Accreditation in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS):
A snapshot 2017/18
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 over 700,000 health practitioners across 15 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 practice 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 2018.

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Contact us

Please contact AHPRA on 1300 419 495 or visit our website 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.
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 practice 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 practice the profession in Australia.

There are 11 external accreditation entities and three accreditation committees exercising accreditation functions in the National Scheme (see: www.ahpra.gov.au/Education/Accreditation-Authorities):

Accreditation Committees:
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee
- Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee
- Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee

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

Accreditation in the National Scheme: Who does what?

Accreditation Authority
- Exercises accreditation functions required by the National Board
- Establishes procedures for development/review of accreditation and registration standards
- Provides advice to National Board on accreditation matters
- Assesses education providers/programs of study against accreditation standards
- Accredits programs of study
- Monitors accredited programs
- May assess overseas-qualified practitioners and/or accrediting and examining authorities to provide advice on practitioners’ knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes

National Board
- Decides on its accreditation authority (council or committee)
- Approves accreditation standards
- Develops/reviews registration requirements and standards with wide public consultation
- Considers advice from accreditation authority
- Approves or refuses to approve an accredited program of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration
- Uses assessment advice to determine whether overseas qualified practitioners are qualified for registration

AHPRA
- Enters into contracts with accreditation councils
- Establishes procedures for development/review of accreditation and registration standards
- Provides support and advice to National Boards/Accreditation Committees in exercising their functions
- Publishes up to date list of approved programs
- Establishes/administers procedures for registration applications and other matters relating to health practitioner registration including overseas qualified practitioners
Other bodies involved in accreditation

**Accreditation Liaison Group**
The National Boards, accreditation authorities and AHPRA have established an Accreditation Liaison Group (ALG) to facilitate effective delivery of accreditation within the National Scheme. The ALG is a committee of the Forum of NRAS Chairs and, as an advisory group, it provides an important mechanism to consider shared issues in accreditation across National Boards, accreditation authorities and AHPRA. The ALG has developed a number of reference documents to promote consistency and good practice in accreditation while taking into account the variation across entities. These documents have been approved by National Boards and Accreditation Authorities. Examples include the *Quality framework for the accreditation function*.

**The Health Professions’ Accreditation Collaborative Forum**
The Health Professions’ Accreditation Collaborative Forum (HPACF), formerly known as the Health Professions’ Accreditation Councils’ Forum, is the coalition of the entities appointed by the National Boards as accreditation authorities for the professions regulated under the National Law. The HPACF has been meeting regularly since 2007, prior to the commencement of the Scheme, to consider matters of common interest, principally matters concerning the accreditation of education and training programs in the regulated health professions and advocating for good accreditation practices. The HPACF engages with AHPRA and the National Boards.
Accreditation and the lifecycle of health practitioners

**Lifecycle of a health practitioner**

Student graduates from an Australian accredited and approved program of study

Qualification for registration (subject to any examination required)

Australian graduate or overseas-qualified practitioner applies for registration

Australian graduate or overseas-qualified practitioner meets the registration standards and eligibility requirements, including being qualified

Australian graduate or overseas-qualified practitioner is registered with their National Board. Once on the national register, they are able to use title

Annual renewal of registration. Practitioner provides statutory declaration that they continue to adhere to registration standards

If AHPRA has received a notification about a practitioner’s performance, conduct or health, AHPRA will work with the National Board to assess what regulatory action is required

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**How does accreditation fit into the lifecycle of a health practitioner and contribute to safety and quality of the health system?**

Accreditation contributes to the safety and quality of the health system by providing a framework for evaluating whether individuals seeking registration have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to safely and competently practice their profession in Australia. This is a crucial quality assurance and risk management mechanism for the National Scheme.
Accreditation activities 2017/18

**Program accreditation**
- 42 new programs accredited
- 137 programs re-accredited
- 359 programs monitored
- 46 site visits undertaken

**Practitioner assessment activities**
- Over 6,000 overseas-qualified health practitioners assessed
What’s new in accreditation

2018

161,114* registered students studying to be health practitioners through an accredited and approved program of study or clinical training program

Program assessment
6 new standards published in 2017/18
9 standards currently under review

Assessment of overseas qualified practitioners
Two accreditation authorities reviewing aspects of examinations

New accreditation standards: What are they?
Accreditation standards are used to assess whether a program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, provides graduates of the program with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise the profession

Links to new standards
Accreditation Standards for programs of study leading to endorsement of registration of medical practitioners for acupuncture (2017)
Accreditation Standards for Chiropractic Programs and Competency Standards for Graduating Chiropractors (2017)
Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards (2017)
Accreditation Standards and Evidence Guide for Programs of Study in Ocular Therapeutics (effective 1 January 2018)
Accreditation Standards for Psychology Programs (effective 1 January 2019)

*students in pre-registration programs
Student registrations

A breakdown by profession at 30 June 2018

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice
  490 registered students
- Chinese medicine
  1,220 registered students
- Chiropractic
  2,209 registered students
- Dental
  4,832 registered students
- Medical
  19,111 registered students
- Medical radiation practice
  4,424 registered students
- Nursing
  97,361 registered students
- Midwifery
  3,495 registered students
- Occupational therapy
  8,079 registered students
- Optometry
  1,936 registered students
- Osteopathy
  1,456 registered students
- Pharmacy
  6,687 registered students
- Physiotherapy
  8,472 registered students
- Podiatry
  1,482 registered students
Overseas qualified practitioner assessments

9 accreditation authorities assess overseas-qualified practitioners seeking registration in a registered health profession in Australia

- Council of Chiropractic Education Australasia
- Australian Dental Council
- Australian Medical Council
- Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd
- Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand
- Australasian Osteopathic Accreditation Council
- Australian Pharmacy Council
- Australian Physiotherapy Council
- Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council
Further details about work in accreditation

Each accreditation authority, the HPACF, and AHPRA publishes information on their websites:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee

Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee

Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia

Australian Dental Council
http://www.adc.org.au/

Australian Medical Council

Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd

Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand
http://www.ocanz.org/

Australasian Osteopathic Accreditation Council

Australian Pharmacy Council
http://pharmacycouncil.org.au/

Australian Physiotherapy Council

Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council

Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum

Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency