

Accreditation function



Overview of the role and responsibilities of each entity

This document aims to provide guidance on the functions and responsibilities of entities involved in the accreditation of programs of study and education providers. For clarity purposes, this document only focuses on the entity's role in the accreditation function.

Accreditation is a core regulatory function within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) and is covered by Part 6 of the the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law). Accreditation means the public can be confident that individuals seeking registration have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise their profession safely and competently in Australia. It is a quality assurance and risk management mechanism for the National Scheme and plays a key role in assuring quality and safety in the health system.

Roles and responsibilities under the National Law

	Function	Accreditation standards	Programs of study	Practitioner registration
Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand (OCANZ)	Exercises accreditation functions required by the National Board.	Develops and reviews accreditation standards for all categories of registration, with wide public consultation.	Assesses new and existing programs of study against accreditation standards, for accreditation. Monitors accredited programs of study to ensure ongoing compliance with accreditation standards. Provides advice to the National Board on accreditation matters.	Assesses overseas-qualified practitioners for suitability to apply for registration and to provide advice on practitioners' knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes.
Optometry Board of Australia (OptomBA)	Decides on its accreditation authority (council or committee). Develops/reviews registration requirements and standards with wide public consultation.	Approves accreditation standards. Requests review of accreditation standards.	Approves (or refuses to approve) an accredited program of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration. Considers advice from accreditation authority.	Uses assessment advice to determine whether overseas-qualified practitioners are qualified for registration in Australia. Approves accreditation authority assessment of overseas-practitioner processes leading to registration.
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)	Enters into agreements with accreditation councils. ¹ Provides support to National Boards in exercising their functions.	Establishes procedures for development/ review of accreditation and registration standards. Contracts for required accreditation functions.	Publishes list of approved programs of study that lead to eligibility for registration.	Establishes and administers procedures for registration applications and other matters relating to health practitioner registration, including overseas qualified practitioners.

1 Accreditation agreements with accreditation councils or committees

Appendix A

Definitions under the National Law

Accreditation function means –

- (a) developing accreditation standards for approval by a National Board; or
- (b) assessing programs of study, and the education providers that provide the programs of study, to determine whether the programs meet approved accreditation standards; or
- (c) assessing authorities in other countries who conduct examinations for registration in a health profession, or accredit programs of study relevant to registration in a health profession, to decide whether persons who successfully complete the examinations or programs of study conducted or accredited by the authorities have the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes necessary to practise the profession in Australia; or
- (d) overseeing the assessment of the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of overseas-qualified health practitioners who are seeking registration in a health profession under this Law and whose qualifications are not approved qualifications for the health profession; or
- (e) making recommendations and giving advice to a National Board about a matter referred to in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d).

Accreditation standard for a health profession, means a standard used to assess whether a program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, provides persons who complete the program with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise the profession in Australia.

Approved qualification for a health profession, means a qualification obtained by completing an approved program of study for the profession.

External accreditation entity means an entity, other than a committee established by a National Board, that exercises an accreditation function.

Education provider means a:

- (a) university
- (b) tertiary education institution, or another institution or organisation, that provides vocational training; or
- (c) specialist medical college or other health profession college.

Health profession agreement

The Board and Ahpra must enter into an agreement that makes provisions for the following:

- (a) the fees that will be payable under this Law by health practitioners and others in respect of the health profession for which the Board is established (including arrangements relating to refunds of fees, waivers of fees and additional fees for late payment)
- (b) the annual budget of the National Board (including the funding arrangements for its committees and accreditation authorities)
- (c) the services to be provided to the National Board by the National Agency to enable the National Board to carry out its functions under this Law.

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