



# **Accreditation in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS):**

A snapshot 2022/23

# Introduction

**The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme** (the Scheme) was established by the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (the National Law) in July 2010.

The Scheme is multi-professional, regulating more than 850,000 health practitioners in 16 professions. The accreditation functions in the National Law include developing accreditation standards, accrediting programs of study against approved accreditation standards and assessing overseas-qualified practitioners.

**Accreditation** is integral to the Scheme as it is the key way to ensure that individuals seeking registration have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to safely and competently practise their profession in Australia.

**Snapshot of Accreditation** is a yearly summary of whole of scheme information about accreditation activities. This version is current at 30 June 2023.

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## Contact us

Please contact Ahpra on **1300 419 495** or visit our website **[www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au)**

This document was prepared by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency in collaboration with National Boards and the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum.



HEALTH  
PROFESSIONS  
ACCREDITATION  
COLLABORATIVE  
FORUM

Australia's accreditation authorities  
for regulated health professionals



**Ahpra**  
& National  
Boards

# Accreditation

## What is it?

### Program Accreditation

Program accreditation is the process of assessing whether an educational program of study and the education provider that provides the program produce graduates who have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to safely and competently practise the profession in Australia.

### Practitioner Assessment

Practitioner assessment is the process of assessing whether an overseas-qualified practitioner has demonstrated the knowledge, clinical skills, and professional attributes to safely and competently practise the profession in Australia.

## Who performs accreditation?

Six accreditation committees and 10 accreditation councils perform accreditation in the National Scheme.

### Accreditation Committees:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee
- Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee
- Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee
- Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee (Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives)
- Paramedicine Accreditation Committee
- Podiatry Accreditation Committee

### Accreditation Councils:

- Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia
- Australian Dental Council
- Australian Medical Council
- Australian Nursing & Midwifery Accreditation Council
- Occupational Therapy Council of Australia
- Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand
- Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council
- Australian Pharmacy Council
- Australian Physiotherapy Council
- Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

## Accreditation in the National Scheme: Who does what?



- Exercises accreditation functions required by the National Board
- Develops and reviews accreditation standards
- Provides advice to National Board on accreditation matters
- Assesses education providers/ programs of study against accreditation standards
- Accredits programs of study
- Monitors accredited programs
- May assess overseas-qualified practitioners and/or accrediting and examining authorities to provide advice on practitioners' knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes.

- Decides on its Accreditation Authority (council or committee)
- Approves accreditation standards
- Develops/reviews registration requirements and standards with wide public consultation
- Considers advice from Accreditation Authority
- Approves or refuses to approve an accredited program of study as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration
- Uses assessment advice to determine whether overseas qualified practitioners are qualified for registration.

- Enters into contracts with accreditation councils
- Establishes procedures for development/review of accreditation and registration standards
- Provides support and advice to National Boards/Accreditation Committees in exercising their functions
- Publishes up-to-date list of approved programs
- Establishes/administers procedures for registration applications and other matters relating to health practitioner registration including overseas qualified practitioners.



### Accreditation Liaison Group

The National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and Ahpra established the Accreditation Liaison Group (ALG) to facilitate effective delivery of accreditation within the National Scheme. The ALG has developed a range of [reference documents](#) to promote consistency and good practice in accreditation while accounting for variation across entities.

In October 2022, the Forum of NRAS Chairs (FoNC), HPACF and Ahpra agreed to discontinue the ALG and replace it with an integrated approach to collaboration on accreditation issues within the National Scheme using existing structures. These new collaborative arrangements are described in more detail in the '[what's new in accreditation?](#)' section on page seven.



### The Health Professions' Accreditation Collaborative Forum

The [Health Professions' Accreditation Collaborative Forum](#) (HPACF) is the coalition of entities appointed by the National Boards as Accreditation Authorities for the professions regulated under the National Law. The HPACF has since been meeting regularly since 2007, before the commencement of the Scheme. The HPACF considers matters of common interest, principally matters concerning the accreditation of education and training programs in the regulated health professions. The HPACF advocates for good accreditation practices. The HPACF engages with Ahpra and the National Boards, and publishes a [communique](#) after each meeting.



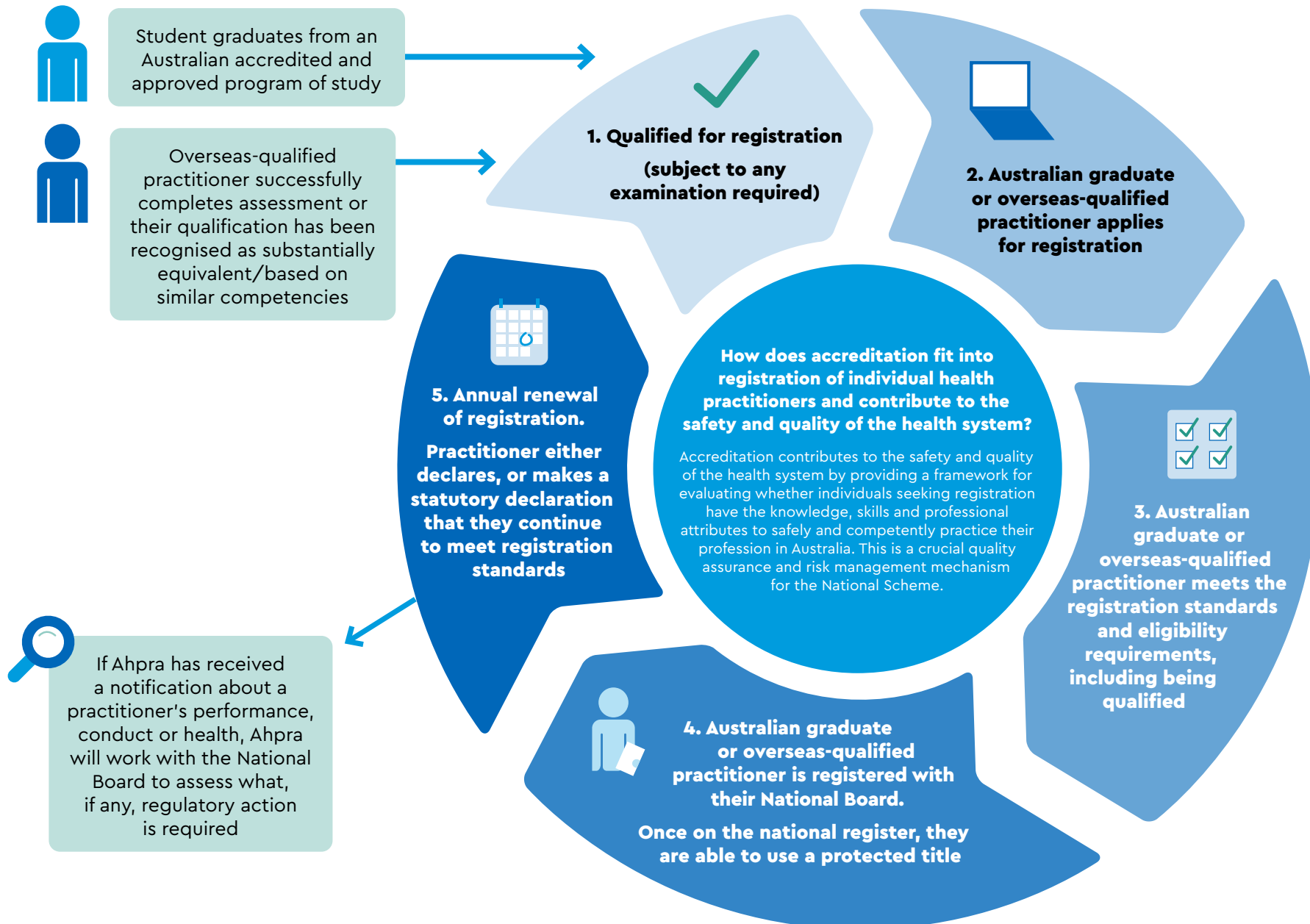
### Accreditation Committee

The Ahpra Board established the Independent Accreditation Committee (the Committee) consistent with [Ministerial Council Policy Direction 2020-1- Independent Accreditation Committee](#) to provide independent and expert advice on accreditation reform and other National Scheme accreditation matters to National Scheme entities (National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and Ahpra).

The Committee's published [2023 work plan](#) reflects its main work deliverables during 2022/23. The Committee also publishes [communiqués](#) following each meeting.

# Intersection between accreditation and registration functions

## Lifecycle of a health practitioner



# What's new in accreditation?

## Update on Accreditation Committee deliverables

In 2022/23 the [Accreditation Committee](#) (the committee) commenced work on multiple deliverables as part of its [published work plan](#).

The committee released public consultation proposals on two of its first priorities – a National Scheme statement of intent for interprofessional collaborative practice (IPCP) and a glossary of accreditation terms designed to create a shared language and understanding of terms used in the committee's advice.

Achieving IPCP is fundamental to effective team-based and coordinated care. This will benefit individuals and healthcare consumers by enhancing their healthcare experiences and health outcomes. The committee is seeking to embed IPCP into the professional practice expectations of the 16 professions within the National Scheme by gaining a joint commitment from stakeholders across the health and education sectors to take action. The glossary of accreditation terms will support interpretation of the committee's future advice.

The committee anticipates the glossary and IPCP statement of intent will be published in late 2023.

## New Accreditation Committee work plan priority

The Ahpra Board has expanded the committee's scope to include the key area of reform: *building capacity of the Australian health workforce to provide culturally safe health services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and eliminate racism in health care*. This area has been added to the Committee's [work plan](#) as a priority area.

## New collaborative approaches to accreditation across the National Scheme

After the ALG was discontinued in October 2022, an integrated approach to collaboration on accreditation issues within the National Scheme using existing structures was developed. National Boards, Accreditation Authorities and Ahpra have developed a statement of intent (the intent)

which sets out how they will collaborate on accreditation and related issues, including planned engagement and information sharing.

The approach provides dedicated opportunities for considering accreditation issues and facilitates cross-Scheme collaboration by a range of activities including: dedicated discussions with HPACF representatives at the Forum of National Chairs (FoNC), attendance by Ahpra and National Board representatives at meetings of the HPACF and an annual meeting of HPACF, FoNC and Ahpra to discuss accreditation issues relevant to the National Scheme strategy.

## Independent review of health practitioner regulatory settings

On 30 September 2022, National Cabinet [announced an independently-led review](#) of Australia's regulatory settings for overseas trained health practitioners and international students who have studied in Australia. The review is led by [Ms Robyn Kruk AO](#) and has provided an [interim report to National Cabinet](#). Ahpra and accreditation authorities are working towards progressing some of the recommendations from the interim report in anticipation of the final report being presented to National Cabinet and published in late 2023.

## HPACF Accreditation Monitoring Framework

The Health Practitioner National Law (the National Law) outlines 'monitoring' as an essential accreditation function. In July 2022, the HPACF Accreditation Managers Sub-Committee established the [Accreditation Monitoring Framework](#). The framework describes the current monitoring practices across the National Scheme for accreditation authorities and other external stakeholders, including the range of monitoring activities undertaken and how these activities work. This framework is available on the [HPACF's website](#).

## HPACF IPE project update

In 2022, the HPACF endorsed a project whose aim is to gain a better understanding of collaborative practice from a range of stakeholders to inform strategies for delivery of Interprofessional Education (IPE). The project seeks to develop consensus guidance, to support education providers and accreditation authorities in enhancing the development of collaborative practitioners. More information about the project is available on the [HPACF's website](#).

## HPACF Cultural Safety Training for accreditation teams

The HPACF has progressed the development of cultural safety training for accreditation team members. The training is designed to provide assessors with the necessary skills to assess accredited education and training programs in relation to cultural safety. An important aspect of the training is that it will be delivered cross professionally to encourage learning and sharing across the accreditation teams from the 16 professions. It is expected that the training will be piloted in December 2023 with the implementation of the training commencing in early 2024.

# Accreditation activities 2022/23

## Program accreditation activities

**60 new programs accredited**  
**102 programs re-accredited**  
**761 programs monitored**  
**148 site visits undertaken**



## Practitioner assessment activities

**28,471 overseas-qualified health practitioners assessed**



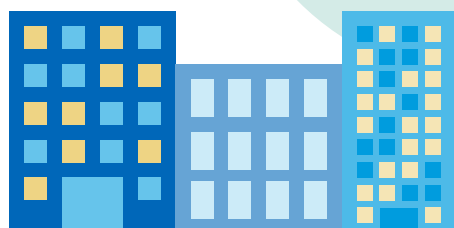
## Overall program accreditation at 30 June 2023

**802+ accredited programs**  
**130+ providers offering accredited programs**



## Accreditation standards

**1 new standard published in 2022/23**  
**7 standards currently under review**



### Link to new standard

[Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Cosmetic Surgery Programs of Study \(2023\)](#)

Accreditation standards are used to assess whether a program of study, and the education provider that delivers the program of study, provides graduates of the program with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise the profession.

The current standards can be found on the [Ahpra website](#) under the relevant Boards accreditation section.

# Overseas qualified practitioner assessments



**Nine Accreditation Authorities assess overseas-qualified practitioners seeking registration in a registered health profession in Australia**

## **Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia**

25 assessment activities

## **Australian Dental Council**

5,453 assessment activities

## **Australian Medical Council**

6,730 assessment activities

## **Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee**

(Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives)<sup>1</sup>

9,705 assessment activities

## **Occupational Therapy Council of Australia**

440 assessment activities

## **Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand**

105 assessment activities

## **Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council**

13 assessment activities

## **Australian Pharmacy Council**

3,686 assessment activities

## **Australian Physiotherapy Council**

2,314 assessment activities

Overseas-qualified practitioners seeking registration in other registered health professions in Australia are assessed as part of the registration process.

<sup>1</sup> *Nursing and Midwifery Board has established a committee to oversee the assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives.*



# More information about accreditation

Each Accreditation Authority, the HPACF and Ahpra publishes information, including current accreditation standards and contact details on their websites:

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee

[www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/ATSIHP-Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.atsihealthpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/ATSIHP-Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

## Australian Dental Council

<https://adc.org.au/>

## Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra)

[www.ahpra.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/Accreditation.aspx)

## Ahpra's Independent Accreditation Committee

[www.ahpra.gov.au/About-Ahpra/Who-We-Are/Agency-Management-Committee/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.ahpra.gov.au/About-Ahpra/Who-We-Are/Agency-Management-Committee/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

## Australian Medical Council

[www.amc.org.au/](http://www.amc.org.au/)

## Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council

[www.anmac.org.au](http://www.anmac.org.au)

## Australian Osteopathic Accreditation Council

<https://osteopathiccouncil.org.au/>

## Australian Pharmacy Council

[www.pharmacycouncil.org.au](http://www.pharmacycouncil.org.au)

## Australian Physiotherapy Council

[www.physiocouncil.com.au](http://www.physiocouncil.com.au)

## Australian Psychology Accreditation Council

<https://apac.au/>

## Chinese Medicine Accreditation Committee

[www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Committee.aspx](http://www.chinesemedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Committee.aspx)

## Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia

[www.ccea.com.au](http://www.ccea.com.au)

## Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum

<http://hpacf.org.au/>

## Medical Radiation Practice Accreditation Committee

[www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.medicalradiationpracticeboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

## Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Committee (Assessment of overseas qualified nurses and midwives)

[www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Assessment-of-overseas-qualified-nurses-and-midwives.aspx](http://www.nursingmidwiferyboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Assessment-of-overseas-qualified-nurses-and-midwives.aspx)

## Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd

[www.otcouncil.com.au/](http://www.otcouncil.com.au/)

## Optometry Council of Australia and New Zealand

[www.ocanz.org](http://www.ocanz.org)

## Paramedicine Accreditation Committee

[www.paramedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.paramedicineboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)

## Podiatry Accreditation Committee

[www.podiatryboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx](http://www.podiatryboard.gov.au/Accreditation/Accreditation-Committee.aspx)