

## Education Provider Reference Group

### Communiqué - October 2021

The second meeting of the Education Provider Reference Group (EPRG) was held via videoconference on 11 October 2021.

Ahpra's Chief Executive Officer, Martin Fletcher, welcomed members to the meeting. Sean Ledger from the Council of Physiotherapy Deans Australia and New Zealand nominated to chair meetings. Members confirmed Sean's appointment as chair for the next twelve months.

#### Discussion

Key areas of discussion at this meeting included:

- audit of graduate list portal access
- establishment of the new accreditation committee
- impact of COVID-19 on student graduations

Ahpra's National Director, Registration, Catherine Miedecke, provided an update on the audit of access to the graduate list portal. The audit has resulted in the clean-up of user access from over 1,000 users to around 300 users by deleting duplicate users and users who no longer require access to the portal.

Martin Fletcher provided an update on the establishment of the new accreditation committee. The committee was established in August 2021 pursuant to [Policy Direction 2020–1](#). The committee provides independent and expert advice on accreditation systems reform and other National Scheme accreditation matters to National Scheme entities (National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and Ahpra).

The committee is chaired by Professor Andrew Wilson. Consistent with Ministers' policy direction, Professor Wilson is an independent chair (external to the National Scheme). More details about the committee's work and a communiqué from its first meeting, are published on [the committee's webpage](#). Members of the group welcomed the potential for the committee's advice to contribute to streamlined accreditation processes across the regulated health professions.

Members of the group provided updates on the impact of COVID-19 on student clinical placements and student completions and graduations. Key issues identified in the updates included:

- the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the university sector, and this is likely to continue into 2022 with downstream issues through to 2023.
- student clinical placements have been significantly disrupted in the states/territories hardest hit by COVID-19 and associated public health orders.
- differing and changing requirements for student clinical placements between jurisdictions and between different organisations within jurisdictions have created logistical challenges for education providers
- the health response to the COVID-19 pandemic had created additional opportunities for student clinical placements in pharmacy, in both community and hospital settings, including opportunities for students to participate in the surge workforce.
- education providers are continuing to meet regularly to discuss and respond to the ongoing challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Communication

An [EPRG page](#) has been published on the Ahpra website. Ahpra issues 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 first half of 2022.

### **More information**

Queries regarding the work of the EPRG may be directed to the secretariat via email at [EPRG.Secretariat@ahpra.gov.au](mailto:EPRG.Secretariat@ahpra.gov.au)

### **Meeting attendees**

#### **Representatives of Member Organisations**

Sean Ledger (Chair)	Council of Physiotherapy Deans Australia and New Zealand
Esther May	Australian Council of Deans of Health Sciences
Ryan Causby	Australasian Council of Podiatry Deans
Tracey Moroney	Council of Deans of Nursing and Midwifery (Australia and New Zealand)
Debra Rowett	Council of Pharmacy Schools Australia and New Zealand
Nigel Bond	Heads of Departments and Schools of Psychology Association
Charlie Xue	Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International-STEM College) and Distinguished Professor at RMIT
Narelle Mills	Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum

#### **Ahpra**

Martin Fletcher	Chief Executive Officer
Kym Ayscough	Executive Director, Regulatory Operations
Chris Robertson	Executive Director, Strategy & Policy
Helen Townley	National Director, Policy and Accreditation
Catherine Miedecke	National Director, Registration

#### **Secretariat**

Margaret Grant	Specialist Accreditation Advisor, Ahpra
Kerryn Rozenbergs	Senior Policy Advisor, Ahpra

### **Apologies**

Robert Love	Australasian Council of Dental Schools
Sarah Larkins	Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand