



Standards & Application Packet

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Third Edition

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Introduction

The International Registry of Counsellor Education Programs (IRCEP) was created in 2009 to foster excellence in the education and training of professional counsellors worldwide. As an international quality assurance review process, IRCEP was purposefully designed to empower programs to develop counsellor training curricula appropriate to their country, regions, and/or culture, while simultaneously recognizing the broad tenets of education and training common to the practice of counselling regardless of practice location.

History

The International Registry of Counsellor Education Programs (IRCEP) was developed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) to respond to a growing request for an international recognition review process for counsellor education programs around the world. Recognizing that the CACREP accreditation standards were not easily applied to or even necessarily appropriate for use by counselling programs external to the US higher education system, the CACREP Board began examining ways it could foster quality assurance for the education and training of counsellors regardless of culture, country, region, work setting, or educational system.

The result of this examination was CACREP's decision, in 2008, to establish an international steering committee to assist in the creation of an international registry of programs. This committee was charged with developing registry standards that were culturally sensitive, rigorous, and flexible enough to be used by a variety of educational systems. The committee was further charged with developing the review processes that would be followed to determine a program's eligibility to seek and become IRCEP approved.

The members of the initial steering committee were selected to represent various regions of the world and included representation from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Oceania. In September 2009, this international group of counsellors met in Buenos Aires to finalize the standards and procedures to be implemented as the IRCEP application and approval process.

What is IRCEP's Purpose?

IRCEP's purposes are defined by the vision and mission statements developed by the IRCEP Steering Committee and approved by the CACREP Board of Directors. The core values define IRCEP's approach to accomplishing the mission.

Vision

IRCEP will promote the ongoing development and recognition of the counselling profession worldwide through the creation of a registry of approved counsellor education programs that use common professional requirements essential to the education and training of counsellors regardless of culture, country, region, work setting, or educational system.

Mission

In order to promote the development and recognition of the counselling profession worldwide, IRCEP's mission is to 1) develop standards that focus on common professional requirements for counsellor education and training programs, 2) approve programs that meet the IRCEP Standards, 3) maintain a registry of approved programs, and 4) create networks of counsellor educators, students, and practitioners to further develop and promote excellence in counsellor education and training.

Core Values

IRCEP values

- advancing quality assurance in counsellor education and training worldwide through the creation of standards that reflect the needs of diverse societies and cultures
- respecting the diversity of instructional approaches and strategies
- encouraging program improvement and best practices
- strengthening the public's understanding of counselling worldwide
- creating networks of counsellor educators, students and practitioners
- serving as leaders and advocates for the profession of counselling worldwide.

Benefits of IRCEP

A natural question asked by programs is “Why seek IRCEP approval for our counsellor training program?” There are several reasons why programs might seek to approval for being IRCEP approved, including the following:

1. IRCEP provides the program with an opportunity to measure itself against a set of internationally created standards for educating and training counsellors.
2. IRCEP’s application process includes an external review of the applicant program by an international group of counsellor educators.
3. Listing on the IRCEP Registry provides programs with a special and prestigious recognition.
4. IRCEP approval of programs assists the public in recognizing quality programs.
5. IRCEP registered programs may attract the attention of prospective students and may increase international student interest.
6. The IRCEP standards will encourage and build stronger professional counsellor identity within programs and their graduates.
7. IRCEP programs will be a part of a network of programs that can share information across borders and advance the knowledge base of the profession worldwide.
8. Graduating from an IRCEP approved program may facilitate students’ entry and mobility into advanced degree programs.

The Application Process

All application materials must be submitted *in English* on a disk or USB drive that is readable on all computer platforms. The disks should be clearly labeled to include the program's name, the date the disk/USB drive was created, and the disk content.

Please forward the disks to:

IRCEP
c/o the CACREP office
1001 North Fairfax Street, Suite 510
Alexandria, VA 22314

The non-refundable application fee of \$1,000 US must also be submitted at the time application is made to IRCEP. No application will be reviewed until the application fee is received. Please contact IRCEP at ircep@ircep.org for determining the best method of payment.

Completing the Application

There are two key sections of the IRCEP application.

1. Application Form: Programs must submit a completed copy of the application form that includes signatures of key representatives from the program.
2. IRCEP Standards: The IRCEP application process requires programs to respond to six (6) standards. For each standard, the program must submit a narrative description of how the standard is being met, along with supporting documentation that verifies the information included in the narrative description.

The Application Form

This form contains vital contact information about the program seeking IRCEP approval. The program contact information provided on this form will be listed on the IRCEP website.

In addition to program information, the application form requests the names of two expert consultants from the same region or country as the applicant program, but who are not affiliated with the program. These individuals should be knowledgeable about the educational system in the applicant program's region and may be contacted by IRCEP reviewers for information.

The signature page must be completed and signed by a program official who has authority to request the application review and can vouch that information contained in the application is accurate and verifiable. A copy of the application form can be found on page 17 of this application packet or on the IRCEP website at www.ircep.org

The IRCEP Requirements

As part of the application process, the counsellor education and training program must describe and document that the following *minimum* standards are met:

1. The program has a written mission statement, goals, curriculum, and criteria for student selection.
2. The program has a designated individual who is responsible for the oversight of courses offered.
3. The program employs counsellor educators and trainers and has other resources of appropriate quality and sufficiency to achieve its mission and goals.
4. The program has procedures for assessing students.
5. The program offers curricular experiences that broaden the knowledge base and skill development of all students in the program based on the following domains. These two domains are considered necessary to the training of competent counsellors regardless of culture, country, region, work setting, or educational system.
 - Domain A. Counselling Skills and Practice
 - Communication/Counselling Skills
 - Theories and Techniques
 - Human Development
 - Supervised Field Practice
 - Domain B. Understanding the Social Context and Norms of Working as a Counsellor
 - Ethical Principles
 - Societal Norms
 - Diversity and Differences
 - Professional Identity
 - Research and Assessment
6. The program can provide documentation of legitimacy to operate.

Guidelines for addressing each of the six (6) can be found on page 14 of this application packet or on the IRCEP website at www.ircep.org

The Review Process

The review process is designed to insure that multiple reviewers have examined the application for compliance with the requirements. One member of the IRCEP Steering Committee will be appointed to chair the review of each application. Once this assignment is made, the application materials will be made available to all members of the Committee to examine and discuss.

Application reviews are to be completed within six (6) weeks. At the end of this six week period, the review committee chair will collate all review comments, questions, concerns and recommendations for action. The committee chair will determine the appropriate next steps based on the feedback received from all reviewers. The committee chair may choose one of four options:

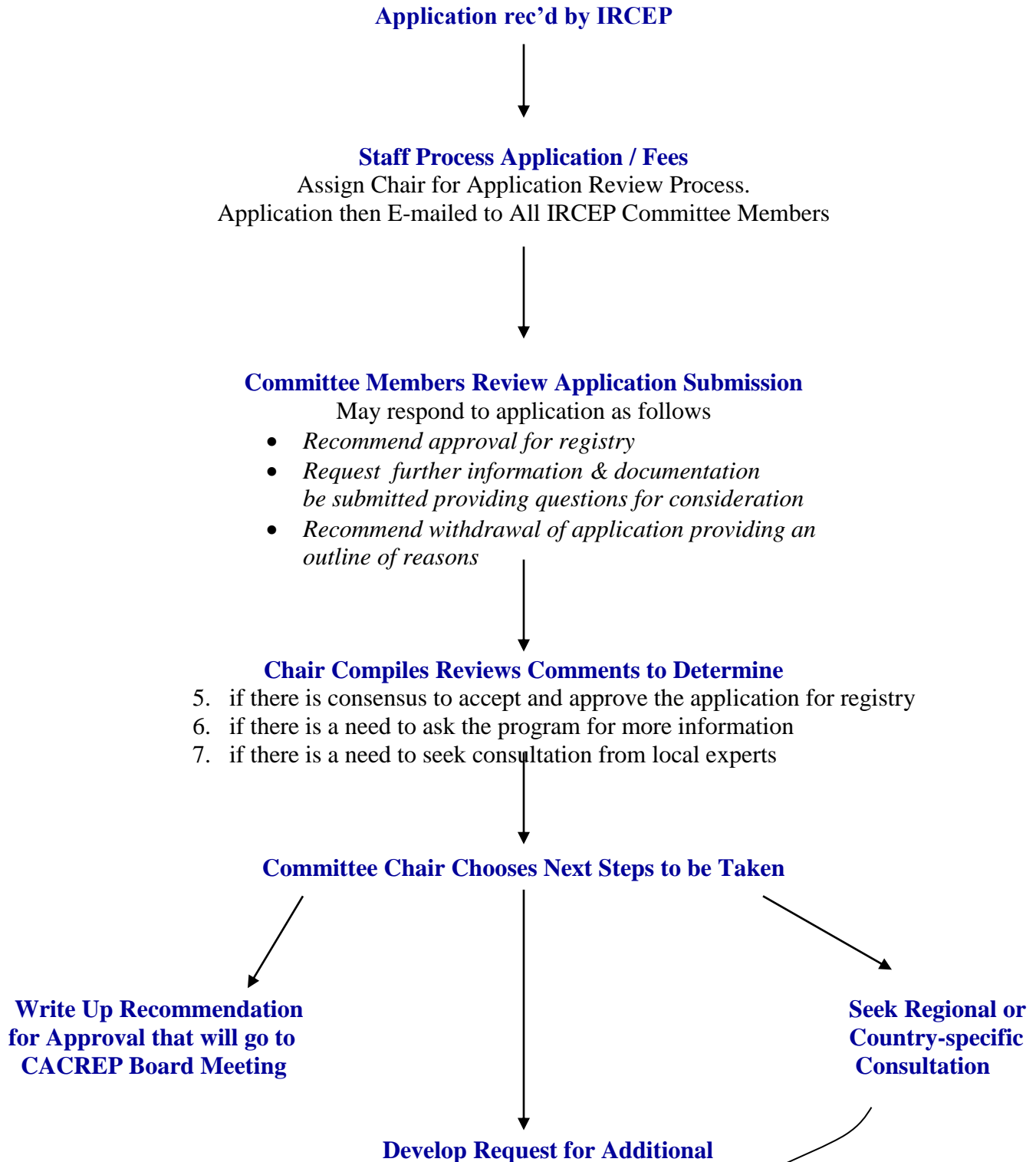
1. If there is consensus by the reviewers to accept and approve the application for registry, the chair may develop a recommendation that the program be approved by the CACREP Board for listing in the Registry.
2. If the reviewers have questions or concerns that may be clarified by submission of additional information and/or documentation, the chair may direct the IRCEP staff to contact the applicant program with a request for the additional information.
3. If the reviewers expressed concerns in understanding the context in which the program operates, the chair may determine that there is a need to seek consultation from the local experts identified on the application form.
4. If the reviewers believe that the applicant program insufficiently meets the IRCEP Requirements, the chair may direct staff to write to the program and ask if it desires to withdraw its application from further review. The written request will outline the areas found to be deficient in the application.

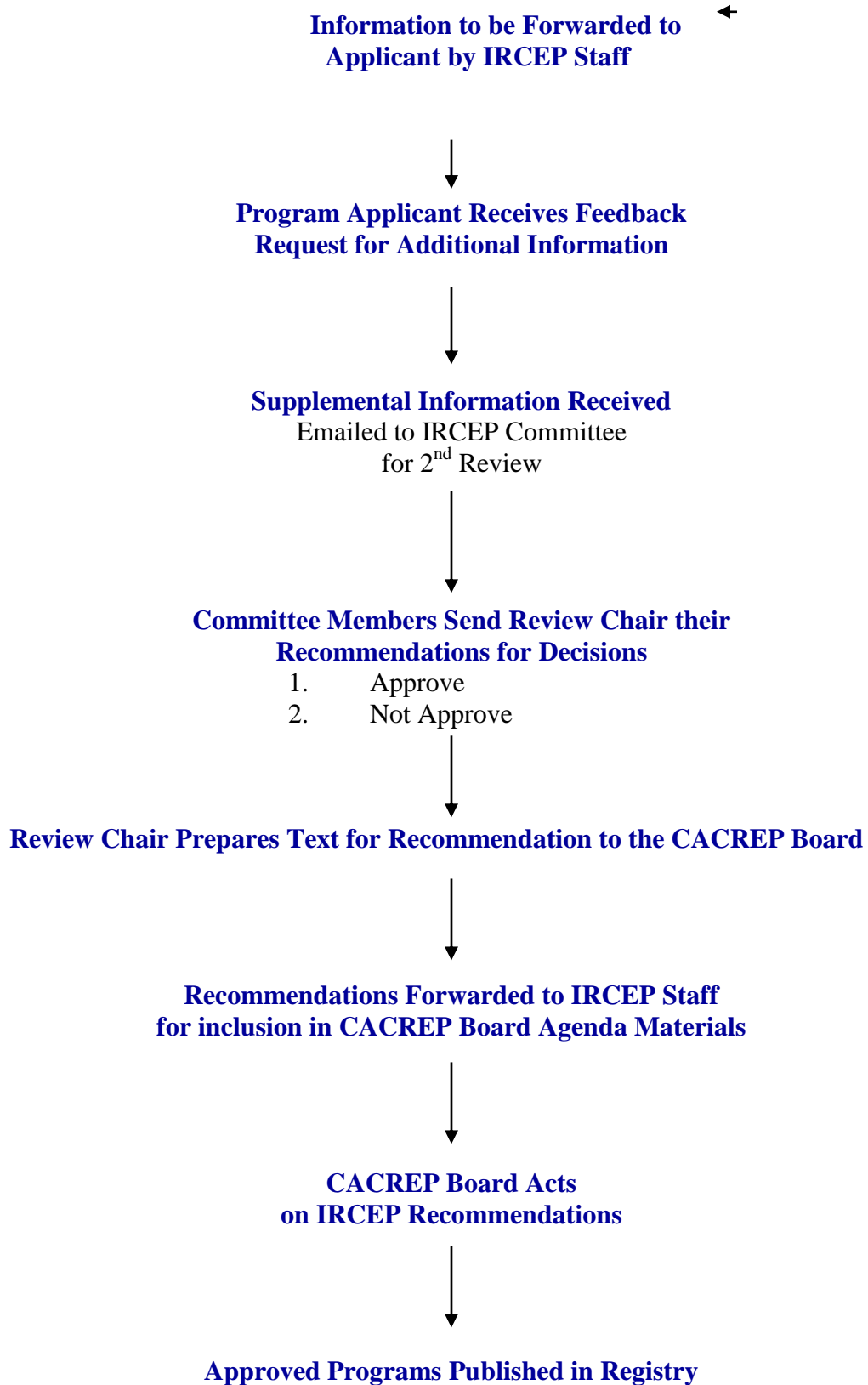
If a program chooses to continue in the process and supply additional information to address the concerns outlined from the initial review, the supplemental information must be submitted to IRCEP within 12 weeks of receipt of the request. Any and all information submitted by the program and/or expert local consultants to address and clarify the questions, concerns, or deficiencies will then be forwarded to the IRCEP Steering Committee for a second review. This 2nd review may take up to six weeks to complete.

At the conclusion of the 2nd review period, the review chair will determine if the program can be recommended for program approval and listing in the Registry. The program will then be notified that a recommendation will be forwarded to the CACREP Board for a final decision at its next meeting - either January or July. All decisions made by the CACREP Board will be final and applicant programs will be notified of the decision within one month following the conclusion of the CACREP Board meeting.

A step-by-step visual depiction of the review process follows:

Visual Outline of the IRCEP Application Review Process





Registry Decisions

Final registry decisions are made by the CACREP Board of Directors only after the review process has been complete and recommendations have been made by the IRCEP Steering Committee. Applicant programs have no status with IRCEP or CACREP until the review process is complete and a registry decision has been made. There will be no publication of information about programs that have submitted applications and are “in process.” Applicant programs may withdraw from the review process at any time prior to a final registry decision being made. The CACREP Board decisions are to approve or not approve. All Board decisions are final and are not subject to appeal. The final registry decision will be presented to the applicant program, in writing, within four (4) weeks following the Board’s decision-making meeting.

If a program’s application is approved, the approval is granted for a period of up to seven (7) years. Once approved, a program may state that it is “Approved by IRCEP, an international affiliate of CACREP.” All information supplied by the program in its application materials is considered part of the public domain unless otherwise requested by the program.

Only “approved” programs will be listed in the Registry of Approved Programs.

If a program is “not approved,” it will be notified, in writing, with an explanation of the reason. No public announcement about the decision will be made. If the program believes it can address the deficiencies, it will be welcome to reapply at the end of 12 months following receipt of the initial decision letter.

Maintaining Registry Approval

Registry approval is good for a period of up to seven (7) years. Once a program is approved for listing on the Registry, the program agrees to complete an Annual Program Progress Report and to pay a sustaining fee of \$200 USD by January 31st of each year. Failure to submit either the report and/or the annual fee will result in withdrawal of a program's registry listing.

If the Annual Program Progress Report indicates that the program is no longer meeting the IRCEP Standards, IRCEP maintains the right to require a full application review be conducted should the program wish to remain on the Registry. If a full review is required, the program will be assessed all applicable application fees to cover the cost of the additional review.

At the end of the 7-year period, registered programs will need to re-apply for the full review and approval process under the current IRCEP Standards.

THE IRCEP STANDARDS

Listed below are the six (6) IRCEP Standards. Under each standard is a description of information that should be included in the discussion of how a program meets the IRCEP Standards. In addition, suggestions for possible documentation are also included in the guidelines.

Standard I

The program has a written mission statement, goals, curriculum, and criteria for student selection.

Guidelines for Meeting Standard I

Please describe the mission and goals of the program, the required curriculum, and how students are selected for the program. In addition to the narrative description, please also provide links to an official website and/or a set of documents demonstrating that student, faculty, and the public have access to this information.

Standard II

The program has a designated individual responsible for the oversight of courses offered.

Guidelines for Meeting Standard II

Please provide the name, title, and contact information of the individual who is responsible for insuring that the program's curriculum is adequate and appropriately delivered to students. Please also provide links to any documents that support this individual's authority to coordinate the program (e.g., official position description, letter of appointment).

Standard III

The program employs counsellor educators and trainers and has other resources of appropriate quality and sufficiency to achieve its mission and goals.

Guidelines for Meeting Standard III

Please provide information on the number of individuals teaching in the program, along with information regarding their qualifications to teach in the program. Provide links to teacher resumes. Also, describe any other resources available to the program that assist in the education and training of counsellors (e.g., classrooms with recording facilities, partnerships with local schools, etc.).

Standard IV

The program has procedures for assessing students.

Guidelines for Meeting Standard IV

Describe how student learning and skill development is evaluated. Describe how the faculty and teachers determine that a student has the appropriate attitudes, skills, and knowledge to be a counsellor. Indicate what degrees and/or certificates are provided to students who successfully complete the counselling program.

Standard V

The program offers curricular experiences that broaden the knowledge base and skill development of all students in the program based on the following domains. These two domains are considered necessary to the training of competent counsellors regardless of culture, country, region, work setting, or educational system.

Domain A – Counselling Skills and Practice

- Communication/Counselling Skills
- Theories and Techniques
- Human Development
- Supervised Field Practice

Domain B – Understanding the Social Context and Norms of Working as a Counsellor

- Ethical Principles
- Societal Norms
- Diversity and Differences
- Professional Identity
- Research and Assessment

Guidelines for Meeting Standard V

Please describe where, how, and when students are provided with the knowledge and skills appropriate to each domain. Provide links to any documents that describe the curricular requirements or show how students progress through the program.

Standard VI

The program can provide documentation of legitimacy to operate.

Guidelines for Meeting Standard VI

Please provide information on requirements that must be met in your country, region and local area before an educational program can be offered to students. Describe any special permission or licenses that are required for operating the program. Please also provide a link to where these documents may be found.

IRCEP Application Form

Date of Application:

Name of Program:

Institutional Affiliation: (if applicable)

Complete Mailing Address:

Program Website:

Primary Program Contact Person:

Telephone: (include country codes and city codes needed for calls made from the US)

Fax:

E-Mail:

Skype Account: (if available)

Local Consultants:

Please also provide the names and contact information for two individuals that could be contacted for additional information about the educational system in your region or country. These persons should not be directly affiliated with your program, but should be aware that their names are being provided to IRCEP in case questions arise during the review of the application.

Contact Person #1: (name, position and title, work address, phone and email)

Contact Person #2: (name, position and title, work address, phone and email)

Required Signatures:

IRCEP requests the name, mailing address, emails, and signatures of those individuals responsible for the continued operation of the applicant programs. For example, these persons may be the President or CEO of the institution offering the counselling program or the Executive Director of the private training institute offering the counselling program. In addition, the contact information and signatures of any additional persons who should be contacted regarding the status of the application should be included.

Please note that by signing this application form, the persons attest to the accuracy of the information included in the application documents.

Signature #1: Include the required contact information in the space below

Signature #2: Include the required contact information in the space below

Signature #3: Include the required contact information in the space below

Please note that all information submitted to IRCEP for review will remain confidential until final registry decisions are rendered on this application. Once a program's application is approved for listing in the Registry, then the information will be made available to the public. If a program's application is not approved, no information will be made public. If an approved program desires its responses to the IRCEP Standards to remain confidential, a special letter outlining the reasons for this must accompany this application.

Summary of IRCEP Policies

1. All application materials are treated as confidential. No information will be released regarding the application status of a program during the review process.
2. No application will be reviewed until the nonrefundable application fee is received.
3. No application will be reviewed until the application fee has been received.
4. Applicant programs may withdraw from the review process at any time prior to a final registry decision being made.
5. Final registry decisions are made by the CACREP Board of Directors. One of two decisions can be made – 1) to approve, or 2) to not approve. These decisions are not subject to appeal.
6. Programs will be notified of their Registry decision within one month following the CACREP Board meeting. Notification of the decision can only be released by the IRCEP staff in an official letter to the program representatives listed on the application form.
7. Only decisions to approve are made public. No information is released about applicant programs not approved.
8. Programs that are not approved for the Registry may reapply one year following the date of their notification letter.
9. Only “approved” programs will be listed in the Registry of IRCEP Approved Programs.
10. Programs may be approved for a period up to seven (7) years.
11. Programs must submit annual sustaining fees and an annual progress report to maintain their approval status on the Registry.
12. Failure to submit any fees or reports may result in a withdrawal of a program’s registry listing.

IRCEP Fee Structure

As international quality assurance review process offered by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, IRCEP is solely supported by the fees paid by programs wishing to become registered as approved programs. Because IRCEP's review process must operate within the parameters of US non profit organization requirements, every effort is made to be fiscally responsible and to provide a responsive quality service to the educational programs that apply for the Registry. Fees may be adjusted from time to time to assure that a quality review process can be maintained. It is important to note, however, that none of the members of the IRCEP Steering Committee or the CACREP Board of Directors receive any monetary compensation for the service that they provide to IRCEP. They only receive reimbursement for the periodic meetings they attend.

The following fees apply to the IRCEP review and registry process:

Application Fee

The application fee must be paid when the application is submitted to IRCEP for review. If more than three (3) months lapses between receipt of the application fee and the arrival of the application documents, the program will be required to submit an additional application fee. No application will be reviewed until the application fee has been received.

Annual Sustaining Fee

The annual sustaining fee is due on January 31st of every year. Approved programs will receive an electronic invoice at least 3 months prior to the due date. Failure to pay this fee by the due date will result in the assessment of a late fee equal to ½ the cost of the original fee. Once a late fee is assessed, failure to pay the original fee and late fee by the date provided with the late fee notice will result in immediate withdrawal of the program's listing on the Registry.

Current Fees as of October 1, 2012

Application Fee	\$1,000 USD
Annual Sustaining Fee	\$ 200 USD