



# ACFEF-APPROVED PROGRAMS

## Rules and Guidelines



American Culinary Federation  
Education Foundation

Reviewed: Summer 2021



### Overview

The American Culinary Federation is the largest professional organization of chefs and cooks in the United States and is the culinary leader in offering educational resources, training, apprenticeship and programmatic accreditation.

ACF's Education Foundation (ACFEF) approved program status recognizes culinary- and hospitality-related programs that meet or exceed industry standards for education and training.

ACFEF-approved program status is defined and designed for educational schools, organizations or institutions offering certificate or training programs in areas including, but not limited to: culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, hospitality management, foodservice management, food photography and food styling.

ACFEF does not recommend any one program or course of study over another. ACFEF may promote education programs but does not endorse them as the sole recommended resource provider.

### Benefits

ACFEF-approved program recognition provides tremendous marketability and public trust of the program for the educational provider. As the culinary industry continues to thrive and educational offerings become more competitive, consumers are choosing institutions that have had a third party validation review.

The benefits of earning this recognition include:

- **Validate quality** that your program meets industry standards by verifying that:
  - Program instructors are qualified to teach assigned subjects and have demonstrated proficiency through work experience and/or post-secondary education.
  - Learning objectives are clearly defined through marketing materials, lesson plans and/or syllabi.
  - Proper sanitation rules are followed in all classroom and learning environments.
  - Adequate facilities are available to meet the outlined objectives of the program.
- **Enhance your brand value** by promoting your program with the ACFEF-approved program logo.
- **Increase visibility and attendance** by being listed on the ACF website.

### Criteria

- Ensure that program does not meet qualification requirements for ACFEF accreditation, apprenticeship or culinary fundamentals program.
- Program must be culinary-related, including, but not limited to: culinary arts, baking and pastry arts, hospitality management, foodservice management, food photography and food styling.
- Program instructors are qualified to teach assigned subjects and demonstrate proficiency through a series of job experiences and/or post-secondary education. Minimum qualifications:
  - Associate's degree in culinary arts or ACF-certified or certifiable at Chef de Cuisine® (CCC®) level (with at least 3 years of experience at the sous chef level, and has supervised a station in a foodservice operation).
- Learning objectives are clearly defined through marketing materials, lessons plans and/or syllabi.
- Proper sanitation rules are followed in all classroom and learning environments.
- Adequate facilities and space are available to meet the outlined objectives for the program.

### Application Process

1. Submit application with verification documentation and non-refundable application fee.
  - a. ACF professional development team will process the fee and send a confirmation receipt by email within five business days.

- b. ACF education taskforce will review complete application packages within 10 business days. Applicants will be notified of their status by email.
  2. Schedule a site visit to validate content provided in application.
    - a. ACF professional development team will schedule a site visit with eligible programs within 90 days of application approval.
    - b. Programs will receive an invoice within 10 business days after the site visit with an invoice for the evaluator expenses.
    - c. Invoices for evaluator expenses must be paid within 30 days. Recognition will not be granted until the invoice is paid.
  3. Receive recognition status.
    - a. ACF education taskforce will review the site visit report within 15 business days after the site visit.
      - If there are areas of discrepancy between the information provided in the application and the site visit report, recognition status will be denied.
      - If there are NO areas of discrepancy between the information provided in the application and the site visit report, recognition status will be granted.
    - b. Initial recognition is granted for three years.
    - c. Approved programs will:
      - Receive an ACFEF-approved program certificate
      - Receive an ACFEF-approved program logo to use per logo usage guidelines
      - Be listed on the ACF website as an ACFEF-approved program
  4. Maintain recognition status.
    - a. Annual reports and fees must be submitted for the program's ACFEF-approved program recognition to remain active.
    - b. The annual fee will be prorated for the initial year. An invoice will be sent once the program's status has been approved.
    - c. Invoices are sent annually in October and are due by 11/30 of the current year to be valid for the next year.
  5. Renew recognition status.
    - a. Initial recognition is for three years. Renewal recognition is five years.
    - b. Program must submit a renewal application with verification documents and non-refundable renewal application fee.
    - c. ACF professional development will schedule a site visit to validate the content provided in application.
      - Programs will receive an invoice within 10 business days after the site visit with an invoice for the evaluator expenses.
      - Invoices for evaluator expenses must be paid within 30 days. Recognition will not be granted until the invoice is paid.
    - d. ACF education taskforce will review the site visit report within 15 business days after the site visit.
      - If there are areas of discrepancy between the information provided in the application and the site visit report, recognition status will be denied.
      - If there are NO areas of discrepancy between the information provided in the application and the site visit report, recognition status will be granted.
    - e. Renewing programs will receive recognition status for five years.
      - Annual reports and fees must be submitted to maintain status.

### Program Recognition/Status

#### Temporary Status

A new program will be granted temporary status upon completion and acceptance by the ACF professional development team of all required application documents. Temporary status will be considered valid for a period of 90 days or completion of the initial site visit, response period, and review & ruling by the ACF education taskforce, whichever happens first.

#### Recognition Status

Recognition status shall be granted to those programs whose eligibility requirements submitted in their application has been verified with no areas of discrepancy by a site visit evaluation. Initial recognition is granted for three years. Renewal recognition is granted for five years.

If significant changes to the learning objectives or facilities are identified during the annual reports, the ACF professional development team reserves the right to request a site visit evaluation prior to the renewal date.

#### Recognition Suspended

Failure to meet any reporting deadlines or financial obligations or refusal of a program to respond to or cooperate with the ACF professional development team's request for a special visit or report may be grounds for suspension of recognition. Suspension will be for a specific period of time and recognition can be reinstated depending on the actions of the program and the decision of the ACF professional development team. No recognition action is considered to be final until after the program has availed itself of all due process of the Appeals Procedure.

#### Recognition Revoked

Recognition can be revoked if the program closes, no longer wishes to renew or does not respond to the conditions set forth in a suspension within a given time period. No recognition action is considered to be final until after the program has availed itself of all due process of the Appeals Procedures.

### Advertising of Recognition

Only after recognition is granted by the ACF professional development team may a program so denote its status in official publications or in advertising. It may be listed as "Recognized as an American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Approved Program." The ACFEF approved program logo may be used by a program on its publications or in advertising within the logo usage guidelines.

ACFEF does not recommend any one program or course of study over another. ACFEF may promote education programs but does not endorse them as the sole recommended resource provider.

### Annual Reports and Fees

All programs recognized with ACFEF-approved program status must file an annual report. Program contacts will receive notification, annual fee invoices and report documents prior to the due date. The purpose of this annual report is to keep the ACF professional development team apprised of any substantial changes which have occurred in the program. These include changes in primary contact information, learning objectives and instructors.

Failure to submit the annual report and fees within the deadline set will result in suspension of recognition. A penalty fee of \$250 will be assessed to a program submitting this report later than 30 days after the due date.

Annual fees will be prorated for the initial year. See the application for current fee schedule.

### Site Visits

The ACF professional development team will conduct, or appoint a team to conduct, required site visits. After the initial site visit, subsequent visits will be conducted within each program's recognition period. Certain conditions may necessitate additional evaluators and additional evaluation days. The requirements of each program will be assessed individually.

The evaluators will prepare a team report based on the site visit findings. The purpose of the site visit is to verify information provided during the application process, assess faculty qualifications, program facilities, instructional delivery

and overall sanitary practices through observation, as well as interviews with the program contact, faculty and program participants. For online programs, full access must be provided to the evaluator for a virtual site visit.

### Site Visit Fees

Required fees must be paid by the program and include initial/renewal application fees PLUS all transportation, lodging and meal expenses for evaluators. Evaluators will follow the ACF Travel Policy guidelines, and every effort will be made to keep these expenses to a minimum. An invoice will be sent to the program or corporate accounting office for payment within 30 days of the visit.

### Special Site Visits

The ACF professional development team reserves the right to require at any time special visits to or specific reports from a program. These shall be under cited conditions and within a time frame to be decided by the ACF professional development team. Refusal of a program to respond to or cooperate with such requests shall be grounds for suspension or revocation of its recognition. The program of which a special visit is required will be responsible for any expenses incurred by the visiting team. An invoice will be sent to the program or corporate accounting office for payment within 30 days of the visit.

### Continuing Education Hours

In an effort to consistently approve programs for continuing education hours (CEH), the following guidelines must be followed by programs seeking to offer ACF-approved CEHs to participants:

- 4-6 week program – 6 CEHs
- 3-month program – 10 CEHs
- 6-month program – 16 CEHs
- 12-month program – 25 CEHs
- Other – to be evaluated by the ACF professional development team

Upon completion of the program, students/participants should receive a certificate, letter or other documentation stating the program title, date, participant name and number of CEHs earned.

### Fees

Please view the current application or email [educate@acfcchefs.org](mailto:educate@acfcchefs.org) for fee schedule.



## Appeals Procedures

A program may petition for review of a decision by the ACF professional development team to suspend or revoke recognition on the grounds that: (1) the ACF education taskforce and / or the evaluation team failed to follow stated procedures; (2) the ACF education taskforce failed to consider all the evidence and documentation presented in favor of a program's application; (3) the ACF education taskforce acted erroneously by disregarding the policies and procedures for recognition; or (4) there was bias demonstrated by an ACF education taskforce or evaluation team member.

The program must notify the ACF director of partnerships and professional development, in writing, of its intention to petition for review of the decision no later than thirty (30) days from the date the program was notified of an adverse decision by the ACF professional development team. The petition must relate to one of the grounds cited above and justification must be provided for the request. All documentation supporting such a petition must be submitted to the ACF director of partnerships and professional development no later than sixty (60) days from the date the program was notified to the adverse decision.

A program has the opportunity to present its case, including new evidence, for review by an Appeals Board. The case will be reviewed by an Appeals Board chaired by the ACFEF education taskforce chair and the ACF director of partnerships and professional development. The Appeals Board will be activated once the ACF director of partnerships and professional development has received written notice of a program's intention to petition for review. The Chair of the Appeals Board will appoint two past taskforce members, known to have knowledge of and experience with the recognition of ACFEF-approved programs to serve on the Appeals Board. The Chair of the Appeals Board will call a meeting within ninety (90) days of receipt of the documentation for the filing program. The Appeals Board, subsequent to its hearing, will make a recommendation to the ACF professional development team.

The expenses related to a review by the Appeals Board shall be borne by the petitioning program if the final outcome is an unchanged decision by the ACF professional development team. If the outcome is changed, fifty (50) percent of the costs shall be borne by the ACF professional development team and fifty (50) percent by the petitioning program. The expenses will include travel and subsistence of the Appeals Board members participating in the review and other related costs. An appeals deposit of \$5,000 will be required prior to the hearing.

An appeal pursuant to this section shall be the sole and exclusive remedy of a program for challenging a decision of the ACF professional development team to suspend or revoke recognition. The action following the recommendation of the appeals board shall be final, conclusive and binding on all parties.



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