



# **Accreditation in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS):**

A snapshot 2023/24

# Introduction

**The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme** (the Scheme) was established by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) in July 2010.

The Scheme is multi-professional, regulating more than 870,000 health practitioners in 16 professions. The accreditation functions in the National Law include developing accreditation standards, accrediting programs of study against approved accreditation standards and assessing overseas-qualified practitioners.

**Accreditation** is integral to the Scheme as it is the key way to ensure that individuals seeking registration have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to safely and competently practise their profession in Australia.

**Snapshot of Accreditation** is a yearly summary of whole of scheme information about accreditation activities. This version is current at 30 June 2024.

## Contents

Introduction	2
Accreditation	3
Intersection between accreditation and registration functions	5
What's new in accreditation?	6
Accreditation activities 2023/24	7
Breakdown of accreditation activity data for 2023/24	8
Overseas qualified practitioner assessments	9
More information about accreditation	10

## Contact us

Please contact Ahpra on **1300 419 495** or visit our website **[www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)**

This document was prepared by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency in collaboration with National Boards and the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum.



HEALTH  
PROFESSIONS  
ACCREDITATION  
COLLABORATIVE  
FORUM

Australia's accreditation authorities  
for regulated health professionals



Ahpra  
& National  
Boards

# Accreditation

## What is it?

### Program Accreditation

Program accreditation is the process of assessing whether an educational program of study and the education provider that provides the program produce graduates who have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to safely and competently practise the profession in Australia.

### Practitioner Assessment

Practitioner assessment is the process of assessing whether an overseas-qualified practitioner has demonstrated the knowledge, clinical skills, and professional attributes to safely and competently practise the profession in Australia.

## Who performs accreditation?

Six accreditation committees and 10 accreditation councils perform [accreditation](#) in the National Scheme.<sup>1</sup>

### Accreditation Committees:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee
- Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee
- Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee
- Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee (Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives)
- Paramedicine Accreditation Committee
- Podiatry Accreditation Committee

### Accreditation Councils:

- Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia
- Australian Dental Council
- Australian Medical Council
- Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council
- Occupational Therapy Council of Australia
- Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand
- Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council
- Australian Pharmacy Council
- Australian Physiotherapy Council
- Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

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1 If the Accreditation Authority is an external council, the council works with the National Board to deliver specified accreditation functions under a formal agreement with Ahpra on the Board's behalf. If the Accreditation Authority is a committee, the committee works with the National Board according to the committee's terms of reference.

## Accreditation in the National Scheme: Who does what?



- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercises accreditation functions required by the National Board</li> <li>• Develops and reviews accreditation standards</li> <li>• Provides advice to National Board on accreditation matters</li> <li>• Assesses education providers/ programs of study against accreditation standards</li> <li>• Accredits programs of study</li> <li>• Monitors accredited programs</li> <li>• May assess overseas-qualified practitioners and/or accrediting and examining authorities to provide advice on practitioners' knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decides on its Accreditation Authority (council or committee)</li> <li>• Approves accreditation standards</li> <li>• Develops/reviews registration requirements and standards with wide public consultation</li> <li>• Considers advice from Accreditation Authority</li> <li>• Approves or refuses to approve an accredited program of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration</li> <li>• Uses assessment advice to determine whether overseas qualified practitioners are qualified for registration.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enters into contracts with accreditation councils</li> <li>• Establishes procedures for development/review of accreditation and registration standards</li> <li>• Provides support and advice to National Boards/Accreditation Committees in exercising their functions</li> <li>• Publishes up-to-date list of approved programs</li> <li>• Establishes/administers procedures for registration applications and other matters relating to health practitioner registration including overseas qualified practitioners.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|--|



### The Health Professions' Accreditation Collaborative Forum

The [Health Professions' Accreditation Collaborative Forum](#) (HPACF) is the coalition of entities appointed by the National Boards as Accreditation Authorities for the professions regulated under the National Law. The HPACF has since been meeting regularly since 2007, before the commencement of the Scheme. The HPACF considers matters of common interest, principally matters concerning the accreditation of education and training programs in the regulated health professions. The HPACF advocates for good accreditation practices. The HPACF engages with Ahpra and the National Boards, and publishes a [communique](#) after each meeting.



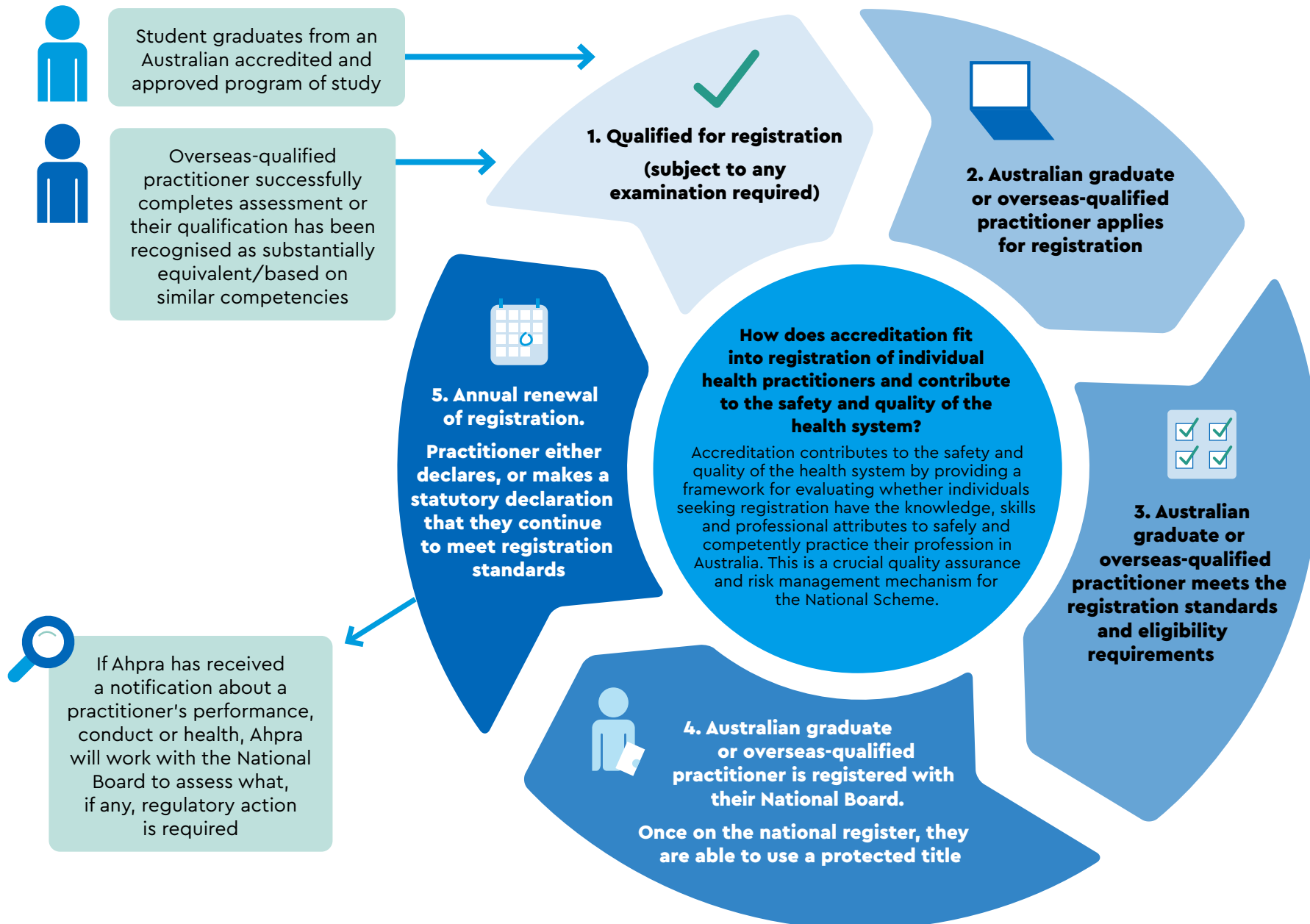
### Accreditation Committee

The Ahpra Board established the the independently-chaired Accreditation Committee (the committee) consistent with [Ministerial Council Policy Direction 2020-1- Independent Accreditation Committee](#) to provide independent and expert advice on accreditation reform and other National Scheme accreditation matters to National Scheme entities (National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and Ahpra).

The committee's published [work plans](#) reflect its main work deliverables. The Committee also publishes [communiques](#) following each meeting.

# Intersection between accreditation and registration functions

## Lifecycle of a health practitioner



# What's new in accreditation?

## Update on Accreditation Committee deliverables

In 2023/24 the Accreditation Committee (the committee) continued to progress multiple deliverables as part of its published [work plan](#).

The first two deliverables have been successfully published in 2023/24, with the [glossary of accreditation terms](#) in October 2023, and the [Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Statement of Intent](#) in March 2024.

The committee released public consultation proposals on two of its priorities – a proposed set of principles to strengthen the involvement of consumers in accreditation and draft guidance on embedding good practice in clinical placements, simulation-based learning and virtual care in initial student health practitioner education.

High levels of diverse consumer involvement in the design and delivery of healthcare can improve patient safety and care outcomes. Meaningful consumer involvement ensures that accreditation meets the needs of the community.

The draft guidance on embedding good practice in clinical placements, simulation-based learning and virtual care in initial student health practitioner education will help National Scheme entities, in particular National Boards and accreditation authorities, improve student education in these areas.

The committee anticipates both the proposed principles and draft guidance will be published in late 2024 and is also progressing work as part of its [2024/25 work plan](#).



## ABSTARR\* training update (HPACF)

The HPACF partnered with ABSTARR consulting to develop and implement assessor training on the Cultural Safety Curriculum for Accreditation Contributors. It is designed for health accreditation professionals so that accreditation assessors can appropriately assess whether health education programs are equipping graduates with these necessary skills and attributes.

A full roll out of the training commenced at the end of March 2024.

The HPACF will continue to fine tune the process as they move along with the implementation of the training.

\*ABSTARR Consulting offers cultural safety training with the vision of patient safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



## Annual Accreditation Meeting

The Inaugural NRAS Annual Accreditation Meeting was held on 1 May 2024 at the Sheraton Melbourne with almost 100 attendees from National Boards, Accreditation Authorities, Ahpra and other NRAS stakeholders in attendance. The meeting allowed for wide-ranging discussion on a variety of contemporary accreditation issues, brainstorming of possible solutions and fostered a strengthened sense of collaboration in addressing the issues discussed.

The day predominantly focused on discussions around three key topics – cultural safety and eliminating racism in healthcare, the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies on accreditation, and how training and education systems prepare the health workforce of the future. The final session of the day challenged attendees to discuss possible ways forward for the issues identified during discussions on these three topics.

## Update on the Kruk review

In December 2023, National Cabinet endorsed the 28 recommendations of the Independent review of Australia's regulatory settings relating to overseas health practitioners [final report](#), also known as the Kruk review.

Ahpra welcomed the findings of the review and will play a key role in addressing several of the recommendations. Ahpra and National Boards have commenced work on recommendations that are relevant to accreditation functions

## HPACF IPE project update (HPACF)

In 2022 the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum (HPACF) endorsed a project to gain a better understanding of collaborative practice from a range of stakeholders and inform strategies for delivery of Interprofessional Education (IPE). The project has now been handed over from the Australian Pharmacy Council to the Australian Medical Council and they are hoping to release the final report soon. The project seeks to develop guidance, to support education providers and accreditation authorities in enhancing the development of collaborative practitioners. More information about the project is available on the [HPACF's website](#).

## IPCP SOI Implementation Working Group

The [Interprofessional Collaborative Practice Statement of Intent](#) was published in March 2024. A working group has been established and are currently designing an implementation plan to define the key elements, expected outcomes and next steps to achieve the intent of the statement.

\* ABSTARR Consulting offers cultural safety training with the vision of patient safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

# Accreditation activities 2023/24

## Program accreditation activities

**66 new programs accredited**  
**114 programs re-accredited**  
**729 programs monitored**  
**126 site visits undertaken**



## Practitioner assessment activities

**38,312 overseas-qualified health practitioners assessed**



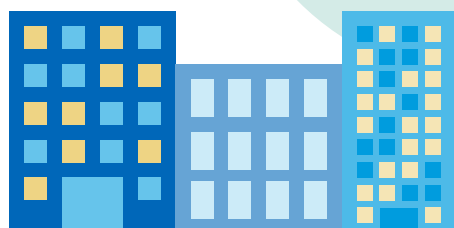
## Overall program accreditation at 30 June 2024

**800+ accredited programs**  
**130+ providers offering accredited programs**



## Accreditation standards

**3 new standards published in 2023/24**  
**3 standards currently under review**



## Links to new accreditation standards

[Pharmacist Prescriber Education Programs](#)

[Assessment and Accreditation of Cosmetic Surgery Programs of Study](#)

[Assessment and Accreditation of Primary Medical Programs](#)

Accreditation standards are used to assess whether a program of study, and the education provider that delivers the program of study, provides graduates of the program with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise the profession.

The current standards can be found on the [Ahpra website](#) under the relevant Boards accreditation section.

# Breakdown of accreditation activity data for 2023/24<sup>1</sup>

	Accreditation standards		Accreditation of programs of study and education providers				Accredited programs and providers		Assessment of overseas authorities	Assessment of overseas qualified health practitioners
	Number of accreditation standards developed in the relevant financial year	Number of accreditation standards reviewed in the relevant financial year	Number of new programs accredited in the relevant financial year	Number of programs re-accredited in the relevant financial year	Number of programs monitored in the relevant financial year	Number of site visits undertaken in the relevant financial year	Total number of accredited programs	Total number of providers offering accredited programs	Number of overseas authorities assessed in the relevant financial year	Number of overseas qualified health practitioners assessed in the relevant financial year
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee	0	0	0	3	14	1	14	14	N/A	N/A
Australian Dental Council	0	0	2	12	64	16	66	18	0	6,717
Australian Medical Council	0	1	0	32	34	9	117	42	0	8,722
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council	1	1	29	0	186	50	172	86	0	N/A
Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council	0	0	0	0	3	2	3	3	0	15
Australian Pharmacy Council	1	0	4	3	56	8	56	21	5	7,292
Australian Physiotherapy Council	0	0	6	6	42	10	54	29	N/A	2,731
Australian Psychology Accreditation Council	0	0	7	31	181	10	168	42	0	0
Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee	0	0	2	1	9	2	6	5	N/A	N/A
Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia	0	1	0	2	5	3	5	5	0	16
Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee	0	0	0	6	37	0	31	11	N/A	N/A
Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd	0	0	7	13	42	5	65	26	0	589
Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand	0	0	0	2	10	2	10	9	N/A	148
Paramedicine Accreditation Committee	0	0	7	0	24	6	24	18	N/A	N/A
Podiatry Accreditation Committee	0	0	2	3	19	2	17*	10	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> reflective of data provided by accreditation authorities for the 2023/24 financial year

\* includes two pod surgery programs accredited by the Committee



# Overseas qualified practitioner assessments



**Nine Accreditation Authorities assess overseas-qualified practitioners seeking registration in a registered health profession in Australia**

## **Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia**

16 assessment activities

## **Australian Dental Council**

6,717 assessment activities

## **Australian Medical Council**

8,722 assessment activities

## **Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee**

(Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives)<sup>1</sup>

12,082 assessment activities

## **Occupational Therapy Council of Australia**

589 assessment activities

## **Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand**

148 assessment activities

## **Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council**

15 assessment activities

## **Australian Pharmacy Council**

7,292 assessment activities

## **Australian Physiotherapy Council**

2,731 assessment activities

Overseas-qualified practitioners seeking registration in other registered health professions in Australia are assessed as part of the registration process.

<sup>1</sup> *Nursing and Midwifery Board has established a committee to oversee the assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives.*

## More information about accreditation

Each Accreditation Authority, the HPACF and Ahpra publishes information, including current accreditation standards and contact details on their websites:

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee

[www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/ATSIHP-Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/ATSIHP-Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

### Australian Dental Council

<https://adc.org.au/>

### Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)

[www.ahpra.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx)

### Ahpra's Independent Accreditation Committee

[www.ahpra.gov.au/About-Ahpra/Who-We-Are/Agency-Management-Committee/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/About-Ahpra/Who-We-Are/Agency-Management-Committee/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

### Australian Medical Council

[www.amc.org.au/](http://www.amc.org.au/)

### Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

[www.anmac.org.au](http://www.anmac.org.au)

### Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council

<https://osteopathiccouncil.org.au/>

### Australian Pharmacy Council

[www.pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au)

### Australian Physiotherapy Council

[www.physiocouncil.com.au](http://www.physiocouncil.com.au)

### Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

<https://apac.au/>

### Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee

[www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Committee.aspx](http://www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Committee.aspx)

### Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia

[www.ccea.com.au](http://www.ccea.com.au)

### Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum

<http://hpacf.org.au/>

### Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee

[www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

### Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee (Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives)

[www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Assessment-of-overseas-qualified-nurses-and-midwives.aspx](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Assessment-of-overseas-qualified-nurses-and-midwives.aspx)

### Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd

[www.otcouncil.com.au/](http://www.otcouncil.com.au/)

### Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand

[www.oanz.org](http://www.oanz.org)

### Paramedicine Accreditation Committee

[www.paramedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.paramedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

### Podiatry Accreditation Committee

[www.podiatryboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.podiatryboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)