tour Guide Australia Code of Conduct for Tour Guides**.

I acknowledge that:

1. any incorrect/misleading information or failure to provide information as set out in the *Application Kit*, or any breach of these terms and conditions, or failing to comply with the **Tour Guides Australia Code of Conduct for Tour Guides** may lead to refusal to grant or renew accreditation, or the withdrawal of my accreditation.
2. **Tour Guides Australia** can refuse to grant or continue my accreditation with 14 days' notice at **Tour Guides Australia's** discretion,
3. if I do not meet the specified criteria as set down in the *Application Kit*, then I may be refused an onsite assessment or accreditation opportunity.

I acknowledge and agree that **Tour Guides Australia** accepts no liability for any information, recommendation or advice provided to me and I agree to seek independent specialist advice before relying upon any information, recommendation or advice provided to me by **Tour Guides Australia** or its employees, agents or contractors.

I agree to be liable for and indemnify **Tour Guides Australia**, its employees, agents and contractors from and against all claims, actions, demands, liability, damages (including personal injury or death) and expense (including legal costs on an indemnity basis) with **Tour Guides Australia**, its employees, agents and contractors may sustain or incur, which may be brought or made by any person, arising out of or in connection with:

- a) Any wilful, unlawful or negligent act or omission by me;
- b) Any breach of any warranty, terms or condition of accreditation

NAME	
SIGNATURE	DATE

Appendix B - Tour Plan

Tour guide name	Tour date	Location	Start time	Finish time
Tour name & brief description				
Itinerary (content, objective, themes, major points you will cover)				
Group movement (eg. foot, vehicle)		Equipment, props, resources		
Handouts, loan equipment		Tourist nationalities/languages/age group		
Other information/notes				
Safety and risk management	Do you, or your employer, have a risk assessment for this tour?			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	Have you prepared risk, safety and security procedures for this tour?			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	Are you familiar with the condition of all facilities and equipment to be used for this tour?			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
	Do you have contingency plans in case of unusual events?			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Please Note. *Tour Guides Australia* does not assess, consider or approve the appropriateness of any risk assessments or safety procedures of the tour plan but merely ensures that applicants are aware of and have considered these issues when applying for accreditation. *Tour Guides Australia* accepts no liability in relation to the tour plan or its risk assessment, safety or security procedures.

Appendix C - Onsite Assessment Criteria

This document will be useful when preparing your tour plan. It is a general guideline of what you will be expected to cover during your one-hour assessment. This is the same document your assessor will be working with. Note - some of the suggested criteria may not apply to your specific tour.

Preparation – Does the guide have?	Evidence Guide
Equipment and props ready	ie. microphone, AV equipment, food/drink requirements, reference books
Access to a first aid kit	Appropriate to tour, stocked and nearby if not carried
Professional personal presentation	Professional, considers customer expectations, safe, hygienic, well dressed.
A tour plan	Written tour plan to be given to assessor before tour
Manifest/activity/numbers (pax)	Obtained as appropriate
Introduction – Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide
Gain the attention of the group	Appropriate and professional – consistent throughout tour
Use an effective introduction	Welcome, positive, tour length and route, intro to topic
Inform group of health and safety issues	Tour practicalities and personal requirements
Commentary & Interpretive Techniques Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide
Have a logical order/flow to commentary	In topics and theme/s and smooth flow between
Use current, accurate, relevant information	Relevant to topic and to group – consider group demographics, time management, depth of knowledge
Consider the sites cultural and social value	Cultural and social differences
Use effective themes	Appropriate to group
Hold the group's attention	Involve the entire group
Use props appropriately	To environment and group
Demonstrate effective body language	Confident, enthusiastic, positive and professional
Demonstrate effective use of voice	Variety in pitch, appropriate speed, tone of voice and projection
Use appropriate vocabulary	Not too technical, appropriate to group demographics
Use appropriate humour	Professional related information (rather than just jokes)
Maintain eye contact	Share attention equally with entire group
Encourage customer participation	In tour activities and use of senses
Remain flexible, seize opportunities	Incorporate customer knowledge and take advantage of chance experiences
Questions - encourage questions from group, answer questions appropriately	Ask if any questions, courteous and correct, repeats to group if appropriate and offers to provide answers later if needed

Customer Service & Communication Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide
Maintain friendly yet professional interactions	Between guide and group, positive and cooperative attitude
Use active listening	Acknowledge and respond to customer comments
Consider customer body language	Acknowledge and respond to individual and group
Recognise cultural and social differences	Consider customers communication skills, treat all with respect
Overcome language barriers if required	Use simple words and gestures, utilise bilingual assistance from within group for important info
Provide for special needs of customer	Identify, and consistently provide for reasonable requests
Meet visitor expectations	Identify and provide for customer needs
Action customer dissatisfaction	Identify and promptly action improvement measures
Have effective communication with colleagues	Polite, friendly and professional, in common English and industry terminology
Communicate effectively with service providers	Polite, timely & accurate. Forward tour/visitor confirmations
Group Management – Does the Guide..?	Evidence Guide
Lead and control group	Displays leadership, provides effective instructions, and encourages clarifications, leads group without being too far ahead or behind
Check group numbers	Consistently and accurately without being too obvious
Relay to the group the tour itinerary/schedule	Scheduled and updated if delayed
Respond to group/individual needs	Providing balanced and flexible service
Encourage group cohesion	Appropriate interaction, team building, ice breakers
Encourage minimal impact	On social, cultural and natural environments
Safety – Does the Guide ...?	Evidence Guide
Assess, reassess and action risks	Action risk management policy and unexpected situations on tour – to visitors, self and others
Show their duty of care at all times	Carrying first aid kit for walks, and consistently advising groups of health and safety issues
Follow health, safety and security procedures	As per instructions, or as deemed necessary when situations arise. Identify and rectify possible breaches & dangers
Ethics – Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide
Refrain from soliciting tips or kick backs	From tourists or service providers
Minimise negative impacts	From activity & self, on social, cultural & natural environments
Provide accurate and current information	In all communication – including additional tour services
Legal Issues – Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide

Provide all tour requirements	As per advertised activity and within specified timeframe
Have all permits and licence requirements	Acknowledge specific permit and licence requirements, carry required documentation
Conclusion – Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide
Wind the tour up effectively	Leave group feeling positive, thank group, recap highlights, appropriate on selling of products
Encourage questions and feedback	Utilise feedback forms or verbal feedback

Post tour – Does the Guide...?	Evidence Guide
Notify colleagues of return	In a timely manner, generally within 24 hrs
Follow up on unanswered questions	Research unanswered questions and notify customers
Return equipment	Clean and store, ready for next use
Complete required reporting & Invoice	Tour report, incident report, faulty equipment, OHS breaches
Conduct evaluations	Consider customer feedback and self evaluation for next tour

Appendix D - Self Assessment and Visitor Feedback

Your name, tour & tour date	
How many tourists did you have?	
How did your group respond to your commentary?	
What was the highlight of the tour?	
What interpretation worked well? Why?	
Was there any aspect of the tour that didn't work well? Why?	
How did you show care for the safety of the group?	
How did you show ethical behaviour?	
How could you improve your tour?	
Visitor feedback	

Appendix E - Applicant Feedback on Accreditation

Your name		Comments
Were you given appropriate and sufficient information about the accreditation process?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you able to access additional information easily?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Were queries dealt with promptly?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Was additional information helpful/useful?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Were you provided with assistance/support from the onsite assessor?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Was the onsite assessment conducted at a suitable and convenient location?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Was your onsite assessor friendly and helpful?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you think the onsite assessment process was fair and reasonable?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	
Additional feedback and comments		

Thank you for your feedback. **Please return this form within 7 days** to office@tga.org.au

Appendix F - Code of Conduct for Tour Guides

I promise to demonstrate the **Tour Guides Australia Code of Conduct for Tour Guides** in all my actions, and encourage its implementation across the industry through interactions with tourism businesses, organisations and other tour guides.

I agree to abide by the **Tour Guides Australia Code of Conduct for Tour Guides** and will:

1. Provide a professional service to visitors – ensure they are treated with respect, care and a commitment to best practice guiding.
2. Provide objective and fair interpretations of places visited. Make every effort to present true and accurate facts, ensuring that a clear distinction is made between stories, legends, traditions and opinions.
3. Act honestly, fairly and professionally in all dealings with those who engage my services and with all colleagues within the tourism industry.
4. Educate visitors on the need to be respectful of our precious natural, cultural and heritage environments, minimising our footprint and impacts at all times.
5. As a representative of Australia, I will welcome all visitors, and act in such a way as to bring credit to the country and to its promotion as a tourist destination.
6. Regularly update and upgrade my guiding skills and knowledge through training, professional development and networking activities.
7. Declare to customers any relevant personal commercial interests, including commissions. I agree to not engage in forced visitor purchases or soliciting of tips.
8. Be mindful at all times of my duty of care and other health and safety issues.
9. Provide all goods and services as is presented in the job brief, itinerary and promotional materials.
10. Abide by all national, state and territory legislation governing the operation and conduct of tours, tour operators and tour guides, including holding all relevant licences and certificates for the activities I undertake.
11. As a professional tour guide, I shall establish my own complaint handling procedures if I am an independent operator, or if not, be familiar with the complaints handling procedures of the organisation I am engaged by.
12. Inform my clients that TGA has a Guiding Standards Complaints process covering alleged breaches of the TGA Code of Conduct for Tour Guides.
13. Continually maintain a valid Level 2 certificate in First Aid (valid for 3 years) & CPR (valid for 12 months), as a prerequisite for tour guiding.
14. At all times that I operate as an independent contractor, I will hold a current **Certificate of Currency* for indemnity insurance to the value of \$10 million.

Name	
Signature	Date

Appendix H - References

Further information on tour plans and activity planning can be found in the following references:

Pastorelli, J. (2003) *An interpretive approach to tour guiding – enriching the experience*. NSW, Pearson Education Australia.

Department of Conservation Western Australia (2000). *Developing ecotours and other interpretive activity programs*. Gil Field and Lotte Lent, WA Department of Conservation Western Australia, Perth.

Crabtree, A. (2000). *Plan and develop interpretive activities*, Vic, South West Institute of TAFE.

Contact Us

Tour Guides Australia

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website www.tga.org.au