

ADP HANDBOOK

2026

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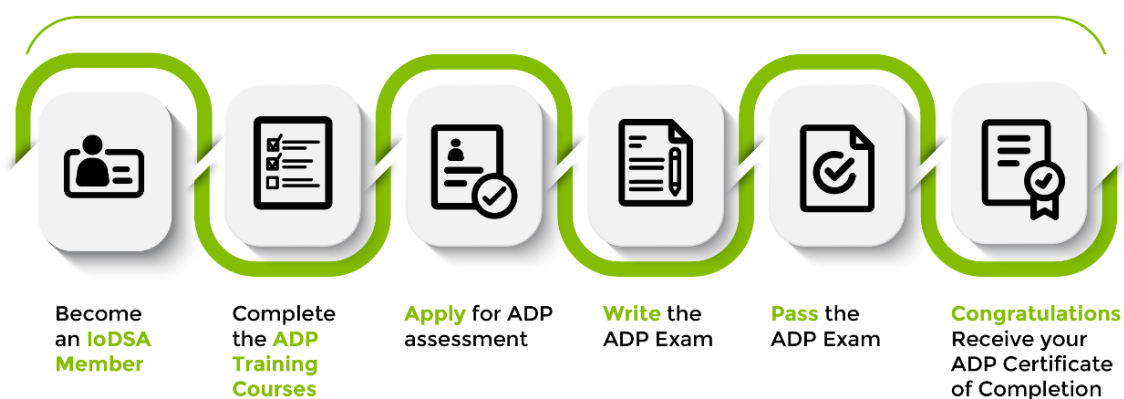
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1. Introduction

The Accelerated Director Programme (ADP) is a structured learning and assessment pathway designed for current and aspiring directors to develop and demonstrate their core governance knowledge. The programme also serves as a pathway toward Certified Director®, as successful completion of the ADP pathway forms part of the entry criteria for the designation.

For individuals who do not yet meet the Certified Director designation criteria, the ADP stands as a formal achievement, recognising commitment to governance learning and providing a platform for continued development within the IoDSA and director community. The ADP signals that an individual possesses the governance knowledge to contribute effectively to leadership and governing body roles, and to be considered for such opportunities.

Accelerated Director Programme Pathway



The ADP is regulated through the IoDSA Certification Policy and other policies. Prospective and current applicants are required to adequately familiarise themselves with the content and provisions of the regulations and policies below that govern IoDSA membership and the ADP:

- [Member Regulations](#)
- [Member Code of Professional Conduct](#)
- [Member Disciplinary Regulations](#)
- [Certification Policy](#)
- [Examination Policy](#)
- [Certification Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Certification Appeal Policy](#)

Definitions used throughout the Handbook are drawn from these relevant policies. Words in capitals are defined words in these relevant policies.

The purpose of this ADP Handbook is to provide a comprehensive guide to the processes relating to applying for and attaining the ADP Certificate of Completion. The Handbook is reviewed annually and

updated from time to time. It is the reader's responsibility to ensure that the latest version of the Handbook is consulted and utilised at all times.

Where relevant, links to forms and templates are provided throughout the Handbook.

The Accelerated Director Programme is administered by the IoDSA Certification team who can be contacted by emailing certification@iodsa.co.za or by calling 011 035 3000.

2. Value of the Accelerated Director Programme

The Accelerated Director Programme is both a recognised achievement and a progressive step in an individual's director development journey. It brings together a curated set of governance-focused learning modules and a central assessment to ensure participants develop and demonstrate a coherent, integrated understanding of director and board-level responsibilities. ADP focuses on assessing governance knowledge and providing a strong theoretical and conceptual framework for effective directorship. It is designed to support individuals at different stages of their governance journey – whether strengthening existing knowledge, transitioning into leadership/board roles or progressing toward the Certified Director designation.

The Accelerated Director Programme signals:

- **Knowledge:** demonstrated understanding of core governance principles, duties and decision-making frameworks expected in board and leadership contexts.
- **Readiness:** ability to engage meaningfully in governance discussions, interpret obligations and contribute constructively in board, committee and executive environments.
- **Credibility:** formal recognition that the individual has met a defined standard of knowledge through structured learning and assessment, which showcases their commitment to good governance practices.

Additionally, it enables governing bodies and organisations to take a more targeted and structured approach to talent development, broadening the pool of potential leadership and governing body members. The ADP also provides assurance of a shared governance foundation, allowing greater focus on company-specific induction, training and development.

3. Entry criteria

To be eligible to write the ADP exam, an Applicant must meet the following entry criteria¹ on application:

3.1. Be a Member in good standing of the IoDSA

A "Member in good standing" is a member that has *"met all the obligations of membership, is up to*

¹ The entry criteria are as per the Certification Policy, which is subject to change from time to time as such, applicants must ensure they consult with the latest version before applying.

date with the requisite membership subscription fees, any other fees due to the IoDSA and/or has no disciplinary process(es) in progress”.



Timelines: If you are not currently an active IoDSA Member, you will not be able to access the online ADP application form, so please ensure you apply for IoDSA membership well in advance to allow sufficient time for member application processing and approval. Member applications take approximately 2 weeks; however, this timeframe may vary depending on volumes at the time, information required from applicants to assess eligibility and payment of membership fees.

[Click here](#) to view information on IoDSA membership or complete the [membership enquiry form](#) for one of our Member Services and Experience Coordinators to contact you.

3.2. Complete the IoDSA ADP Training Courses

An Applicant must complete the ADP pathway training courses before registering and writing the ADP exam. These courses include:

- [Being a Director Part 1](#): Introduction to Corporate Governance, Ethical Leadership and Governance Role-Players
- [Being a Director Part 2](#): The Governing Body's Role in Ethics, Strategy, Performance and Reporting
- [Being a Director Part 3](#): The Governing Body's Role in Risk, Compliance, Data, Information & Technology and Assurance
- [Being a Director Part 4](#): The Governing Body's Role in Its Structure, Composition, Evaluation and Delegation
- [Financial Insights for Non-Financial Directors](#)



Timelines: Individuals can complete the individual training courses at any time according to their schedule and available public training dates. It is, however, recommended to complete the training within close proximity of each other and to write the ADP exam as soon as possible thereafter, whilst the training and information are still fresh. Individuals who have completed the training under a different governance code or longer than 5 years ago may require a refresher course (which will be enforced should they fail the ADP exam 4 times). [View the training calendar](#) for dates and bookings. For a condensed and cost-effective option, individuals may choose to book courses as a package. Please email training@iodsa.co.za for more information.

Group booking options are available through our [Customised Board Development Programmes](#).



Fees

View [Annexure 1](#) for details on the current fees per training course. Note: these fees are the applicable discounted member rates and while non-members may still register and complete the training courses (at non-member rates) we recommend taking up membership from the start to enjoy member discounts, avoid delays in applications and to ensure that you are kept updated on the latest governance updates and certification news.



Supporting evidence: [Training Confirmation Letter](#) to be obtained from the Individual Director Development Department once all training courses have been completed.

4. Step-by-Step Process

The IoDSA follows a three-step process for awarding the ADP Certificate of Completion: **Application**, **Assessment** and **Award**. For a broader overview of the various timelines and approximate costs please refer to [Annexure 1: ADP Pathway, Timelines and Fees Summary](#).

4.1. Step 1 – Application

Individuals must apply to write the ADP exam, allowing the IoDSA to evaluate and verify that they meet the eligibility requirements prior to granting them entry to the assessment. Applicants must sign in to their member profile and complete the online application form which includes the submission of the following **supporting documents**:



- Certified copy of ID
- [Training Confirmation Letter](#) reflecting completion of the pre-requisite ADP training courses



Fees

The application and assessment fee for the ADP Exam is **R2 530 incl. VAT** (R2 200 excl. VAT) and includes one (1) rewrite attempt. This fee is payable in full on application. (Note: Applicants will not be given access to the ADP Exam until the associated fee is received in full)



Application dates

Applications will open later in 2026. [Click here](#) to receive priority notification.

In the interim, interested individuals are encouraged to complete the pre-requisite courses.

4.2. Step 2 - Assessment

The assessment component of the Accelerated Director Programme is the ADP exam - an online multiple-choice question exam that is available on demand and can be done at any time during the year. After an application is approved and proof of payment for the prescribed fee is received, registration for the ADP exam will be confirmed by email together with the assessment link. Applicants will have 30 calendar days in which to complete their exam. This includes one rewrite attempt.

The ADP exam tests knowledge and understanding of the content covered in the above ADP training courses and reference material and a pass mark of 70% is required to achieve the Certificate of Completion. The ADP exam consists of 60 multiple-choice questions (MCQs) and must be completed within a set 90-minute time limit. **Note:** *These exam details are subject to change and will be confirmed closer to the application opening date.*

Please refer to the [Certification Examination Policy](#) to view the rules and procedures governing the ADP exam, pass marks and assessment process. Candidates must submit an exam rules declaration when undertaking the exam to confirm their understanding of the rules.



Please note: Candidates will receive notification of results immediately after completion of their exam. Results are reported as a Pass or Fail.

4.3. Step 3 – Award of the ADP Certificate of Completion

Following the completion of the exam and achievement of a Pass mark of at least 70%, members are automatically issued with their Certificate of Completion.

The ADP Certificate of Completion remains valid indefinitely and is recognised as an achievement of having demonstrated core governance knowledge acquired through training and assessment.

5. Appeals

Applicants may appeal the outcome of each component of the application and assessment process. Appeals must be submitted in the prescribed form and timeframe, and are subject to the provisions of the [IoDSA Appeal Policy](#).



Fees

The appeal fee for the ADP Exam is **R575 incl. VAT** (R500 excl. VAT). In the event of a successful appeal decision 50% of the appeal fee will be refunded to the candidate.



ADP Exam appeals involve an administrative review to confirm correct scoring and procedural compliance and does not provide for re-marking or subjective re-evaluation as questions are objectively scored multiple choice items.

6. Progression to the Certified Director® designation

The ADP forms part of the entry criteria for the Certified Director designation. To be eligible to write the Certified Director exam, an Applicant must:

- Be an IoDSA Member in good standing
- Hold an NQF Level 7 SAQA-registered qualification (i.e. a Bachelor's degree). (Foreign qualifications must be verified by SAQA prior to applying for the designation. Candidates may qualify for recognition of prior learning in accordance with the [IoDSA RPL Policy](#))
- Be, or have been within the last 5 years, an Executive Manager or Director
- Have completed the Accelerated Director Programme (ADP)
- Not have anything in their past or present that will put the IoDSA or the designation into disrepute

***ADP Transitional Arrangement (Valid for 2026 only)**

The Accelerated Director Programme (ADP) enables progression towards the Certified Director designation, and forms part of its entry criteria. As part of the transition to this new ADP requirement, individuals who have completed the current Certified Director training pathway and have received their [Training Confirmation Letter](#) for the associated courses, namely:

- Being a Director Part 1 – 4,
- Being a Director Part 5 (Board Simulation),
- Governance of Ethics, and
- Financial Insights for Non-Financial Director

will be **exempt** from the ADP exam entry requirement, provided they apply to write the Certified Director exam by 8 July 2026. (**Note:** Applicants are still required to meet the remaining Certified Director entry criteria as outlined above in order to register for the exam.)

After 8 July 2026, applicants will be required to complete the new ADP pathway and receive the ADP Certificate of Completion before applying for the designation.

[Click here](#) to view more information about the Certified Director designation.

Annexure 1: ADP Pathway, Timelines and Fees Summary

The time and cost required to attain the Accelerated Director Programme (ADP) Certificate of Completion varies depending on each applicant's entry pathway, individual progress and assessment dates and is subject to the current eligibility criteria and requirements at the time of application. Refer to the [ADP Handbook](#) and applicable policies for full details. *Fees are based on member rates and are subject to change.

Steps in the ADP Pathway	Timeline	Estimated Fees (incl. VAT)
Step 1	<p>IoDSA Membership If not already an IoDSA Member, apply to become an IoDSA member in order to proceed</p>	<p>Processing time is approximately 7 – 10 working days</p> <p>R4 393.00 (per annum)</p>
Step 2	<p>ADP Training Being a Director Part 1 Being a Director Part 2 Being a Director Part 3 Being a Director Part 4 Financial Insights for Non-Financial Directors</p>	<p>Timelines to complete this training and assessment programme will vary between individuals. It could take an estimated time of 2 months to 1 year depending on completion of the training courses and the ADP Exam</p> <p>R30 145.00 (based on individual online courses, discounts available for package deals)</p>
Step 3	<p>ADP Exam Once a member has met the ADP entry criteria, they may apply to write the ADP Exam</p>	<p>Applications: Can be made at any time as this is an on-demand online exam. Individuals must however complete the exam within 30 days. This includes 1 rewrite attempt, if needed.</p> <p>Processing times are dependent of verifications required.</p> <p>This is a 90-minute, online multiple-choice (MCQ) exam. Outcome of exam results will be provided upon completion of the exam.</p> <p>R 2 530.00 (includes 1 free rewrite)</p>
Total Investment Cost		R37 068.00