



**Accredited Best of Breed  
Penetration Tester**





## Background

On Tuesday 16th November 2021, at its AGM, CREST ANZ announced the launch of its new Accredited Best of Breed Penetration Tester (ABPT) program.

The CREST ANZ Board reviewed the spectrum of vendors and qualifications in the sector, and identified gaps in the penetration testing industry's approach to certification, namely:

1. Existing certifications vary significantly between vendors, across:
  - technology coverage
  - degree of difficulty
  - format and delivery mechanisms
  - quality of learning and testing
2. Existing certification processes and outputs do not provide any insights into:
  - professionalism
  - on-the-job performance competency
  - trustworthiness
3. Historically, there has been no mechanism to assess the competency of penetration testers who have:
  - not pursued technical certification
  - significant penetration testing experience, but no certifications.

This identification of these gaps, by the CREST ANZ Board, aligned to the 2020 National Cyber Security Strategy's call for a more holistic, multi-dimensional approach to accreditation; one based on skills, experience, qualifications, professionalism and trust.

Recommendation #49, extract from 2020 National Cyber Security Strategy ....

*"Consider creating an internationally aligned accreditation scheme to recognise the skills, experience and qualifications of cyber security professionals in both technical and management roles. This should include mapping the equivalency of existing qualifications."*

Accordingly, work began in 2020 to develop a multi-dimensional approach to accreditation which accredited individual penetration testers (employees and contractors) against Technical Competency, Professional Competency and Trust Standards that have been developed and defined by CREST ANZ members, and aligned to best practice exemplar programs across other industries.

### Technical Competency Assessment

- Technical examination | certifications based on
  - Theory
  - Practice
  - Both
- Certifications
- Other technical course completions

### Professionalism Competency Assessment

- Years experience in role and industry
- Psychometric assessment
- Employer reference checks
- Client reference checks
- Professionalism exhibited in Technical Competency Assessment Examination

### Trust Assessment

- Police check
- Internet | social media check
- Ethics test



## Accreditation Process

After completing an application, inclusive of supporting documentation, ABPT applicants are assessed according to three assessment dimensions:

### 1. Technical Competency, in which

- A history of certifications and courses completed is captured in the application process, reviewed, and verified by CREST ANZ personnel
- Commercial and industry experience is captured in the application process, reviewed, and used to further develop competency profiles
- The Technical Competency Assessment includes an Accreditation Assessment Panel examination with predetermined questions, a formal scoring mechanism, and time bracketed responses, and is supervised by CREST ANZ's CEO. The examination is conducted by a 2-5 member Accreditation Assessment Panel, which is underpinned by standards, processes and policies (Confidentiality and non-disclosure; Evidence based assessment; Autonomy and independence; Due process and equal opportunity; Appeals process).
- Technical areas examined include Web and API; Mobile app (native not API); Static code review; Infrastructure (internal); Network; Exploitation; Wireless; SCADA and OT; IoT; Cloud; Social engineering; and Red teaming.

### 2. Professional Competency, in which

- Years' experience in role and industry are evaluated
- A psychometric assessment is conducted
- Employer reference and client checks are used to add qualitative perspectives to the competency profile
- Applicant professionalism, exhibited in the Technical Competency Assessment Examination, is scored by the Accreditation Assessment Panel during the Technical Competency Assessment

### 3. Trust Standards, in which

- A valid national police check is captured in the application process, reviewed, and verified by CREST ANZ personnel
- Internet | social media checks are conducted
- Applicants sit a cyber ethics examination (currently in development).

Upon successful completion of the ABPT program, a comprehensive report is provided to the party that is responsible for the application (either individual or organisation).

ABPT accreditations are current and valid for 18 months from time of completion.



## Benefits

For individuals seeking accreditation, the benefits of participation include:

- A comprehensive, third-party validation of technical competencies, professionalism and trustworthiness
- An independent view of knowledge gaps and development opportunities
- Clear, data driven guidance regarding skill development.

For organisations seeking to have their employees and contractors accredited, the benefits include:

- Identification of skills gaps – individuals, teams, organisation – against rest of industry
- A data driven guide for skills development decisions and investments
- A more meaningful third party qualification for clients (government and enterprise) than single-dimension, technical certifications
- Differentiation across marketing, tenders, proposals
- Affordability, relative to single-dimension technical certifications.

## How to apply

If you are interested in applying to the Accredited Best of Breed Penetration Tester program, please download the application form from CREST ANZ's website, <https://www.crestaaustralia.org>.

## Fees

A fee of \$2500 (plus GST) applies to all ABPT applicants from CREST ANZ Approved Member Companies, and is payable upon submission of the application. A fee of \$3000 (plus GST) applies to ABPT applicants that are not employees or contractors from CREST ANZ Approved Member Companies.

A \$1000 (plus GST) accreditation update fee applies to all ABPT applicants from CREST ANZ Approved Member Companies, if existing ABPT accreditations are updated (to reflect new competencies) within the first 12 months of the accreditation period. A fee of \$1500 (plus GST) applies to ABPT applicants that are not employees or contractors from CREST ANZ Approved Member Companies, that seek to update their accreditation (to reflect new competencies) within the first 12 months of the accreditation period.

For further information, please contact CREST ANZ's CEO .... [click here](#) for contact details.





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