



HEALTH
PROFESSIONS
ACCREDITATION
**COLLABORATIVE
FORUM**

Australia's accreditation authorities
for regulated health professionals

Accreditation Managers Sub-Committee

Accreditation monitoring framework

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to

- provide clarity on the use of monitoring by Accreditation Authorities in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS),
- outline how monitoring is used in accreditation activities, and
- provide an overview of the range of monitoring activities used by Accreditation Authorities in the NRAS.

Introduction

The Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum (the Forum) is a coalition of the accreditation authorities appointed to undertake the accreditation functions under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (the National Law).

Programs of study, and the education providers which deliver the programs must be accredited by the relevant accreditation authority for the health profession and subsequently approved by the relevant National Board to enable graduates to apply for registration.

Accreditation Authorities are mindful of the role of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA), their standards and processes to address compliance and quality assurance for higher education providers, and their role in applying conditions on programs. We aim to collaborate with TEQSA and ASQA respecting our differing roles in accreditation for the provider and accreditation for the program of study.

In line with the National Law, an Accreditation Authority may grant accreditation if it is satisfied a program of study, and the education provider that provides this program, meet the approved accreditation standards. An accreditation authority may also grant accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied the program of study and the education provider substantially meet approved accreditation standards, and the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure the program meets the accreditation standards within a reasonable time.

When applying accreditation conditions, the Accreditation Authority will indicate the reporting requirements relevant to addressing the condition. The use of conditions is described in this document prepared by the Accreditation Managers sub-committee in November 2020.

Accreditation Authorities are also required to monitor programs of study and education providers. In relation to monitoring the National Law states at Section 50, Division 50 (1):

The accreditation authority that accredited an approved program of study must monitor the program and the education provider that provides the program to ensure the authority continues to be satisfied that program and provider meet an approved accreditation standard for the health profession.

To enable the ongoing monitoring of all accredited programs, Accreditation Authorities undertake a range of routine, targeted or occasional monitoring activities which are distinct from conditions, although conditions may be imposed as a result of monitoring.

Monitoring as a quality improvement strategy

The accreditation assessment and monitoring activities contribute to the ongoing quality assurance of a program of study. Aside from providing assurance to stakeholders that accreditation standards are being met, monitoring processes and activities ensure ongoing review of programs and where required drive improvements to programs of education.

Monitoring as a risk management strategy

Monitoring processes and activities assist accreditation authorities to identify, mitigate and manage risk, while ensuring that regulatory responses are in proportion to identified level of risks.

Accreditation authorities monitoring activities, and response to any reports provided are congruent with the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS) regulatory principle 4 which is outlined below.

In all our work we:

- a. identify the risks that we need to respond to*
- b. assess the likelihood and possible consequences of the risks*
- c. respond in ways that are culturally safe, proportionate, consistent with community expectations and manage risks so we can adequately protect the public, and*
- d. take timely and necessary action under the National Law.*

Source: www.ahpra.gov.au/about-ahpra/what-we-do/regulatory-principles.aspx

Potential monitoring activities

Monitoring activities will vary between Accreditation Authorities to accommodate the needs and context of each profession. Monitoring activities may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Program Monitoring Reports (including annual reports)
2. Review of material changes to the program
3. Stakeholder engagement
4. Education data
5. Graduate data
6. Website and publication monitoring
7. Monitoring examination
8. Targeted monitoring review
9. Thematic reviews

1. Program monitoring reports

Frequency: As requested, often annually

Reports completed by education providers to assist the Accreditation Authority to track the required changes and any developments in accredited programs for assurance of continued compliance with the Accreditation Standards.

All Accreditation Authorities require some form of regular monitoring report, with many requiring these reports annually.

Also known as Annual Report/Annual Monitoring Report/Progress Report/Monitoring Report/Annual Declaration. These reports are usually required to be submitted using the Accreditation Authority's pro-forma.

2. Review of material changes

Frequency: As reported

Material changes are those that will or may significantly affect the way the education provider meets the requirements of the Accreditation Standard.

An education provider must notify the Accreditation Authority in writing of a material change to any part of an accredited program relevant to the accreditation standards. This may include, for example, curriculum, staffing, staff to student ratio, clinical/practice education experiences, support for students, resources, leadership and governance changes. Planned changes should be reported to the Accreditation Authority in advance of its occurrence, and in sufficient time to enable an assessment against the accreditation standards. Education providers may report material changes in scheduled monitoring reports or in a Notification of Material Change pro forma.

In monitoring these changes, the Accreditation Authority will determine if the extent and impact of these changes warrants a re-assessment of the accreditation status of a program. Re-assessment of the accreditation status may take the form of a paper-based/desk top evaluation, online meetings or a site-visit depending on the nature of the planned changes.

3. Stakeholder engagement

Frequency: Ongoing

Accreditation authorities liaise with a wide range of stakeholders including TEQSA, ASQA and other regulators, professional and representative bodies, other health professions and Accreditation Authorities in and outside the NRAS.

Information shared through the relationships with these stakeholders assists Accreditation Authorities to monitor the performance of education providers and programs. It also enables Accreditation Authorities to look for continual alignment of common activities such as monitoring to reduce the regulatory burden on programs.

Should the information obtained warrant further investigation, the provider involved is contacted formally. Where necessary, further monitoring of the program may be required.

4. Education data

Frequency: Periodic

Data from a range of external sources on Australian education programs. For example: Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) including Student Experience Survey (SES) data, TEQSA status, UCube and other higher education data. These are used to inform Accreditation Authority processes or prompt further investigations of programs.

5. Graduate data

Frequency: Periodic

Some accreditation authorities gather data directly from newly registered practitioners to obtain qualitative feedback regarding their education, clinical experience and other issues relevant to their education and training.

6. Website and publication monitoring

Frequency: Ongoing

By scanning relevant publications and websites, all providers of accredited programs are regularly monitored regarding recruitment, information to current and prospective students including about the accreditation status proposed changes, or new programs offered.

When education providers are accredited by more than one authority, Accreditation Authorities may also review accreditation reports published by other Authorities.

7. Monitoring and mandatory national examination

Frequency: as requested

Examinations are applied in different ways by Accreditation Authorities and may include:

- i) A voluntary monitoring examination for students in accredited programs. Those education providers who wish to do so may offer the examination to their final year students in their final year to provide benchmarking data.
- ii) A mandatory examination as a pathway to general registration. An Accreditation Authority may monitor the performance of programs in the Examinations as an indicator of whether the program continues to meet the Accreditation Standards.

8. Targeted Monitoring review

Frequency: As arises

Where the Accreditation Authority becomes aware of a matter that may pose a significant risk to a program's ability to meet the Accreditation Standards it may conduct an out-of-cycle monitoring review of a program. The review may be paper based, via a site visit or through combination of both.

9. Thematic review

Frequency: As arises

The Accreditation Authority may conduct a thematic review of an issue or a number of issues within the profession that are relevant to compliance with the accreditation standards and/or to the quality improvement of programs. Thematic reviews may be conducted with all providers or a subset of providers depending on the theme being reviewed.

Themes to be reviewed may be chosen from time to time based on significant matters brought to the Accreditation Authority's attention by key stakeholders; matters of significant public concern regarding the profession; or common issues that are revealed through an analysis of accreditation reports or decisions and which would benefit from further review.

For example, the accreditation authority may review strategies being used to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic or review strategies being used to prepare graduates for interprofessional collaborative practice to establish a benchmark of education provider activity.

Further Information

The above list of monitoring activities is provided for information. Contact your relevant Accreditation Authority if you wish to discuss their particular activities and approach to monitoring.

Acknowledgement

The Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum (the Forum) acknowledges the Australian Dental Council Ltd (ADC). The ADC's monitoring framework has provided the key content and structure for this document.