

Public consultation

18 Dec 2019

Public consultation: Draft proposed professional capabilities for paramedicine practitioners

We welcome your feedback on the enclosed draft proposed professional capabilities for paramedics by email to paramedicineconsultation@ahpra.gov.au by midday on 13 March 2020.

Public consultation

Interim professional capabilities for paramedics were approved and published by the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the Board) on 29 June 2018. These interim professional capabilities have been reviewed and the Board is now seeking consultation feedback on a set of draft proposed capabilities for paramedics (draft proposed professional capabilities). The Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (the Accreditation Committee) is separately seeking consultation feedback on proposed accreditation standards for the education and training of paramedics for registration by the Board. Although the draft proposed professional capabilities are developed separately to the proposed accreditation standards, they are being consulted on simultaneously due to the implicit linkage between capability and accreditation.

The draft proposed professional capabilities describe the threshold level of professional capability required for general registration as a paramedic in Australia.

About this preliminary consultation

This public consultation allows the Board to test proposals and refine them before a final version of the capabilities is approved and published. This follows a round of confidential preliminary consultation with a limited group of stakeholders earlier in 2019.

Your feedback

The Board invites you to provide feedback on this **public consultation** on the draft proposed professional capabilities for paramedicine practitioners (Attachment A).

Please note that unless advised otherwise, your comments and feedback will be published on the Board's or Ahpra's websites.

To assist the consideration and publication of your submission, please use the template provided (Attachment B) and give feedback in Word format or equivalent.

Feedback can be provided by email to Ahpra:

paramedicineconsultation@ahpra.gov.au.

You may want to use the response template to provide your feedback.

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

For further information about the project, contact Paul Fisher, Executive Officer, Paramedicine:

paul.fisher@ahpra.gov.au.

Overview

The Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act, as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), established the Paramedicine Board of Australia (the Board) to begin national regulation of the profession from 1 December 2018. The Board is responsible for the regulation of paramedics and established the Paramedicine Accreditation Committee under the National Law in October 2019 to carry out the accreditation function for paramedicine as set out in s43 of the National Law and appointed the current membership of the committee on 18 March 2019.

On 29 June 2018, the Board published *Interim professional capabilities for paramedics*. These professional capabilities describe the knowledge skills and attributes of a registered paramedic and apply to all registered paramedics and to individuals seeking to qualify for registration, including:

- practitioners qualified and/or trained in Australia; and
- practitioners qualified and/or trained overseas.

When finalised and approved, these capabilities will apply to education providers and their programs of study (programs) to assure those programs provide graduates with the knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed to safely and competently practise paramedicine in Australia.

Following analysis of feedback from preliminary consultation, the Board has modified the *Interim professional capabilities for paramedics* prior to this public consultation. Following analysis of feedback from public consultation, the Board may further modify the document before approving a final version for publication and application. Once approved, they will become the *Professional capabilities for paramedics*.

The relationship between the draft proposed professional capabilities and the proposed accreditation standards for paramedicine

The Board does not directly examine or assess the competence of applicants for registration who have completed their paramedicine education in Australia through an approved program of study.

The Paramedicine Accreditation Committee (the Accreditation Committee) is responsible for accrediting education providers and their paramedicine programs of study. The Accreditation Committee will assess programs against the accreditation standards, which are being developed by the Accreditation Committee for review and approval by the Board. The Accreditation Committee accredits programs that meet the accreditation standards and monitors programs to ensure they continue to meet them.

Accreditation of a program, therefore, assures the Board and the community that graduating students have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed to safely and competently practise paramedicine in Australia.

The proposed professional capabilities are expected to be finalised, approved and published around the same time as the accreditation standards for paramedic approved programs of study.

The approved accreditation standards and professional capabilities will take effect several months after they are published. This will allow education providers to make any necessary changes to meet the accreditation standards. The accreditation standards published by the Council of Ambulance Authorities and interim capabilities published by the Board will continue to be used until these new documents take effect.

Purpose and intended use of the proposed professional capabilities

The draft proposed professional capabilities identify the knowledge, skills and professional attributes needed to safely and competently practise as a paramedic in Australia. They describe the threshold level of professional capability required for both initial and continuing registration.

Education providers will use the professional capabilities for the development of paramedicine program curricula (learning and assessment).

Approach to developing the proposed professional capabilities

The approach to the draft proposed professional capabilities is informed by:

- feedback on the interim set of capabilities currently in place;
- feedback received in preliminary consultation on the interim set of capabilities currently in place;
- early collaborative engagement between the Accreditation Committee and the Board; and
- a review of recently published professional capabilities for other health professions in and outside of the National Scheme.

Key features of the draft proposed professional capabilities

1. Many of the draft proposed professional capabilities reflect the Council of Ambulance Authorities' professional competency standards.
2. The standard titles of the professional capabilities reflect practitioner roles.
3. The domains describe the key features of safe and competent paramedicine practice in a range of contexts and situations of varying complexity and uncertainty. As part of their professional conduct and practice, paramedics are expected to demonstrate key capabilities from the various domains. This recognises that competent professional practice requires an ability to draw on and integrate the breadth of capabilities to support overall performance.

The statements about the level of capability describe the essential and measurable characteristics of the corresponding key capabilities and facilitate assessment of performance in the practice setting. Safe and competent practitioners will demonstrate all enabling components for all key capabilities for safe and competent practise. This includes applying and adapting new knowledge from experience to continually improve clinical and professional performance.

4. The draft proposed professional capabilities describe the level of capability needed for safe and competent practice. They are informed by capability principles to recognise that practitioners must be capable of taking appropriate and effective action to formulate and solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar settings, as well as in complex and changing settings, rather than just showing that they know how to perform practice-related tasks in isolation.
5. The draft proposed professional capabilities are also patient-centred and include engagement with, and involvement of, the patient at all stages of the practitioner-patient interaction.

The draft proposed professional capabilities address cultural competence and cultural safety in practice. Cultural competence and cultural safety, particularly concerning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have been incorporated into the professional capabilities. This is important because paramedics in Australia need a working knowledge of factors that contribute to and influence the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. These factors include history, spirituality and relationship to land and other determinants of health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Cultural competence is a commonly used term that encompasses patient-centred concepts focused on demonstrating cultural safety and cultural respect. It involves interacting effectively with and responding to each patient. Culturally responsive practice requires practitioners to reflect not only on their own culture but on that of their patient and to engage in new and ongoing learning relevant to cultural safety.

The National Scheme's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group's current definition for cultural safety has been included in the professional capabilities. This definition is under review, and any changes will be reflected in future versions of the proposed professional capabilities document.

The Board is interested in your feedback about the draft proposed professional capabilities

The Board welcomes comment about the draft proposed professional capabilities and this consultation paper.

Feedback is sought on:

- the information in this consultation paper;
- the draft proposed professional capabilities document (Attachment A):
 - the information in the introduction of the draft proposed professional capabilities; and
 - the key capabilities and corresponding levels of capability in each domain of the draft proposed professional capabilities.

Specific questions the Board would like you to address are:

1. Does any content need to be added to the document?
2. Does any content need to be amended or removed from the document?
3. Is there important content in these capabilities that is better placed in clinical practice guidelines or in ethical and professional guidelines, and vice versa?
4. Is the content on cultural safety clear and helpful? Why or why not?
5. Is the language clear and appropriate? Are there any potential unintended consequences of the current wording?
6. Are there jurisdiction-specific impacts for practitioners, or governments or other stakeholders that the Board should be aware of if these professional capabilities are adopted?
7. Are there implementation issues the Board should be aware of?
8. Do you have any other feedback or comments on this consultation paper, process or the proposed draft proposed professional capabilities?

Publication of submissions

The Board will publish submissions at its 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 Board.

The Board will 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.

Please provide your feedback by email to paramedicineconsultation@ahpra.gov.au (using the response template if desired) by midday on 13 March 2020.

Attachments

Attachment A: Draft proposed professional capabilities for paramedicine practitioners

Attachment B: Proforma response template for providing feedback