



## Frequently Asked Questions: AAQEP Initial Accreditation

### **Do all new AAQEP members start with the initial accreditation pathway?**

No. Providers who are new to the AAQEP system have a choice of two pathways based on the same standards. Members may opt to complete a Quality Assurance Report in application for 7-year accreditation status—the same process that applies for reaccreditation every 7 years. Members with new or newly revised programs, or those seeking an expedited transition from another accreditor, may choose to complete an Initial Accreditation Report in application for 5-year (nonrenewable) initial accreditation status before moving into the 7-year cycle.

### **What is the process for initial accreditation?**

AAQEP's initial accreditation review process is similar to that for 7-year accreditation. The chief differences are in the self-study report (Initial Accreditation Report; see [IAR guidelines](#)). In addition, the review team conducts a fully virtual review (including a virtual site visit), and an affirmative decision by the Accreditation Commission results in a maximum of 5-year rather than 7-year status.

### **Is initial accreditation status recognized in all states?**

Please check with your state program authorizer regarding the role of initial accreditation in your context. While AAQEP welcomes all eligible providers to pursue initial accreditation, states vary both in the role that accreditation generally plays with regard to state approval and in whether or not initial accreditation can fulfill that role. Some states also recognize initial accreditation status for a shorter term than the 5 years awarded by AAQEP.

### **What does the initial accreditation process cost?**

To participate in AAQEP's initial accreditation process, a provider must be a regular member in good standing, so annual membership dues must be paid. In addition, a one-time site visit fee must be paid (\$3,500 for visits through spring 2025) at least 6 months prior to the start of the visit.

### **How does 5-year initial accreditation relate to 7-year accreditation and reaccreditation?**

Initial accreditation status signals that a provider has a complete and functioning quality assurance system with measures in place to address the aspects of Standards 1 and 2. Initial accreditation status is nonrenewable, so a provider holding initial accreditation must complete a Quality Assurance Report and host a site visit before its term expiration to remain continuously accredited.

### What is the timeline for the initial accreditation process?

Providers seeking initial accreditation can expect to follow this general timeline:

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Anytime prior to submitting an Initial Accreditation Report	Join AAQEP as a regular member and indicate initial accreditation option
6-9 months before site visit	Pay site visit fee and return signed letter to formally schedule visit dates
6 months before site visit	Submit Initial Accreditation Report
1 month before site visit	Attend previsit meeting with the review team (virtual)
2-day site visit (fully virtual)	Host a virtual site, which includes arranging virtual interviews and meetings with a variety of internal and external stakeholders
2 to 4 months after site visit	Attend Accreditation Commission decision meeting (virtual)
Up to 5 years after site visit (for reaccreditation)	Complete a quality assurance review for 7-year accreditation before the expiration of any initial accreditation status received