



australian
pharmacy
council

O-01 Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy

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Glossary of Terms

Term	Meaning
Accreditation	Accreditation of a degree program, intern training program (ITP), pharmacist education program, continuing professional development (CPD) accrediting organisation or CPD activity against defined standards to ensure that the education and training is rigorous and prepares individuals to practise a health profession safely.
Accreditation Committee (AC)	A standing committee of the APC Board which is structured to draw upon relevant expertise across the pharmacy profession, academia and the community to undertake accreditation decision making on behalf of APC.
Accredited CPD accrediting organisation	Refers to an organisation accredited by APC to accredit pharmacist CPD activities on its behalf.
Accredited pharmacist education program	Collective term used to refer to pharmacist education programs that have been assessed by the APC Accreditation Committee (AC) to be 'compliant' or 'substantially compliant' with the pharmacist education program accreditation standards. The programs prepare pharmacists for roles as medication management review (MMR) and/or aged care on-site pharmacists.
Accredited pharmacy program	Collective term used to refer to pharmacy degree programs and ITPs that have been assessed by the APC AC to be 'compliant' or 'substantially compliant' with the pharmacy program accreditation standards.
Accredited program provider	Refers to an organisation that is responsible for delivering an accredited pharmacy or pharmacist education program.
CPD	The means by which members of the profession maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge, expertise and competence, and develop the personal and professional qualities required throughout their professional lives ¹ .
CPD activity provider	Refers to providers of CPD activities for the pharmacy profession. <i>NB: Please note that in some instances the CPD accrediting organisation and the CPD activity provider is the same.</i>

¹ This definition is adopted from the PharmBA [Registration Standard – Continuing Professional Development](#).

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
AC	Accreditation Committee
ACOP	Aged Care On-site Pharmacist
AON	Accreditation Outcome Notification
APC	Australian Pharmacy Council
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ITP	Intern Training Program
IWE	Intern Written Exam
MMR	Medication Management Review
MR	Monitoring Requirement
NoC	Notification of Change
NRAS	National Registration and Accreditation Scheme
PharmBA	Pharmacy Board of Australia
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning

Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy

1. Purpose

To allow for the ongoing quality assurance monitoring of all accredited programs and continuing professional development (CPD) accrediting organisations.

Accredited CPD activities delivered by CPD activity providers are monitored through the CPD accrediting organisations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all APC accredited programs and CPD accrediting organisations.

3. Overview

The Pharmacy Board of Australia (PharmBA) has authorised APC to accredit pharmacy programs in Australia.

We also accredit:

- international pharmacy degree programs
- pharmacist education programs
- organisations to accredit CPD activities for pharmacists.

4. Quality assurance and monitoring activities

To allow for the ongoing quality assurance monitoring of accredited programs and CPD accrediting organisations, we undertake the following activities:

Table 1 Quality assurance and monitoring activities undertaken by APC

Pharmacy degree programs	ITPs	Pharmacist education programs	CPD accrediting organisations
NoC	NoC	NoC	NoC
Reporting	Reporting	Reporting	Reporting
Site visits	Site visits	Desktop audits	Desktop audits
Accreditation Marketing Policy monitoring	Accreditation Marketing Policy monitoring	Accreditation Marketing Policy monitoring	Accreditation Marketing Policy monitoring
Networking	Networking	Networking	Networking

Pharmacy degree programs	ITPs	Pharmacist education programs	CPD accrediting organisations
Surveys	Surveys	Surveys	Surveys
TEQSA registration status	ASQA/TEQSA registration status	ASQA/TEQSA/other applicable registration status	Site audits
IWE data	IWE data		
Regular meeting with Council of Pharmacy Schools (CPS)			
Department of Education and Training data			

4.1. Notification of Change (NoC)

Frequency: As required when a program change is planned

Target: Accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations

An accredited program provider must notify us in writing via our [NoC form](#) of planned change(s) to any part of the program (including curriculum or resources), immediately when a change decision is anticipated (prior to the change being made). It is the responsibility of our AC to determine if it is a material (major) or minor change², and if it warrants a reassessment of the accreditation status of the program. Reassessment of the accreditation status can take the form of an external review or a site visit.

A CPD accrediting organisation must [notify us](#) in writing of change(s) to any part of their accreditation process (including resources), immediately following a change decision. It is the responsibility of the AC to determine if this warrants a reassessment of the accreditation status of the organisation. Reassessment of the accreditation status can take the form of a site visit or desktop audit.

² Please refer to our [NoC form](#) for definitions of what constitutes a material or minor change.

4.2. Reporting

4.2.1. Annual reporting

Frequency: Annually

Target: Accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations

Accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations are required to submit an annual report each year.

We provide a template which requests information which may include the following (or additional information as required), specific to the program/organisation:

Accredited program providers

- staffing profile (including changes to employment, changes to qualifications or teaching responsibilities)
- curriculum changes
- student progression rates (including reasons for variation in student numbers - degree programs only)
- enrolled student/intern/learner numbers (including breakdown of domestic and international students)
- anticipated program changes in the next 12 months (e.g. new buildings, curriculum changes, staff changes)
- quality improvement activities undertaken in the previous 12 months
- WIL placement details (i.e. number of hours, types of placement site)
- interprofessional opportunities (degree programs only).

Accredited CPD accrediting organisations

- total number of accreditation applications received
- number of accreditation applications granted accreditation
- number of accreditation applications not granted accreditation, and de-identified information regarding the reason(s) for rejection
- staffing profile
- quality improvement activities undertaken in the previous 12 months.

Annual reports are provided to the AC for discussion and decision. Information obtained from annual reports is used by us for quality assurance and monitoring purposes. The information is not published on our website.

4.2.2. Ongoing reporting

Frequency: As requested

Target: Accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations

The AC can decide to apply conditions and/or monitoring requirements (MRs) to an accredited program or accrediting organisation if there is:

- non-compliance against a criterion
- the AC is satisfied the program meets a specific criterion but would like further information to ensure continued compliance with the accreditation standards, which can be met within a reasonable timeframe.

Reporting submitted in response to ongoing conditions and MRs is requested by the AC via an Accreditation Outcome Notification (AON) and is provided to the AC for discussion and decision.

4.3. Site visits

4.3.1. Pharmacy program site visits

Frequency: Once per accreditation cycle or as required

Target: Accredited degree and intern training program providers

APC establishes an Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) to conduct a site visit to ascertain the strengths and current challenges of an accredited program, as well as to identify any areas where a program may not adequately meet the accreditation standards.

An AAT for a degree and intern training program assessment normally consists of up to 3 assessors supported by an APC representative. Depending on the type of program being assessed, the roles might include:

- Chair
- Pharmacy academic/educator
- Practising pharmacist

The visit is conducted over several days and allows the AAT to discuss the program with stakeholders involved in program delivery (e.g. academics, students/interns and preceptors). It also allows the team to assess the teaching resources and infrastructure of the provider.

The AAT prepares a draft report of their findings and the program provider is given the opportunity to correct any errors of fact, before the report is used by the AC to allow them to make an accreditation decision.

4.3.2. Desktop audits

Frequency: Once per accreditation cycle or as required

Target: Accredited pharmacist education program providers and CPD accrediting organisations

APC establishes an Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) to conduct a desktop audit for a program/organisation. The AAT will also conduct a videoconference with the provider/organisation.

An AAT can include up to 3 assessors supported by an APC representative. Depending on the type of program/organisation being assessed, the roles might include:

- Pharmacy academic/educator
- Practising pharmacist

The videoconference is generally scheduled for up to 2 hours and allows the AAT to clarify any questions with the provider/organisation.

4.3.3. CPD accrediting organisation site audits

Frequency: Once per accreditation cycle or as required

Target: CPD accrediting organisations

Within the first 6 months of an organisation being accredited to accredit CPD activities on behalf of APC, a site visit is conducted at the main premises where CPD accrediting activity takes place.

The assessment is conducted by 2 members of the APC accreditation team (including at least one pharmacist). The purpose is to confirm alignment with the organisational requirements, any inconsistencies in the process of accrediting activities and any areas where improvement may be required.

A draft audit report is provided to the CPD accrediting organisation, inviting any correction of errors, before being submitted to the AC to allow them to make an accreditation decision.

4.4. Intern Written Exam (IWE) data collection

Frequency: Annually

Target: Accredited program providers

As part of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS), all Australian interns are required to sit a written exam delivered by APC. As part of this process, we collect and collate information on IWE results according to degree program and ITP providers. The data is considered annually by the AC and can be used to inform accreditation decisions.

Results of graduates from both degree and intern training programs are benchmarked against the national mean and any outliers can be discussed by the AC. A provider identified as an outlier may receive a request from the AC for an explanation of the results.

Each accredited program is provided with the IWE results of their graduates/interns compared to the national mean annually for internal quality improvement purposes.

4.5. Department of Education and Training data

Frequency: Annually

Target: Degree providers

We request data on an annual basis from the Department of Education and Training ('the Department') regarding the actual student load information related to accredited Australian pharmacy degree programs.

Data collected from the Department is cross checked against submitted annual report data.

4.6. Surveys

Frequency: Annually or as required

Target: Accredited program providers

We seek feedback from all accredited program providers via surveys on APC's support and processes as part of our commitment to continuous quality improvement.

We also survey accredited program providers who have been the subject of an accreditation assessment (including a site visit) in the current calendar year, as well as the associated AAT.

We monitor survey results for trends and any complaints requiring further investigation. We share information with the AC where appropriate.

4.7. ITP Liaison Group

Frequency: As required

Target: ITP providers

The ITP Liaison Group is a quality improvement and communication mechanism to allow us to distribute, collect and discuss information related to ITPs with accredited ITP providers.

4.8. Accreditation Marketing Policy monitoring

Frequency: Twice annually and as required

Target: Accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations

We monitor the websites and social media activities of accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations. This is to ensure that the advertising of programs, CPD accrediting organisations and CPD activities complies with the requirements of our [Accreditation Marketing Policy](#).

Any accredited program provider, CPD accrediting organisation or CPD activity provider found not in alignment with our policies will be formally requested to amend their publication and/or website within a reasonable timeframe. An accredited program provider or CPD accrediting organisation who does not remove any advertising breach(es) will be asked to give an explanation which will be provided to the AC for discussion and further action.

4.9. Registration status monitoring

Frequency: Twice annually and as required

Target: Accredited program providers

We undertake an ASQA/TEQSA website scan twice yearly and as required to ensure that the ASQA/TEQSA registration status of each accredited program provider complies with the relevant [accreditation standards](#).

We inform the AC of any conditions applied to an accredited program provider's ASQA/TEQSA registration.

4.10. Networking

Frequency: Ongoing

Target: Accredited program providers and CPD accrediting organisations

We liaise with a wide range of stakeholders including education providers, pharmacy professional bodies and other health professions. Through relationships with these individuals and organisations, we can monitor changes in accredited programs, such as staffing changes, or levels of satisfaction with service provision such as CPD accreditation. Should the information lead to a need for further information, we contact the accredited program provider or CPD accrediting organisation involved formally.

5. Related documents/Links

[Accreditation Marketing Policy](#)

[Accreditation Standards for Continuing Professional Development Activities](#)

[Accreditation Standards for Continuing Professional Development Activities: Guidelines 2015](#)

[Accreditation Standards for Pharmacist Education Programs 2023](#)

[Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Programs 2020](#)

[Notification of Change to an accredited program](#)

[Registration Standard: Continuing Professional development](#)



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