

Consultation paper

December 2019

Draft proposed accreditation standards for Paramedicine

The Paramedicine Board of Australia (Board) requires the Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (Accreditation Committee) to develop accreditation standards for the paramedicine profession. Accreditation standards are used to assess whether a program of study (and the education provider delivering the program) provide graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to practise the profession competently and safely in Australia.

Background

Prior to the paramedicine profession becoming regulated under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (National Law), accreditation of paramedicine education programs was undertaken by the Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA). The transitional provisions of the National Law enabled the Board to approve programs of study accredited by the CAA before December 2018 as meeting the qualification requirements for registration as a paramedic.

The development of the proposed accreditation standards for paramedicine commenced in April 2019, as part of the National Law accreditation functions performed by the Accreditation Committee.

Preliminary consultation

From early August to early October 2019, the Accreditation Committee undertook a confidential preliminary consultation with key stakeholders including the paramedic peak bodies and jurisdictions (Commonwealth and state/territory health departments). Preliminary consultation enabled the Accreditation Committee to test an initial draft of the proposed accreditation standards and refine them before proceeding to public consultation. It also provided an opportunity for feedback to improve the clarity of the consultation documents.

The Accreditation Committee is now releasing this consultation paper and the draft proposed accreditation standards for public feedback.

Providing feedback

The Accreditation Committee is consulting on the draft proposed accreditation standards (attached). In addition to general feedback, they are interested in stakeholders' responses to specific questions about the proposed accreditation standards.

Feedback can be provided by sending your responses in the template by email, to accreditationstandards.review@ahpra.gov.au.

This should be provided by close of business on **13 March 2020**.

Submissions for website publication should be sent in Word format or equivalent.¹

Information sessions

The Accreditation Committee invites interested stakeholders to attend information sessions to introduce and discuss the draft proposed accreditation standards across Australia from 6pm to 8pm on the following dates:

- 5 February 2020 in Melbourne
- 17 February 2020 in Brisbane
- 18 February 2020 in Sydney
- 24 February 2020 in Adelaide
- 25 February 2020 in Perth

For those who are interested in the information sessions but are unable to attend one of the planned sessions above, there will be the option of an online information session. Please indicate if you are interested in this online information session option, or if you would like to attend a face to face information session, by sending an email to accreditationstandards.review@ahpra.gov.au with your full name, position, employer (if relevant) and which session you'd like to attend. The venue in each city will be confirmed nearer to the time. Please note that attendee numbers are limited.

Registration and light refreshments will be available from 5.30pm.

Publication of submissions

The Accreditation Committee and AHPRA publish submissions at their discretion.

We generally publish submissions on our websites to encourage discussion and inform the community and stakeholders. Please advise us if you do not want your submission published.

We will not place on our websites, or make available to the public, submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments or which are outside the scope of the subject of the consultation. Before publication, we may remove personally-identifying information from submissions, including contact details.

The views expressed in the submissions are those of the individuals or organisations who submit them, and their publication does not imply any acceptance of, or agreement with, these views by the Accreditation Committee or AHPRA.

The Accreditation Committee and AHPRA accept submissions made in confidence. These submissions will not be published on the website or elsewhere. Submissions may be confidential because they include personal experiences or other sensitive information. Any request for access to a confidential submission will be determined in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)*, which has provisions designed to protect personal information and information given in confidence. Please let us know if you do not want us to publish your submission or want us to treat all or part of it as confidential.

Published submissions will include the names of the individuals and/or the organisations that made the submission unless confidentiality is requested.

¹ We aim to publish documents in accessible formats (such as word files) to meet international website accessibility guidelines. Therefore, while you are welcome to supply a PDF file of your feedback, we ask that you also provide a text or word file. More information about this is available at www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Accessibility.aspx

Overview

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), requires the accreditation committee established by the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the Board) to develop accreditation standards for paramedicine, and submit these accreditation standards to the Board for approval. The Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (Accreditation Committee) must subsequently review the accreditation standards on a regular basis to ensure they are contemporary and relevant.

The Accreditation Committee is developing the draft proposed accreditation standards for paramedicine in accordance with [AHPRA procedures for the development of accreditation standards](#) and the requirements of the National Law.

When the accreditation standards for paramedicine are approved by the National Board, they will be the approved accreditation standards for paramedicine under the National Law. The Accreditation Committee will use the approved accreditation standards to assess programs of study and the education providers that offer the programs to ensure that they produce graduates who have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to competently and safely practise as paramedics in Australia.

The Accreditation Committee is consulting about the content of the draft proposed accreditation standards they will use to assess programs of study and education providers.

Following analysis of feedback from the public consultation on the draft proposed accreditation standards, the Accreditation Committee may adjust the proposed accreditation standards before submitting them to the Board.

The accreditation process

The accreditation process for paramedicine is being developed alongside the development of these draft proposed accreditation standards. The Accreditation Committee will consult major users and stakeholders, including education providers, on the draft proposed accreditation process in early 2020 and this will be finalised alongside the proposed accreditation standards.

The interaction of the accreditation standards with the interim professional capabilities for paramedicine

In parallel with the Accreditation Committee's development of proposed accreditation standards, the Board is consulting on its current interim professional capabilities for paramedics. These capabilities will be referenced by the approved accreditation standards for paramedicine to ensure paramedic graduates from approved programs of study are adequately trained, competent and suitable for registration as a paramedic in Australia.

Issues for discussion

Approach to drafting proposed accreditation standards

The Accreditation Committee's approach is based on a comprehensive review of accreditation standards both nationally and internationally, including a cross-profession analysis of accreditation standards for all health professions within the National Scheme. This consultation gives stakeholders an opportunity to give feedback to the Accreditation Committee on the draft proposed accreditation standards for paramedicine.

The draft proposed accreditation standards place emphasis on safe practice, cultural competence, and on outcomes relevant to the expected competence of graduates. It is proposed that the paramedicine accreditation standards:

- be structured to appropriately align with nine other accreditation authorities within the National Scheme (see more details below)
- reflect an outcome-focused approach
- consist of five standards with accompanying criteria
- do not contain the professional capabilities but refer to professional capabilities endorsed by the Board, and
- are included along with expected information (evidence) and explanatory notes within a single document to clearly describe the Accreditation Committee's expectations.

Although they are within a single document, the expected information and/or explanatory notes are not accreditation standards and updates to the information and notes do not change the accreditation standards. The structure of the proposed accreditation standards is based on an approach used by the majority of regulated health professions in Australia. The proposed accreditation standards consist of five domains, each with a single standard statement:

Domain: Assuring safe practice

Standard 1: Assuring safe practice is paramount in program design and implementation

Domain: Academic governance and quality assurance of the program

Standard 2: Academic governance and quality improvement strategies, policies and procedures are effective in developing and delivering/implementing sustainable, high-quality education at the program level

Domain: Program design, implementation and resourcing

Standard 3: Program design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve professional capabilities endorsed by the Paramedicine Board of Australia

Domain: The student experience

Standard 4: Students in the program are given equitable and timely access to information and support

Domain: Assessment

Standard 5: All graduates have demonstrated they have achieved all the learning outcomes required of the program, including the requirements for safe and competent practice, and the professional capabilities endorsed by the Paramedicine Board of Australia.

Each standard statement is supported by several criteria. The criteria are indicators that set out expectations for an education provider and its program to meet the accreditation standard.

There is specific, expected, documented information that education providers will be asked to submit for each accreditation standard as part of their accreditation application. The expected information is described for each criterion within the standards document and in explanatory notes that follow each accreditation standard.

Separation of the accreditation standards and accreditation process documents

The draft proposed accreditation standards and draft proposed accreditation process (currently in development) will sit in separate documents because they are separated under the National Law – the accreditation standards will, once approved, become the Board's accreditation standards, but the accreditation process describes how the Accreditation Committee will assess, accredit and monitor education providers and programs.

Consultation questions

Please use the response template to address the following questions when you are commenting on the draft proposed accreditation standards.

1. Does any content need to be added?
2. Does any content need to be amended?
3. Are there any potential unintended consequences of the current wording?
4. Do the proposed accreditation standards, associated criteria, expected information and explanatory notes indicate clearly what is required for education providers to demonstrate they are producing safe and competent graduates?
5. Do you think education providers will have difficulty in providing evidence (expected information) to meet any of the criteria?
6. What do you think should be the Accreditation Committee's minimum expectations for education providers to demonstrate adequate quality, quantity, duration and diversity of a student's experience during paramedicine work-integrated learning? (related to standard 3.11)
7. Do you have any other general feedback or comments on the proposed standards?

Feedback can be provided by sending the completed response template by email to AHPRA at

accreditationstandards.review@ahpra.gov.au

The closing date for feedback is **Friday, 13 March 2020**

For further information regarding the project, contact the Project Manager, Simone Pike

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Associated document

Draft Proposed Accreditation Standards: *Paramedicine*