

September 2020 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee meeting

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee (the Committee) undertakes accreditation functions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice in the national scheme regulating health practitioners.

The Communique provides information about the Committee's recent activities. The Committee publishes this communiqué on the Committee's [accreditation webpage](#). Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

Committee's response to COVID-19

The Committee and Ahpra continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impacts on accredited and approved programs. The Committee has released statements outlining its plans for its accreditation activities for the remainder of 2020, on the 'News and updates' accreditation webpage. The Committee is currently undertaking special COVID-19 monitoring of all its accredited and approved programs.

Accreditation Committee meetings

The 37th meeting of the Committee was held on 1 September 2020 via videoconference. The Committee has one remaining meeting scheduled in 2020.

Some activities that were discussed at the Committee's September 2020 meeting are outlined more thoroughly below.

Accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice – transition from the 2013 to 2019 accreditation standards

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) approved the [Accreditation standards: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice 2019](#) (2019 accreditation standards), and the new [Professional capabilities for registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners](#), at its February 2019 meeting, with an effective date of 1 June 2020.

The Committee is responsible for implementing the approved 2019 accreditation standards through monitoring and assessment of currently accredited programs and the education providers that offer those programs.

In May 2020, the Committee [revised its accreditation activities](#) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Education providers were advised about the revised accreditation activities through correspondence sent in June 2020.

As a result of continued impacts on education providers as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee has evaluated the requirements for education providers to transition to accreditation and monitoring against the 2019 accreditation standards. In September 2020, the Committee agreed to its revised implementation schedule for education providers to transition to the 2019 accreditation standards. The Program Accreditation Team, on behalf of the Committee, will communicate transition requirements to each education provider later this year.

2019 accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice - cultural safety and the safe and effective use of medicines

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At its September 2020 meeting, the Committee considered two recent developments relevant to accreditation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice:

- a) the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme's (the National Scheme) definition of cultural safety, which was confirmed and released in February 2020, through the [National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Strategy 2020-2025](#), and
- b) the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum (the Forum)'s [Framework for accreditation requirements for the safe and effective use of medicines](#) which is due to be published later in 2020.

The Committee will continue to discuss these topics, and consider how these important areas might be reflected in the 2019 accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, in line with the recently published revised [procedures for the development of accreditation standards](#).

Monitoring approved programs of study

Under section 50 of the National Law, the Committee has a statutory responsibility to monitor approved programs of study and the education providers offering them, to ensure the Committee continues to be satisfied the program and provider meet the approved accreditation standards.

As forecast in its [11 May 2020 statement](#), the Committee is now carrying out special COVID-19 monitoring of all accredited and approved programs of study.

In July 2020, the Committee agreed on its framework to collect information from education providers about changes impacting the 2020 graduating cohort, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Program Accreditation Team has distributed the COVID-19 reporting template to education providers for completion by mid-September 2020. The Committee will consider all education provider COVID-19 reports in October and November 2020.

Stakeholder engagement

The Program Accreditation Team, on behalf of the Committee, continues to engage with education providers via the Committee's [accreditation webpages](#); through correspondence via email and phone contact, and communiques.

Guidelines for accreditation of education and training programs (revised accreditation process)

The Committee has recently concluded a project to review its accreditation process. The revised accreditation process, the [Guidelines for accreditation of education and training programs](#) (guidelines) were recently published, and were developed in conjunction with the Chinese Medicine, Medical Radiation Practice, Paramedicine and Podiatry Accreditation Committees.

Contact information

For any queries related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice program accreditation, please contact the Program Accreditation Team via email at program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au.

For more information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice accreditation please visit the Committee's [accreditation webpages](#).

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Ahpra and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee work in partnership to accredit education and training programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice.