Pre-Service Evaluation

Increasing the speed and efficiency at which research and education institutions can adopt **cloud services** has been a primary goal of the **Internet2 NET+ initiative** from its inception. The universities that designed NET+ in 2012 developed a comprehensive pre-vetting process for the important aspects of a cloud service through the NET+ **Service Evaluation process**, which is led by several representative member institutions. This process includes negotiation of the legal terms and conditions, connecting to the **Internet2 Network**, implementing **Shibboleth** authentication via the **InCommon Federation**, completing the **Higher Education Community Vendor Assessment Toolkit** (HECVAT) for security, and forming a Service Advisory Board. Universities have found a high degree of variations among service providers in their ability to execute on these items quickly – some are highly attuned to the needs of our community and come into the process meeting most of the requirements, while others take a bit more collaborative effort to get there.

For campuses eager to deploy a cloud service, the breadth of a NET+ Service Evaluation can be an impediment to swift deployment as well. For providers that are already well positioned to fulfill community requirements, it doesn't make sense to delay campuses signing up for their service. In response to this, Internet2 NET+ has created the **Pre-Service Evaluation Program**. This process aims to provide a streamlined approach to service development and deployment. Through NET+ Pre-Service Evaluation, providers that have a community sponsor and are willing to agree to all NET+ community terms and conditions can jump directly to the NET+ Early Adopter phase, concurrent to executing on their commitments. Specifically, these are the commitments a service provider must make to participate in NET+ Pre-Service Evaluation:

- **Legal and Contractual:** Agree to the higher education community contract terms and conditions with minimal or no negotiation
- **Network:** Agree to connect to the Internet2 Network, if they are not already connected (providers hosted on a NET+ cloud infrastructure platform such as Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure will be connected already). Timeline: within six (6) months of the contract effective date
- **Federated Identity:** Adopt Shibboleth/SAML2.0 if they have not already implemented it. Timeline: within six (6) months of the contract effective date
- **Security:** Complete the HECVAT for security before enrolling Qualified Persons for the service and no later than thirty (30) days from the contract effective date.
- **NET+ Service Evaluation:** Commit to initiate a formal service evaluation within 6 months or when a sufficient number of campuses have subscribed to the service - to provide community vetting for the functional, technical, business, security, and accessibility aspects of the service. Timeline: complete the service evaluation within two (2) years of the contract effective date
- **Ongoing Community Relationship:** Establish a Service Advisory Group within six (6) months and meet regularly with those campuses that commit to participating in the Advisory Group.

Ultimately, providers leveraging the NET+ Pre-Service Evaluation program must fulfill all of the same community requirements as a provider in the standard NET+ Service Evaluation process, but universities can sign up for the services more quickly. The term for the Pre-Service Evaluation program is 24 months. If a service provider is not able to fulfill the NET+ Pre-Service Evaluation commitments, by mutual agreement, the service will be discontinued until such time that those requirements can be met. During the full service evaluation, if the service validating universities uncover changes that need to be made for the service to be viable, the provider is committed to making those changes.