

Education Provider Reference Group

Communiqué - March 2021

The first meeting of the Education Provider Reference Group (EPRG) was held via videoconference on 17 March 2021.

Role of the group

The EPRG was established to improve Ahpra's engagement with education providers that offer programs of study approved for registration within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme). The aim is to provide opportunities for education providers' input on developments in the implementation and operation of the National Scheme as it relates to students and graduates. This engagement complements the relationship Accreditation Authorities and National Boards have with education providers.

Inaugural meeting

The group was welcomed by Ahpra's Chief Executive Officer Martin Fletcher who provided an overview of Ahpra's regulatory work and the key bodies in the National Scheme. He said the EPRG would be an important reference group for Ahpra in gaining feedback on areas of work and issues that affect education providers.

Key areas of discussion at this meeting included:

- context and background about Ahpra and the EPRG
- updates on student and graduate registration
- impacts of COVID-19 on education, students and regulatory responses
- an update on Health Ministers' policy direction on a new accreditation committee

Ahpra's Executive Director, Regulatory Operations Kym Ayscough updated members on student and graduate registration issues. She explained that the strategy of opening 2020 graduation registration earlier had achieved positive outcomes. Members discussed the importance of the accuracy of the course completion lists education providers submit to Ahpra as part of the graduate registration process.

Ahpra's Executive Director, Strategy and Policy Chris Robertson updated members on regulatory responses to COVID-19, including the short-term pandemic response sub-register and collaborative work with National Boards and Accreditation Authorities to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on students, education providers and on the future workforce. Members discussed issues related to students who will remain offshore for at least part of 2021 due to border closures, continued impact of COVID-19 on availability of clinical placements and the federal government's response to prioritising which students may return to Australia from offshore.

Chris Robertson also provided an update on Health Minister's [policy direction](#) on the new independently chaired accreditation committee. Members noted that the new committee is expected to be operational in the second half of 2021.

Communication

An [EPRG page](#) has been published on the Ahpra website under Advisory Groups that lists members and will be used to publish updates from the group.

Ahpra will issue a communiqué after each EPRG meeting to keep stakeholders informed about key areas discussed and issues raised by the group.

Next meeting

The next EPRG meeting will be held in the second half of 2021.

More information

Queries regarding the work of the EPRG may be directed to the secretariat via email at EPRG.Secretariat@ahpra.gov.au

Meeting attendees

- Lorelle J. Burton, Heads of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association
- Ryan Causby, Australasian Council of Podiatry Deans
- Bronwyn Clarke, Health Profession Accreditation Collaborative Forum
- Jen Coulls, Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences
- Michelle Leech, Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand
- Robert Love, Australasian Council of Dental Schools
- Sean Ledger, Council of Physiotherapy Deans Australia and New Zealand
- Tracey Moroney, Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia & New Zealand)
- Debra Rowett, Council of Pharmacy Schools Australia and New Zealand
- Martin Fletcher, Ahpra
- Kym Ayscough, Ahpra
- Chris Robertson, Ahpra
- Helen Townley, Ahpra
- Catherine Miedecke, Ahpra

Secretariat

- Margaret Grant, Ahpra
- Christine Pappon, Ahpra

Apologies

- Esther May, Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences
- Charlie Xue, Executive Dean, School of Health and Biomedical Science RMIT University