

Paramedicine Accreditation Committee - Terms of Reference

26 November 2018

Terms of Reference

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1. Purpose

Pursuant to section 43 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the Board) has decided the accreditation functions for the paramedicine profession will be exercised by a committee established by the Board.

The Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (the Committee) is established by the Board in accordance with clause 11 of schedule 4 of the National Law.

The Committee will:

1. develop and review accreditation standards
2. assess and accredit programs of study
3. monitor approved programs of study and education providers to ensure they continue to meet accreditation standards
4. advise the Board on issues in education and clinical training which may impact on paramedicine practice and approved paramedicine programs, and
5. consider other matters as requested by the Board

Subject to confirmation by the Board, the Committee may also:

6. oversee the assessment of the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of overseas qualified paramedics seeking registration in Australia, and
7. advise the Board on issues relating to overseas qualified paramedics seeking registration in Australia

2. Functions

The functions of the Committee are as follows:

1. In relation to **developing accreditation standards**:
 - develop accreditation standards which are subject to wide ranging consultation, and submit these to the Board for approval, and
 - review and resubmit to the Board any proposed accreditation standards if requested by the Board to do so.
2. In relation to **accrediting programs of study**:
 - where an education provider applies for accreditation against the standards which have been approved by the Board and published on the Board's website, assess both the education provider and the relevant programs of study
 - where the Committee considers that the education provider and the relevant programs of study meet the standards approved by the Board, accredit the program and provide a report to the Board on its accreditation of the program to inform the Board's decision to approve or refuse to approve the program as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration
 - where the Committee considers that the education provider and the relevant programs of study substantially meet the standards approved by the Board and the imposition of conditions will enable the standards to be met within a reasonable time, accredit the program with the imposition of conditions and provide a report to the Board on its accreditation of the program to inform the Board's decision to approve or refuse to approve the program as providing a qualification for the purposes of registration
 - where the Committee does not consider that the education provider and/or program of study meet the Board-approved standards, and the imposition of conditions will not enable the outstanding standards to be met within a reasonable time, refuse to accredit the program and give notice of this to the Board and the education provider outlining the reasons for the Committee's decision and advising how the education provider can apply for an internal review of the Committee's decision, and
 - ensure that any internal review of the Committee's decision is carried out by people who are different to those who were involved in carrying out the initial assessment.
3. In relation to **monitoring approved programs of study and education providers** to ensure the Committee remains satisfied they continue to meet the Board-approved accreditation standards:
 - take reasonable steps to ensure that approved programs of study and education providers continue to meet the Board-approved standards by undertaking routine annual monitoring of high

risk issues, periodic checks of medium risk issues at least every three years and specific monitoring and checks where there is a specific concern or risk

- impose conditions on accreditation of a program of study if it no longer meets the Board-approved standards to ensure it meets the standards within a reasonable time-frame and give notice of this to the Board and the education provider outlining the reasons for the Committee's decision
- revoke the accreditation of a program if it no longer meets the Board-approved standards and cannot meet the standards within a reasonable time and give notice of this to the Board and the education provider outlining the reasons for the Committee's decision and advising how the education provider can apply for an internal review of the Committee's decision, and
- ensure that any internal review of the Committee's decision is carried out by people who are different to those who were involved in carrying out the initial assessment.

4. In relation to **overseeing the assessment of overseas qualified paramedics** seeking registration in Australia:

- oversee assessments of the knowledge, clinical skills and professional attributes of paramedics seeking registration in Australia
- provide advice to the Board on matters relating to assessment of overseas qualified paramedics

5. Advise the Board of issues in education and practice which may impact on paramedicine practice and approved paramedicine programs.

3. Duty to Act in the Public Interest

A member of the Committee is to act impartially and in the public interest in the exercise of their functions.

A member of the Committee is to put the public interest before:

- the interests of particular education providers or any entity that represents education providers
- the interests of the profession or any entity that represents the profession, and
- the interests of employers or any entity that represents employers.

4. Conflicts of Interest

Members of the Committee are to comply with the conflict of interest requirements set out in clause 8 of schedule 4 of the National Law.

5. Membership

The Committee will consist of seven members including:

- one individual who is not a paramedic and who has relevant expertise in higher education and in accreditation within the National Scheme
- two registered paramedics currently working in senior positions within the higher education sector who have experiences in paramedicine program delivery and accreditation processes
- four registered paramedics currently working in senior positions in the profession who have comprehensive practical paramedicine experience

The Board will appoint one of the members to be the chair of the Committee and one as deputy chair.

6. Quorum

A quorum for the Committee shall be four members including the Chair or Deputy Chair.

7. Appointment of Members and Term of Appointment

Members of the Board and members of other Board committees are not eligible for appointment to the Committee.

The Board will appoint each member of the Committee following a call for applications published on the Board's website. In deciding whether to appoint a person as a member of the Committee, the Board is to have regard to the skills and experience that are relevant to the Committee's functions.

The selection advisory panel will comprise two members of the Board, the Executive Officer, Paramedicine and the National Director, Policy and Accreditation (or their nominee).

Each member of the Committee will be appointed for a term determined by the Board for up to three years and be eligible to apply for reappointment for a maximum of three terms.

The Board may remove a Committee member if:

1. the member has been found guilty of an offence (whether in a participating jurisdiction or elsewhere) that, in the opinion of the Board, renders the member unfit to continue to hold the office of member; or
2. the member ceases to be a registered health practitioner as a result of the member's misconduct, impairment or incompetence; or
3. the member becomes bankrupt, applies to take the benefit of any law for the relief of bankrupt or insolvent debtors, compounds with the member's creditors or makes an assignment of the member's remuneration for their benefit; or
4. the Committee or Board recommends the removal of the member, on the basis that the member has engaged in misconduct or has failed or is unable to properly exercise the member's functions as a member, or
5. the member is absent, without leave first being granted by the Board or committee chair, from 3 or more consecutive meetings of the Committee of which reasonable notice has been given to the member personally or by post

Where a vacancy occurs prior to the end of a member's term, the Board may fill the vacancy on a temporary or longer-term basis. It is not necessary to advertise such a vacancy before appointing a person to fill a casual vacancy but the appointment must be consistent with the membership details set out in these terms of reference.

8. Meetings and Procedures

Meetings will be scheduled as required and be either face-to-face or held by other means such as teleconference or videoconference in accordance with clause 16 to schedule 4 of the National Law.

A record of meeting will be made by Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) staff and confirmed at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee will convene program assessment teams and may convene other working groups to assist it to exercise its functions. AHPRA, in consultation with the Committee, will recruit appropriate experts to participate in program assessment teams and working groups through an application process similar to that conducted for the Committee appointments.

9. Decision Making

While it is preferred that the Committee reaches decisions by consensus, if this is not possible, a decision supported by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting at which a quorum is present, is the decision.

In the event of an equality of votes, the chair of the Committee has a second or casting vote.

10. Support

AHPRA will provide support for the Committee and its delivery of the accreditation functions.

11. Reporting and Communication Arrangements

The Committee will submit reports on its work to the Board at least four times a year and provide additional reports and liaison when required.

Meetings between the Chair of the Committee, AHPRA staff supporting the Committee and the Board Chair (or delegate) and Executive Officer will be conducted at least four times a year.

The Board and Committee will work together in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.

12. Quality Framework for the Accreditation Function

The Committee will be guided by the *Quality Framework for the Accreditation Function* as it applies to the paramedicine profession.

13. Finances

The costs of delivery of the accreditation functions are funded from:

1. the annual budget of the Board, and
2. fees charged to educational institutions

The Committee will submit an annual work plan and indicative budget for the following financial year to the Board by mid-March each year.

The Committee will provide a year to date report against budget to the Board four times a year.

The annual work plan and indicative budget will include:

1. advice about the accreditation activities planned by the Committee for the next financial year
2. details about the expected income, expenditure and net cost to the Board for the next financial year.

14. Dispute resolution

In the event of a disagreement between the Committee and the Board, the preferred approach to resolving the matter is:

1. The Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Committee must meet to discuss the matter and seek to resolve the disagreement. AHPRA assist with the arrangements for such a meeting as part of its usual role in providing support to the Board and Committee.
2. If the Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Committee are unable to resolve the disagreement within 28 days of meeting, they must refer the disagreement to the National Director, Policy and Accreditation, Strategy and Policy Directorate, AHPRA.
3. The National Director, Policy and Accreditation will take reasonable steps to facilitate resolution of the disagreement to the satisfaction of the Board.

15. Other

Duty of confidentiality

Members of the Committee are bound by the duty of the confidentiality under section 216 of the National Law.

If the Committee intends to publish its findings under paragraph 49(4)(b) of the National Law, it must provide the Board with 14 days' notice of its intention and it must consider any comments provided by the Board in response.

Protection from personal liability for persons exercising functions

As per s.236 of the National Law:

1. a protected person is not personally liable for anything done or omitted to be done in good faith:
 - 1.1 in the exercise of a function under this Law; or
 - 1.2 in the reasonable belief that the act or omission was the exercise of a function under this Law.
2. any liability resulting from an act or omission that would, but for subsection (1), attach to a protected person attaches instead to the National Agency.

16. Review of these Arrangements

The Board may change the Terms of Reference at any time in consultation with AHPRA and the Committee.

These accreditation arrangements will be reviewed by 30 November 2021.

Approved by the Paramedicine Board of Australia 26 November 2018.