



# Guidelines for CPSS applicants

October 2023

*In mid-2023 significant changes were made to the CPSS application process that delivers an easier and fairer process. There is now a single accreditation pathway for CPSS and assessment is done by panel interview rather than by individual assessors.*

*The information in this document supports the application process for CPSS accreditation. It should be read in conjunction with the information and links provided on the CPSS page of the Soil Science Australia website.*

*If you are interested in applying for Contaminated Site Assessment and Management (CSAM) speciality accreditation, please email [accreditation@soilscienceaustralia.org.au](mailto:accreditation@soilscienceaustralia.org.au) for guidance.*

*Applications are confidential, and only assessors and members of the Accreditation Board having no conflict of interest can view an application. Assessors and members of the Accreditation Board are required to delete all documents received, so the only copy of materials kept are those held by Soil Science Australia.*

## Completing the form

### Part 1. Applicant details

In Part 1 you are asked to provide basic contact information including work contact details, where applicable, that will be used on the “Find a CPSS” webpage.

The email address you provide will be where you receive the form and interview details. We also ask you to upload a passport-style image of yourself and to provide a 150-word bio, that once you are accredited, can be used to promote your accreditation status in newsletters and on the SSA website.

### Part 2. Qualifications

Applicants will need to upload a certificate of successful completion of the Soil Science Australia Fundamentals Exam or provide university transcripts (AQF Level 7 or above) that show completion of four soil science subjects e.g. soil biology, soil physics, soil chemistry, pedology. It is helpful if applicants also list the subjects in the table provided.

If you do not have either of the above, you can still complete the form by showing your interest in sitting the Australian soils knowledge exam that will be available in early 2024.

The uploaded documents do not need to be certified, the desktop assessment, references and interview process are sufficient to validate qualifications.

#### **Soil Science Australia**

PO Box 15 BRAESIDE VIC 3195 ABN 96 080 783 106 Ph: 0476 450 321

Email: <mailto:office@soilscienceaustralia.org.au> Web: [www.soilscienceaustralia.org.au](http://www.soilscienceaustralia.org.au)

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### Part 3. Experience

For “Experience” we expect to receive an upload of a comprehensive CV that shows all your relevant educational qualifications and publications and demonstrates that you have at least 5 years soil-related experience and professional development over the last seven years showing:

- the name, location and contact details of the employing organisation
- the dates and duration of your employment in this appointment
- the title of the position you held
- your defined roles and responsibilities.

We recommend that you refer to the *Standards for Professional Soil Scientists* document found on the CPSS webpage when preparing your CV. For overseas applicants, at least three of the five years’ experience must have been worked in Australia.

Post-graduate degrees count for experience at 50% of the minimum time for the qualification to be completed. For example, six months of experience counts for a one-year Master’s Degree, 18 months counted for a three-year PhD.

If your employment situation precludes you from meeting any of the above requirements, you may seek consideration from the Accreditation Board using the online CPSS Consideration Form.

### Submit form

Once you submit the form, you will receive confirmation of receipt and it will undergo desktop review to check that all necessary documentation has been provided. It will also be checked for any omissions or anomalies. You may be contacted during this process for additional information or clarification.

If everything is in order, an interview will be arranged at a mutually agreed time. You will receive an invoice for the accreditation application fee to be paid before your interview. (Note that when you gain accreditation you will be asked to pay the difference between the accreditation application fee and annual CPSS fees).

If you have ticked the box showing that you are waiting to sit the new Australian soil knowledge test, this situation will be acknowledged, and your application will be considered pending until the test becomes available. No invoice for the accreditation fee will be issued until after test completion.

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## Assessing competence

Competence is assessed in four ways:

1. through desktop review;
2. referee reports;
3. evidence of English language competency; and
4. the assessment interview.

**Desktop review.** As above.

**References.** On the form you are asked to provide details of at least two professional referees, only one of whom may be from your current workplace, and none of whom should have a material interest in your accreditation or with whom you have a close relationship. Prior to submitting your application, please ensure your referees agree to act in this capacity. Referees are required to:

- be CPSS accredited or be working at the equivalent professional level of a CPSS
- be available for a telephone or online interview (no written report required).
- provide an objective evaluation of your skills and competencies as a Soil Scientist.

**English language competency.** CPSS accreditation requires fluency in written and spoken English. You can self-declare your language competency on the form if English is your first language; or you have a tertiary qualification from an Australian university; or you have worked in Australia (as detailed in your CV) and your employer has provided a statement that you are competent in English in the workplace.

If English is not your first language, and none of the above statements apply, then you must provide evidence that you have achieved sufficient English-language competency to enter Soil Science practice in Australia. You should provide a satisfactory IELTS (International English Language Testing System) assessment or equivalent.

**Assessment interview.** The panel of three people will contact your referees and revisit all your documentation before conducting a 45-minute online panel interview, date and time to be confirmed. The questions used will be based on the *Standards for Professionals in Soil Science (2019)*.

The panel will make a recommendation to the Accreditation Board to accept the applicant as a CPSS, or not. If not successful, you will be provided with feedback and can either re-apply or request a review.

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## Part 5. Code of ethics

You will declare that if successful, you will abide by the CPSS Code of Ethics that are provided in the application form.

## Part 6. Agreement and consent

At the end of the form you will be asked to consent to the following:

- I declare that all information I have submitted in this application is true and correct, and if admitted as an accredited Certified Professional Soil Scientist, I further:
- consent to Soil Science Australia disclosing that I am CPSS-accredited
- agree to be bound by, and conform to, the Rules and By-Laws of the Soil Science Australia
- agree to adhere to the Standards for Professionals in Soil Science, the CPSS Code of Ethics, and the CPSS Rules of Conduct
- agree to meet the requirements for Ongoing Professional Development required of a CPSS
- agree to furnish any other information the CPSS Board may request from me as part of my CPSS accreditation
- agree to use the CPSS post-nominal and the current year CPSS electronic seal only whilst I remain accredited.

At this stage you can submit the form.

You will be emailed a PDF version of the completed form for your records.

Please direct all enquiries about application to [accreditation@soilscienceaustralia.org.au](mailto:accreditation@soilscienceaustralia.org.au).

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