

October 2020 Paramedicine Accreditation Committee meeting

In March 2019, the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the National Board) established the Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (the Committee) under the National Law to undertake the accreditation functions for the paramedicine profession. The Committee's first meeting was in April 2019.

The Committee publishes this communiqué on its [accreditation webpages](#). Please forward it to your colleagues and employees who may be interested.

COVID-19 impacts on paramedicine accreditation and approved programs

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 continues with its special COVID-19 monitoring of all its approved programs.

Accreditation Committee meeting

The eighth meeting of the Committee was held on 6 October 2020 via Zoom. The Committee has one remaining meeting scheduled in 2020. The Committee anticipates holding at least four meetings in 2021.

Some activities that were discussed at the Committee's October 2020 meeting, as well as some other key activities for the Committee, are outlined more thoroughly below.

Assessment activities for approved programs of study

The Committee is currently finalising its principles and approach for assessment of all paramedicine programs of study against the [approved accreditation standards](#) for paramedicine (accreditation standards), which were published on 14 September 2020, and take effect on 1 June 2021. There will be no assessment activity prior to 1 June 2021, and the Program Accreditation Team will be able to provide further details regarding any agreed approaches by the Committee, and necessary requirements for education providers, later in 2020.

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. Until such time that the accreditation standards take effect on 1 June 2021 the Committee will continue to monitor programs of study to ensure the Committee and National Board can be assured that a program of study approved under section 310 of the National Law continues to provide a qualification for the purposes of registration in paramedicine.

At its October 2020 meeting, the Committee considered the final 2019 Routine annual monitoring responses from education providers, as part of its responsibility to monitor education providers and their programs of study in 2019 and 2020.

COVID-19 reporting

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

In June 2020, the Committee agreed on its framework to collect information from education providers about changes impacting final year students in 2020, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee has considered education provider reports that were submitted in July 2020 and has provided advice to the National Board on changes made to education providers and their programs since March

2020 that may or may not impact on final year students achieving threshold capability prior to graduation. Outcomes of the Committee's COVID-19 monitoring will be communicated to education providers in due course.

The Committee will continue to provide advice to the Board on its monitoring of approved programs including the downstream impacts of COVID-19 (the impacts on current first and second-year students). The Committee is designing its framework for routine annual monitoring in 2021, which will include a range of reporting requirements for education providers on the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on their programs of study and students.

Call for accreditation assessor applications

At its October 2020 meeting, the Committee considered recommendations from the Selection Advisory Panel appointed by the Committee, regarding selection to the Committee's pool of accreditation assessors. Fourteen successful applicants will be informed of their selection shortly.

All successfully appointed accreditation assessors will be required to undergo assessor training in early 2021, prior to commencing their roles and undertaking any assessment or monitoring activities from when the accreditation standards take effect on 1 June 2021.

Other key accreditation activities

Accreditation standards for paramedicine

At its July 2020 meeting, the Committee confirmed the proposed accreditation standards for paramedicine as ready to submit to the National Board for consideration (and approval).

The National Board has approved the accreditation standards for paramedicine (accreditation standards) under section 47 of the National Law, and they are now published on the Committee's webpages.

The accreditation standards recognise contemporary practice in standards development across Australia and internationally. They emphasise safe practice, cultural competence, and outcomes relevant to the expected competence of graduates. Other features of the accreditation standards are:

- structured to align with the structure adopted by nine other accreditation authorities
- consist of five standards with accompanying criteria, and
- emphasising cultural safety and improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes.

The accreditation standards, expected information and explanatory notes are included in a single document to clearly describe the Committee's expectations.

The accreditation standards will take effect from 1 June 2021. Accreditation assessment activities will not take place before this date, and all education providers will be provided with further information on anticipated assessment dates in late-2020.

[The accreditation standards and professional capabilities for registered paramedics – a crucial relationship](#)

The [professional capabilities for registered paramedics](#) (professional capabilities) describe the minimum threshold level of professional capability required for a registered paramedic in Australia. They provide the framework for assessing student and practitioner competence. Applicants for general registration must demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the professional capabilities to be suitably qualified for registration.

Creating a competent and qualified graduate paramedic



The accreditation standards require the design and implementation of a program where learning outcomes and assessment tasks map to all the professional capabilities.

Education providers must be able to show that all students demonstrate all enabling components for all key capabilities (for the relevant division of registration) in the clinical setting, before they complete their program of study. This will be an important element of assessment of approved paramedicine programs against the accreditation standards.

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

The Committee's accreditation process, the [Guidelines for accreditation of education and training programs](#) (guidelines) are now available on the Committee's webpage and outline the process involved for education providers seeking and being accredited against the accreditation standards.

This important document should be used in conjunction with the accreditation standards and professional capabilities for registered paramedics when education providers are preparing their accreditation applications.

Stakeholder engagement

[Presentation at the Australasian College of Paramedicine's International Conference 2020](#)

The Australasian College of Paramedicine International Conference 2020 (ACPIC) is being delivered online from 21 to 23 October 2020.

Committee members Helen Webb and Bill Lord have been invited, on behalf of the Committee, to participate in a panel discussion at ACPIC titled "*Paramedic Accreditation, implications for WIL preceptors and facilitators*".

[Stakeholder engagement framework](#)

The Committee's [Terms of Reference](#) requires "*processes for effective collaboration with key stakeholders including education providers and the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum*".

In December 2019, the Program Accreditation Team, on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice, Chinese Medicine, Medical Radiation Practice, Paramedicine and Podiatry Accreditation Committees, commenced a project to develop a common accreditation stakeholder engagement framework (the framework).

The Committee will use the framework to develop Stakeholder Engagement Plans for key accreditation projects.

Engaging with stakeholders on the implementation of the accreditation standards for paramedicine

The Committee is currently considering strategies for engaging with its key stakeholders regarding the implementation phase of the accreditation standards, including the activities occurring through the period from publication to date of effect, and any period after that which may impact on stakeholders.

It is likely the Committee will run a series of webinar sessions in early 2021, on the implementation of the accreditation standards – more information on this will be communicated to education providers when the details are finalised.

The Committee is committed to ensuring its accreditation stakeholders, particularly education providers for whom their paramedicine programs of study will be accredited against the accreditation standards, remain informed of the steps the Committee is taking during the implementation phase.

The Committee encourages stakeholders to communicate the publication of the accreditation standards to their relevant networks.

Please share the current [social media campaign](#) promoting the recent publishing of the accreditation standards with your networks.

Contact information

For any queries related to paramedicine program accreditation, please contact the Committee via the Program Accreditation Team at program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au.

For more information on paramedicine accreditation please visit the National Board's accreditation webpage. Further information will be added to the website as the Committee's accreditation functions progress.

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