

## COVID-19

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee's initial statement on COVID-19

20 March 2020

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee (Committee), together with the Accreditation Councils and Committees for all professions regulated within the National Scheme, has adopted the [collective position](#) of the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum with respect to accredited programs and the impact of COVID-19.

#### Ongoing ability to meet the accreditation standards

The Committee's focus at this time is on ensuring that accredited programs continue to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise as a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner.

The Committee and Ahpra recognise the need for short-term creativity and flexibility in the way accredited programs meet the accreditation standards, including delivery methods and learning and teaching approaches. The Committee's outcomes-based accreditation standards enable this because they provide a level of flexibility for education providers to demonstrate their ongoing ability to meet the standards, and to address the professional capabilities in a range of ways.

The Committee and Ahpra understand that education providers may need to make short-term changes to elements of the delivery of accredited programs as a result of COVID-19. Education providers have been advised that it is not necessary for them to advise the Committee of temporary changes to their accredited programs if the changes will cease when the crisis period relating to COVID-19 subsides, unless the changes may impact on the ability of the programs to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise as a registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner.

Education providers are required to advise the Committee and Ahpra of:

- changes that may impact on the ability of an accredited program to produce graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise as registered health practitioners, even if this potential impact is only on its 2020 graduates, and/or
- changes that are likely to impact on the ongoing ability of an accredited program to meet the accreditation standards after the COVID-19 situation abates.

#### Accreditation activities for the remainder of 2020

At this stage the Committee has postponed any accreditation site visits scheduled before 30 June 2020. The Committee and Ahpra will monitor the COVID-19 situation and provide an update on site visit schedules in mid-May 2020.

The COVID-19 situation is escalating rapidly, but at this stage all other accreditation activities will proceed as scheduled including routine annual monitoring.

The Committee and Ahpra will continue to work with education providers and provide updates if the Committee's approach needs to change.