



australian
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council

O-50 Accreditation Virtual Site Visit Procedure

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
APC	Australian Pharmacy Council

Accreditation Virtual Site Visit Procedure

1. Introduction

The APC accreditation process includes a site visit as part of the usual accreditation cycle.

We will usually undertake a site visit face to face, which means that the Accreditation Assessment Team ('Team') members/APC representative travel to and undertake interviews at the program delivery site.

In specific circumstances, where travel and attendance at a program delivery site is not possible, we may decide that a virtual site visit can occur.

This document guides the conduct of site visits that are held virtually.

2. Purpose

A virtual site visit is held in place of a face to face visit only when travel to the program delivery location by the assessors/APC representative is not possible. For programs that are granted accreditation following a virtual site visit, accreditation may be conditional on a face to face site visit taking place at a later date (ideally within 12 months of accreditation being granted).

2.1. Follow up face to face visit

If a face to face visit is required, it will take place at a time that is practical after the virtual site visit and with mutual agreement between APC and the education provider.

The purpose of a follow up face to face visit is to confirm the findings of the virtual site visit. It will be a minimum of a one-day on-site evaluation conducted by a minimum of a two-member team comprised of an experienced Team Chair and an APC representative. The schedule for the follow up visit will be confirmed with the education provider in advance of the site visit.

Where possible, the follow up visit will be conducted by the same Team Chair and APC representative as the virtual visit.

The costs of a follow up face to face visit will be absorbed by APC.

3. Decision making

APC will make the final decision on whether a virtual site visit will be used and will communicate the decision to the education provider as soon as possible prior to the scheduled site visit.

3.1. Minimum eligibility requirements

Factors that we will consider include (but are not limited to):

- travel restrictions in place at the program delivery site
- travel restrictions (including quarantine requirements) in place for assessors/APC representative
- social distancing requirements/restrictions on gatherings at the program delivery site
- education provider restrictions on external visitors to their program delivery site
- the availability of a meeting room at the program delivery site that meets gathering rules in place (i.e. a room with adequate capacity for the maximum number of intended attendees at a single meeting).

Education providers who receive a virtual site visit must ensure that all individuals who have been identified as interview participants for the site visit are able to meet virtually with the assessors/APC representative.

If travel to the program delivery location is not possible, it is still preferable that the assessors/APC representative are located together to undertake the assessment of the program. We will endeavour to gather the assessors/APC representative in one location to facilitate their discussions and for collective decision-making to take place as a team.

4. Technology

The maintenance of privacy and confidentiality as part of the accreditation process is important to us.

APC virtual site visits will be conducted *via* Zoom videoconference. We will set up meeting codes and passwords for the virtual site visit, utilise a virtual waiting room and restrict entry into meetings to participants identified in the schedule.

4.1. Guidelines

The following points are considered essential for the smooth conduct of a virtual site visit using Zoom:

- all participants must have their own device to log into the interview separately
- there should not be multiple attendees on a single screen
- all participants must have their video turned on and be visible on screen for the duration of the interview
- all participants must display their full name (first name, surname) on their Zoom window when they enter the virtual waiting room to allow us to identify them
- we will manage entry into each interview session *via* a waiting room, and only participants listed on the site visit schedule will be admitted
- we may edit participant names on Zoom for clarity during the interview

- we will not record any of the interview sessions, and the education provider and attendees are not permitted to record any sessions
- it is our responsibility to ensure that the assessors/APC representative can access Zoom prior to the start of the site visit
- it is the responsibility of the education provider to ensure that interview attendees can access Zoom prior to their interview session (e.g. running a 'test' meeting and/or encouraging participants to log in at least 10 minutes before their session is recommended).

4.2. Backup

Some pre-planning is recommended to minimise the likelihood of an interview session not going ahead due to technology or power failure. All participants should install the Zoom meeting app on their mobile phone to use as a backup login option.

5. Personnel managing the 'virtual' site visit

The roles of the assessors/APC representative and designated program leader (e.g. Head of School, Program Lead) remain unchanged regardless of whether the site visit is conducted face to face or virtually.

To manage the additional requirements of the virtual visit, an additional APC representative may be appointed the virtual site visit to perform a secretariat role. The education provider is also encouraged to appoint an individual to coordinate the requirements of the virtual site visit. The two roles are described below:

5.1. APC Secretariat

In the event that a site visit is held virtually, APC may appoint a staff member to act as secretariat. The role of the APC secretariat will include (but not be limited to):

- acting as host for all Zoom interviews
- checking the names of individuals in the virtual waiting room against the site visit schedule
- admitting eligible participants to each interview session
- providing support to assessors/APC representative to test and access their Zoom account via their personal device prior to the site visit
- providing support to assessors/APC representative on the use of technology and meeting logistics during the site visit
- communicating directly with the education provider representative responsible for managing meeting attendees (the 'meeting facilitator') both before and during the site visit.

5.2. Education provider representative – ‘meeting facilitator’

The education provider will be asked to nominate a staff member to act as the ‘meeting facilitator’ for the site visit. The role of the meeting facilitator will include (but not be limited to):

- ensuring all individuals who are invited to participate in the site visit interviews can access the Zoom meeting, and have a backup option for meeting access available
- communicating directly with the APC secretariat both before and during the site visit.

The program representative who acts as the ‘meeting facilitator’ ideally does not participate in an interview session when they are in the role of facilitator (i.e. they are not an invited attendee who will be answering questions from the team).

6. Tour of facilities

To allow the team to view the program facilities if a virtual site visit is required, the education provider will be asked to submit a pre-recorded video tour of their facilities with their written accreditation submission. In the event that a face to face visit cannot take place, the assessors/APC representative will view the pre-recorded tour prior to the site visit. **The videos are not required to be professionally filmed or edited. If the education provider includes audio descriptions in the video, the sound should be clear.**

To align with the allocated interview sessions in the site visit schedule to observe laboratory and teaching spaces, the video of the tour of the facilities should consist of two separate videos with a duration not exceeding 20 minutes each (i.e. 20 minutes each for laboratory spaces and 20 minutes for teaching spaces). This is the usual time allocated for a tour of the facilities during an in person site visit. The assessors/APC representative may request a supplemental live tour during the virtual site visit if they have any further questions or concerns about the facilities after viewing the videos.

The videos should show (as a minimum) the following:

6.1. Laboratory spaces (maximum 20 minutes)

- laboratory/practical spaces used by pharmacy students including:
 - wet labs
 - chemical storage areas
 - student safety aspects (emergency eye wash and safety shower station)
 - specialised pharmacy compounding equipment including:
 - areas for aseptic dispensing
- counselling suites/mock dispensary areas including:
 - computers and label printers used for dispensing
 - scheduled and over the counter medications for role playing.

6.2. Teaching spaces (maximum 20 minutes)

- lecture theatres
- tutorial/small group spaces
- any other areas available for students to undertake individual or group study.

7. Education provider requirements for a virtual site visit

If a virtual site visit is confirmed, the education provider is required to:

- ensure that all interview participants are notified that the visit will be *via* Zoom
- ensure that all interview participants can log into a Zoom meeting
- provide APC with two video tours of the facilities (in accordance with the guidelines above)
- appoint a 'meeting facilitator' (see the role description above).

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