

## August 2021 Podiatry Accreditation Committee meeting

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

### COVID-19 and the Delta variant

The Committee and Ahpra continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impacts on accredited and approved programs. Statements on, or information outlining, its plans for its accreditation activities will be published on the 'News and updates' accreditation webpage. The Committee was also party to the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum's [consensus statement on COVID-19](#), and the [National principles for clinical education during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

The spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant has escalated, and many states and territories are experiencing lockdowns which has impacted on education providers delivering their programs of study, including students' ability to attend face-to-face classes and placements.

These are difficult times, and the Committee wishes to pass on its thoughts to all those impacted. With the situation ever changing the Committee appreciates the contact being made with Ahpra's Program Accreditation Team about the short-term changes required to programs as a result of current restrictions.

Please continue to reach out to the team should you have any queries, or further information regarding COVID-19 and your program/s that you'd like to provide the Committee.

Keep safe.

### Podiatry accreditation standards and professional capabilities approved

In exciting news, the Podiatry Board of Australia (the Board) recently approved the accreditation standards for entry-level podiatry programs and podiatric surgery programs, as well as standards for the accreditation of education programs leading to endorsement of registration for scheduled medicines.

The Committee developed the new and revised accreditation standards, which involved extensive periods of consultation with key stakeholders.

The Board also approved new professional capabilities for podiatrists and podiatric surgeons. The Board has recently published a [communiqué](#) with more information on its decision.

The accreditation standards and professional capabilities will take effect on 1 January 2022, and will be published on the Board and Committee's accreditation webpages in early September 2021.

## Committee meeting

The tenth meeting of the Committee was held across two sessions via Zoom - on 30 July and 5 August 2021. The Committee anticipates holding one more meeting in 2021.

Some activities that were discussed at the Committee's August 2021 meeting, as well as some other key activities for the Committee, are outlined more thoroughly below.

## Monitoring approved programs of study

Section 3.3 of the [Guidelines for accreditation of education and training programs](#) outlines the Committee's 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 accreditation standards.

### 2021 Routine annual monitoring

2021 Routine annual monitoring reports from education providers are now being submitted. As well as standard collection of key data, the routine annual monitoring reports will also seek information from education providers on the current and downstream impacts of COVID-19 in 2021 and beyond. The Committee will be in contact with education providers in the second half of 2021 regarding the impacts of the current restrictions on programs and current cohorts, particularly the 2021 graduating cohort.

The outcomes of the routine annual monitoring responses will be provided to the education providers and the National Board after each meeting.

## Podiatry accreditation assessors selected

Recently, the Committee considered recommendations from the Selection Advisory Panel (SAP) (Committee appointed) regarding selection to the Committee's pool of accreditation assessors.

The Committee noted the high calibre of skills and experience provided in the applications received; and acknowledged the SAP's management, with advice and guidance from the Program Accreditation Team, of the entire selection process in accordance with statutory guidelines. The Committee agreed to the recommendations made by the SAP and selected fourteen applicants for appointment to its pool of accreditation assessors.

The fourteen accreditation assessors will undertake assessor training later in 2021 in preparation for commencing assessment and monitoring roles against the revised Podiatry accreditation standards, when they take effect on 1 January 2022.

## Newly published accreditation resources

The Committee is very excited to announce the publication of some important accreditation resources, which it has developed in conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Chinese Medicine, Medical Radiation Practice and Paramedicine Accreditation Committees (the Committees). The development of multi-profession approaches to accreditation processes ensures the Committee is striving towards best practice, as outlined in its key performance indicators at *Attachment G* of its [Terms of Reference](#).

### Guidance on teaching out accredited and/or approved programs of study

The [Guidance on teaching out accredited and/or approved programs of study](#) provides education providers with information on what may be provided to the Committee when an accredited and/or approved program of study (program) is discontinued for new enrolments (moves into teach-out).

In developing the guidance, the Committee undertook a period of targeted consultation with education providers delivering podiatry programs of study. The Committee thanks those education providers who provided feedback.

If education providers have any queries about teaching out a program of study, please contact your Accreditation Officer via the [Program Accreditation Team](#) for more information.

## Guidance on site visits and video/teleconference meetings

The [Guidance on accreditation site visits and tele/videoconference meetings](#) outlines the process for site visit and tele/videoconference meetings for education providers delivering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, Chinese medicine, medical radiation practice, paramedicine and podiatry programs of study.

This guidance was developed with consideration for the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum's (the Forum) [position statement on accreditation tools used by Forum members.](#), and should be read alongside the Committee's [Guidelines for accreditation of education and training programs.](#)

For access to the Committee's key accreditation resources please visit their [publications and resources webpage.](#)

## Accreditation fees for podiatry

As previously advised, in late-2020 the Committee considered its approach to podiatry accreditation fees for the period 2021-2024. Following a period of consultation (in December 2020 and January 2021) with education providers and the Australasian Council of Podiatry Deans, the Committee confirmed its approach in April 2021.

The National Board has recently approved the schedule of accreditation fees and the Committee recently published the schedule on its [accreditation webpages.](#)

## Stakeholder engagement

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

The Committee will continue to engage closely with education providers in the second half of 2021 regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on programs of study, and will also liaise with the Australian Podiatry Association and Australasian Council of Podiatry Deans to discuss topics relevant to podiatry education and training.

The Program Accreditation Team will be in contact with education providers in the second half of 2021 regarding their upcoming accreditation assessments.

## Contact information

For any queries related to podiatry program accreditation, please contact the Committee via the Program Accreditation Team at [program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au).

For more information on podiatry accreditation please visit the Committee's [accreditation](#) webpages.

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