

December 2020 Paramedicine Accreditation Committee meeting

In March 2019, the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the National Board) established the Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (the Committee) under the National Law to undertake the accreditation functions for the paramedicine profession. The Committee's first meeting was in April 2019.

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

COVID-19 impacts on paramedicine accreditation and approved programs

The Committee and Ahpra continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and its potential impacts on accredited and approved programs. The Committee has released statements outlining its plans for its accreditation activities for the remainder of 2020, on the 'News and updates' accreditation webpage. The Committee continues with its special COVID-19 monitoring of all its approved programs.

Accreditation Committee meeting

The ninth meeting of the Committee was held on 17 December 2020 via Zoom. The Committee anticipates holding at least four meetings in 2021.

Some activities that were discussed at the Committee's December 2020 meeting, as well as some other key activities for the Committee, are outlined more thoroughly below.

Assessment activities for approved programs of study

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee revised some of its accreditation activities in 2020, including its planned schedule of full accreditation assessments against the accreditation standards. The Committee will commence assessment of all currently approved (under section 310 of the National Law) paramedicine programs of study against the paramedicine accreditation standards from June 2021. The Program Accreditation Team will be able to provide further details of the accreditation assessment schedule to education providers in early 2021.

Risk based approach to accreditation

The Committee has explored cyclic and risk-based approaches to specified periods of accreditation, and recently agreed to adopt a risk-based approach to accreditation – that is that all paramedicine programs of study will be accredited without a specified time period. The Committee would then monitor the programs under section 50 through monitoring against conditions and/or specific monitoring, and routine annual monitoring. All accredited and approved paramedicine programs would undergo a full accreditation assessment against any new or revised accreditation standards each time they are approved by the National Board.

Two sections of the National Law are relevant to the Committee's policy position on specifying a period of accreditation – section 48 and section 50.

Section 48 sets out the parameters for the Committee's decision to accredit a program with or without conditions, or to refuse to accredit a program after assessing that program and the relevant education provider against the accreditation standards.

Section 50 sets out the parameters for the Committee's decision to impose conditions and/or specific monitoring on, or revoke its accreditation of, a Board-approved program after monitoring whether the program and the relevant education provider continue to meet the accreditation standards.

These sections of the National Law do not specify or mandate that accreditation be for a specified period, rather they establish a regulatory framework for accreditation that enables the Committee to continue to accredit programs that the Committee is, through its monitoring, satisfied are meeting the accreditation standards.

These sections also enable the Committee to use conditions to take proportionate regulatory action when the Committee considers it necessary to ensure a program will meet standards that are not met at the time of assessment, or are no longer met after the program is accredited. This proportionate regulatory action may include imposing an end date on accreditation if a program continues not to meet standards, despite conditions.

Monitoring approved programs of study (s50)

Under section 50 of the National Law, the Committee has a statutory responsibility to monitor approved programs of study and the education providers offering them. Until such time that the accreditation standards take effect on 1 June 2021 the Committee will continue to monitor programs of study to ensure the Committee and National Board can be assured that a program of study approved under section 310 of the National Law continues to provide a qualification for the purposes of registration in paramedicine.

The Committee is currently drafting its 2021 routine annual monitoring package, which it anticipates being able to disseminate to education providers in early 2021. The routine annual monitoring in 2021 will include a range of reporting requirements for education providers on the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 on their programs of study and students.

[2020 COVID-19 reporting](#)

The Committee has considered the education providers' 2020 COVID-19 special monitoring reports that were submitted and has provided advice to the National Board on changes made to education providers and their approved programs of study since March 2020 that may or may not impact on final year students achieving threshold capability prior to graduation. Outcomes of the Committee's 2020 COVID-19 special monitoring reporting are being communicated to education providers.

The Committee will continue to provide advice to the National Board on its monitoring of approved programs including the downstream impacts of COVID-19 on all students. Information on the downstream impacts of COVID-19 on future cohorts will be requested with education provider's 2021 Routine annual monitoring reports, which are anticipated to be due in mid-2021.

Internal review of paramedicine accreditation decisions

The National Law at section 48(4) requires an accreditation authority to have an internal review process for accreditation decisions. The Committee has recently confirmed its *Process for internal review of paramedicine accreditation decisions for paramedicine*. This will be published on the Committee's accreditation webpages in early 2021.

[Other key accreditation activities](#)

Accreditation standards for paramedicine

The accreditation standards for paramedicine take effect from 1 June 2021. Accreditation assessment activities will not take place before this date, and all education providers will be provided with further information on anticipated assessment dates in early 2021.

[The accreditation standards and professional capabilities for registered paramedics – a crucial relationship](#)

The [professional capabilities for registered paramedics](#) (professional capabilities) describe the minimum threshold level of professional capability required for a registered paramedic in Australia. They provide the framework for assessing student and practitioner competence. Applicants for general registration must demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the professional capabilities to be suitably qualified for registration.

The accreditation standards require the design and implementation of a program where learning outcomes and assessment tasks map to all the professional capabilities.

Education providers must be able to show that all students demonstrate all enabling components for all key capabilities (for the relevant division of registration) in the clinical setting, before they complete their program of study. This will be an important element of assessment of approved paramedicine programs against the accreditation standards.

Reporting to the Paramedicine Board of Australia

The Committee must provide to the National Board reports and supporting documentation in accordance with the timeframes and form and content requirements as identified in attachment F of the [Terms of Reference](#). Attachment F states: “*The Accreditation Committee will report on a six-monthly basis against a template based on the KPIs and key activity data to be agreed between the Accreditation Committee, National Board and AHPRA. The report template will focus on meaningful parameters and will seek to refine and improve, rather than increase, the current six-monthly reporting requirements.*”

The Committee submitted its key performance indicator (KPI) report to the National Board and Ahpra on 30 November 2020. The KPI report also outlined the Committee’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Stakeholder engagement

Presentation at the Australasian College of Paramedicine’s International Conference 2020

The Australasian College of Paramedicine International Conference 2020 (ACPIC) was held online from 21 to 23 October 2020. Committee members Helen Webb and Bill Lord were invited to present, on behalf of the Committee, and participate in a panel discussion about “*Paramedic Accreditation, implications for WIL preceptors and facilitators*”.

Meetings with the Australasian Council of Paramedicine Deans (ACPD)

In November 2020, the Committee’s Co-Deputy Chair, Bill Lord and the Manager, Program Accreditation, met with members of the ACPD to discuss the accreditation standards for paramedicine and the linkage to the professional capabilities.

The Committee extended an invitation to the ACPD Chair to join the Committee’s December 2020 meeting via Zoom for a discussion on various topics such as monitoring of approved programs of study; 2020 COVID-19 reporting; accreditation standards implementation; professional capabilities; and assessment processes.

Stakeholder engagement framework

The Committee’s [Terms of Reference](#) requires “*processes for effective collaboration with key stakeholders including education providers and the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum*”.

In conjunction with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice, Chinese Medicine, Medical Radiation Practice, and Podiatry Accreditation Committees, the Committee has developed a common accreditation stakeholder engagement framework (the framework).

The Committee will use the framework to develop Stakeholder Engagement Plans for key accreditation projects.

Information forums March and April 2021

The Committee will run a series of webinar sessions in March and April 2021, on the implementation of the accreditation standards – more information on this, including exact dates, will be communicated to education providers by early February 2021.

Contact information

For any queries related to paramedicine program accreditation, please contact the Committee via the Program Accreditation Team at program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au.

For more information on paramedicine accreditation please visit the National Board’s accreditation webpage.

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