

Accreditation Committee Charter

1. Introduction

1.1 This Charter has been adopted by the Ahpra Board (the Board) to set out the role of the Accreditation Committee (the Committee).

1.2 The Committee's functions are 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). Other external entities performing accreditation roles as part of the National Scheme, such as specialist colleges and postgraduate medical councils should have regard for the committee's advice, where relevant
- support implementation of Health Ministers' February 2020 response to the recommendations of the Independent Review of Accreditation Systems Final Report (ASR Final Report)
- provide a forum for advice on significant whole of scheme accreditation issues including governance, accountability and transparency issues, and
- provide jurisdictions and relevant stakeholders with information on how national scheme entities and relevant external entities are taking the Committee's advice into account.

1.3 The Committee has no formal delegated power from the Board. The Policy Direction's intent is that Ahpra, National Boards and Accreditation Authorities are accountable for having regard to the Committee's advice when exercising their functions under the National Law.

1.4 This Charter has effect from the date nominated by the Board until it is subsequently amended and approved by the Board.

2. Purpose

2.1 The Board has established the Committee consistent with the *Ministerial Council Policy Direction 2020-1 – Independent Accreditation Committee advice* issued on 4 February 2021.

2.2 The scope of the Committee's advice will relate to key areas of reform identified by Ministerial Council, including:

- a. further developing funding principles that allow for the costs of accreditation functions to be measured and compared
- b. cross-profession policies and guidelines for accreditation standards development and assessment
- c. clarifying the roles of accreditation bodies and education regulators to avoid duplication
- d. strengthening the role of consumers (including employers) as a key stakeholder in accreditation systems
- e. maintaining the focus on an outcomes-based approaches to accreditation
- f. the role of competency standards in accreditation
- g. inter-professional education and collaborative practice
- h. rural and regional health
- i. building the 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
- j. other national scheme accreditation matters, and

k. outcomes of any reviews of accreditation issues by the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman and Privacy Commissioner (NHPOPC), where appropriate.

2.3 The Committee's advice will be addressed within existing mechanisms such as Accreditation Authority contracts/terms of reference and associated reporting against key performance indicators, revised funding principles and procedures for the development of accreditation standards. The Committee's role does not include providing advice on a particular qualification or standard for a specific profession.

3. Members of the Committee

3.1 Members of the Committee are formally appointed by the Board for a term not exceeding three years. Members may be re-appointed for two additional terms.

3.2 Members will be drawn from the categories identified by Ministerial Council including:

- an external accreditation/education expert ("external" means an individual who is not an office-bearer, employee or agent of any national board, accreditation authority or Ahpra)
- nominee of the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare
- nominee of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
- nominee of Universities Australia
- two nominees of the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum
- two Ahpra Board members
- two National Boards representatives
- jurisdictional representative
- private healthcare employer
- consumer/community representative
- two members who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

3.3 In addition, the Board must appoint an independent Chair of the Committee. "Independent" means an individual who is not:

- a member of the Board
- an office bearer, employee or agent of any organisation or entity that nominates a member to the Committee (**nominating body**), or
- an office bearer, employee or agent of any national board, accreditation authority, Ahpra, or any external entity performing accreditation roles as part of the national scheme.

3.4 The Chair may appoint a deputy to assist with fulfilling their role and to act as chair if the Chair is unavailable. The role and responsibilities of the Deputy Chair shall be agreed by the Board.

3.5 The Committee, through the Ahpra CEO, may request the Board co-opt individuals to the Committee if additional specific skills are required to fulfil the Committee's purpose.

3.6 The Board can fill a casual vacancy in the Committee to ensure the membership reflects this Charter and must ensure that the Committee has an independent Chair at all times.

4. Secretariat and professional support

4.1 Secretariat and professional support will be provided by Ahpra.

5. Transparency of advice

5.1 The Committee will publish its advice on the Ahpra website and provide a copy to national scheme entities, external entities performing accreditation roles as part of the national scheme and all nominating bodies.

6. Working groups

6.1 The Committee may establish working groups where specific expertise is needed to progress its work on key issues such as interprofessional education and collaborative practice.

7. Meetings of the Committee

7.1 The Committee will hold at least four scheduled meetings per calendar year.

7.2 In addition to the scheduled meetings, a meeting of the Committee must be held if requested by:

- the Board
- the Ahpra Jurisdictional Advisory Committee
- the Chair, or
- the Ahpra CEO.

7.3 A majority of members of the Committee, including the Chair or deputy chair, are required for a quorum.

7.4 If a member or attending Ahpra staff member has a 'material personal interest' in a matter that is being considered at a meeting, they must not be present for consideration or be included in any aspect of the recommendation or advice on that matter unless express approval is given by the Chair. Interest declarations must be reviewed on an annual basis.

7.5 The Committee, through the Ahpra CEO, may request at any of its meetings:

- the provision of relevant data or information
- the provision of independent professional advice or
- the attendance of any member of Ahpra staff.

8. Consideration of matters without a meeting

8.1 The Committee may progress its work by email between scheduled meetings if all members agree to consider and progress the matter without discussion.

9. Reporting

9.1 The Committee must submit the outcomes of each meeting to the next possible meeting of the Board and to each nominating body, including jurisdictions. Nominating bodies are:

- the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare
- the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
- Universities Australia
- the Health Professions Accreditation Collaborative Forum
- Ahpra Board
- National Boards
- Jurisdictions (all Australian state and territory governments and the Australian Government)
- the Australian Private Hospitals Association (nominating a private healthcare employer)
- Ahpra Community Reference Group (nominating a consumer/community representative)
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group (nominating a member who identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

9.2 The Chair and Agency Management Committee members of the Committee will provide regular reports to the Board on the Committee's activities.

9.3 The Committee will:

- conduct an annual self-evaluation and provide a summary of the outcomes to the next meeting of the Board, and
- review its activities and produce an annual report for consideration by the Board and circulation to each nominating body, including jurisdictions, and other relevant stakeholders.

9.4 The Committee must also provide any reports requested of it by the Board, the Ahpra Jurisdictional Advisory Committee or Ministerial Council.

10. Accountability and review

10.1 The Board will review this Charter annually, in consultation with nominating bodies, including jurisdictions.

10.2 Any changes to this Charter will be approved by the Board.

Approved by the Board – April 2023