



# Health Ministers' Meeting

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Ms Gill Callister PSM, Chair Agency Management Committee, Ahpra

Dr Anne Tonkin AO, Chair Medical Board of Australia

Dear Ms Callister

Dr Tonkin

## **Ministerial Policy Direction 2023-1: Medical college accreditation of training sites**

I am writing to provide a policy direction under section 11 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as is in force in each state and territory.

On 20 July 2023, Health Ministers resolved to issue this policy direction to clarify Ministerial Council expectations of the Australian Medical Council and medical colleges regarding accreditation of training sites and to direct Ahpra and the Medical Board to note these expectations when exercising their functions for the purposes of the National Law.

Health Ministers acknowledge the critical role medical colleges have in the education and training of the medical specialist workforce but have noted that the colleges could be better aligned with workforce reform priorities to ensure patients can access the care they need and want, in a safe environment.

The Australian Medical Council Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Specialist Medical Programs outline minimum high-level requirements for the accreditation of specialist training sites by medical colleges. In particular, Standard 1.6.3 states that: "The education provider works with training sites and jurisdictions on matters of mutual interest". Each medical college has its own accreditation standards, processes and terminology for training site accreditation. As a result, there is lack of standardisation and significant variation of accreditation processes, procedures, and timeframes between colleges.

Accreditation decisions, including withdrawal of accreditation, have a significant impact on the availability of medical workforce at sites/locations, which in turn, has a significant impact on patients through reduced services. Each College has policies, processes and timeframes to follow should an organisation seek review of an accreditation decision.

Health Ministers had also previously requested the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman conduct a review of the procedural aspects of accreditation including both accreditation authorities and specialist medical colleges. On 20 July 2023 Ministers received an interim update from the Ombudsman outlining potential reform options.

The policy direction is as follows:

1. That Ahpra and the Medical Board of Australia require that:
  - a) The Australian Medical Council works with jurisdictions and medical colleges on an implementation plan regarding the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman's suggestions for reform on arrangements for training site accreditation.
  - b) The Australian Medical Council works with jurisdictions and medical colleges to develop a communication protocol to clarify and confirm the roles and responsibilities of all parties in the training and supply of the medical workforce and the distribution of that workforce.
  - c) The Australian Medical Council reviews existing arrangements:
    - i. to achieve greater consistency of accreditation processes, policies, procedures and decisions for training site accreditation across the medical specialist colleges.
    - ii. that the scope of medical college accreditation of training sites, standards and decisions is clarified to matters relevant to the delivery of high quality education and training of medical specialist trainees.
  - d) The Australian Medical Council works with medical colleges on training site accreditation arrangements to reduce the impact on patient services caused by withdrawal of training site accreditation and reduced workforce. This includes developing a uniform process to be adopted by all medical colleges in relation to accreditation decisions and review processes.

In line with section 17 of the National Law it is requested that this direction be published by Ahpra and the Medical Board of Australia on their websites as soon as practicable.

Yours sincerely



Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA  
Chair  
Health Ministers Meeting

1 / 9 / 2023