

Update from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee

August 2019

Committee activities in 2019

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Accreditation Committee (the Committee) undertakes accreditation functions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice in the national scheme regulating health practitioners.

Committee activities

To date, the Committee has accredited 16 HLT40213 Certificate IV in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice (HLT40213) programs across 12 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)¹. Graduates from these accredited programs are qualified to register as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners.

The list of accredited programs is available on the [Accreditation Committee's FAQ webpage](#) under the heading 'Is my program accredited?'

The Committee recently received an application for accreditation of another RTO's HLT40213 program.

A key activity for the Committee in 2019 is monitoring these accredited programs to ensure they continue to meet the Committee's standards, including evaluation of RTOs' responses to conditions imposed on their accreditation, routine annual monitoring and two site visits.

The Committee met in May 2019 and considered responses from a number of Registered Training Organisations' about their accredited programs. The Committee plans to have two more meetings in 2019 to continue its monitoring activities.

Committee membership

In early 2019 the Committee welcomed its newest member, Elizabeth Shuttle. Elizabeth brings a wealth of experience from her work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice education, and as a registered nurse. The Committee looks forward to the expertise and important contribution Elizabeth will play in ensuring graduates completing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care education have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise safely in Australia.

The Committee now has four members:

Elaine Duffy
Chair and educationalist member

¹ This includes RTOs with programs that are accredited at more than one campus.

Sharon Johnson

Practitioner member and proud Wangkumarra woman whose mother's country covers the far north west corner of NSW surrounding Tibooburra, and father's country and people are the Kamilaroi people of Breeza near Gunnedah in NSW.

Norma Solomon

Practitioner member and Aboriginal woman direct descendant who traces her history over five generations of the 'Monaro/Ngarigo people' of Southeast Coast New South Wales.

Elizabeth Shuttle

Educationalist member

Accreditation standards

In late 2017 the Committee commenced a review of its accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice. The project adopted a multi-profession approach, and included the Chinese medicine and medical radiation practice professions who also were due to review their accreditation standards.

Early in the project, the project team appointed to manage the project undertook a series of education provider forums across Australia to promote early stakeholder input into the review.

The Committee consulted with the education sector, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice profession and federal, state and territory governments about the content of the proposed revised accreditation standards.

The Committee undertook an eight-week public consultation process. This process included the publication of the consultation paper (and attachments) on its website.

In May 2019 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice Board of Australia (the Board) approved the revised accreditation standards (2019 accreditation standards) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, with an effective date of 1 June 2020.

The 2019 accreditation standards will replace the current (2013) accreditation standards and continue to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only graduates with the knowledge, skills and attributes necessary to practise in a competent and ethical manner qualify for registration in the profession.

The 2019 accreditation standards will facilitate the provision of high-quality education and training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, by requiring education providers to demonstrate that they have established appropriate mechanisms to ensure good governance, sufficient resourcing, and appropriate teaching, learning and assessment methods, including sound clinical education through work placements and practical training.

The 2019 accreditation standards have now been published on the Board's [accreditation webpage](#).

The Committee acknowledges that all accredited and approved programs delivered the HLT40213 qualification at the time that the standards were published.

The 2019 accreditation standards apply to any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice program where graduates expect to qualify for registration with the Board. This includes any program that provides the knowledge, skills and professional attributes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice.

What education providers need to do to meet the 2019 accreditation standards

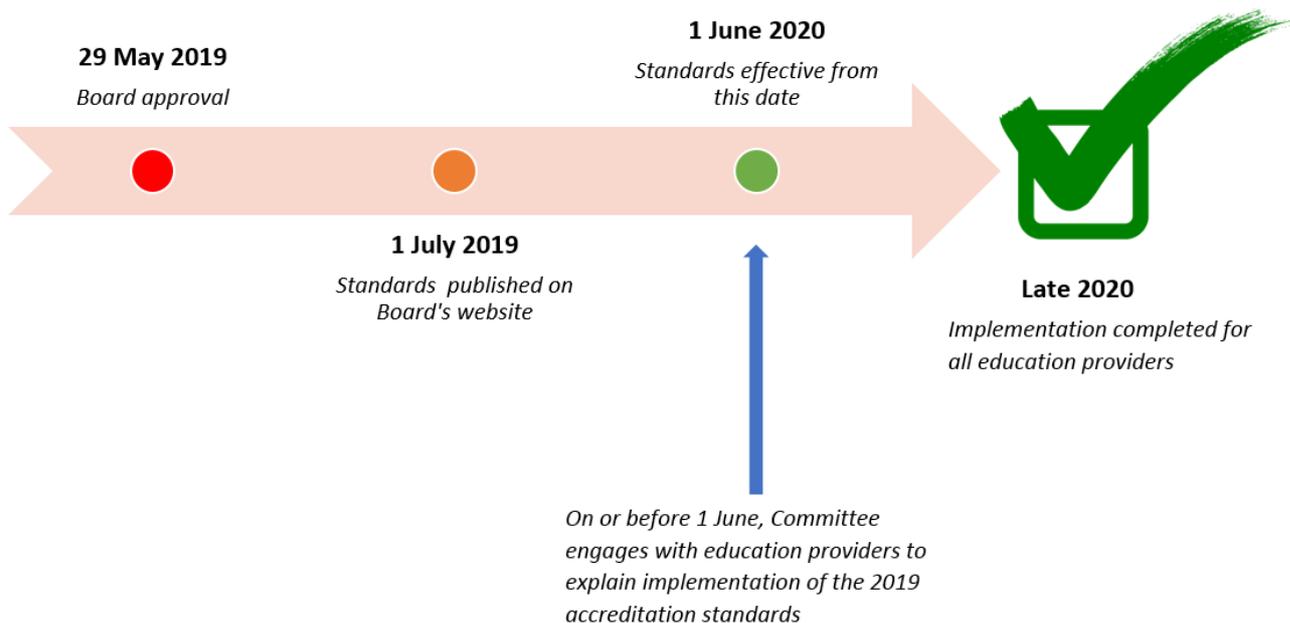
For education providers with an already accredited and approved program, the Committee will consider and approve a proposed implementation plan at the end of 2019, and following this AHPRA's Program Accreditation Team will contact education providers to advise them about the implementation of the 2019 accreditation standards.

Education providers who plan apply for accreditation of a program educating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners should contact AHPRA's Program Accreditation team for information – program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au. The 2019 accreditation standards provide an opportunity for education providers who choose to offer programs other than the HLT40213 program, including programs at higher AQF levels educating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners, to apply for accreditation.

Remember, the new accreditation standards do not take effect until 1 June 2020.

2019 Accreditation standards

The implementation journey



Accreditation process

The [2013 accreditation process](#) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice (the accreditation process) describes how the Accreditation Committee assesses, accredits and monitors education providers and programs against the accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice.

To align with the joint review of the 2013 accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice, and in order to support the implementation of the revised 2019 accreditation standards, a routine review of the current accreditation process is underway.

As with the joint review of the accreditation standards, this review is multi-profession and includes the Chinese Medicine, Medical Radiation Practice, Paramedicine and Podiatry Accreditation Committees. The project is focused on a review of the current processes for each profession to identify common themes and profession-specific requirements.

The outcome will be an updated and user-friendly accreditation process that aligns with the revised 2019 accreditation standards for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice.

The Committee will be undertaking a targeted consultation with key stakeholders in the second half of 2019 to provide feedback on the draft revised accreditation process.

Professional capabilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice

As part of its review of the 2013 accreditation standards, and with support from the Board, the Committee has developed the *Draft proposed professional capabilities for registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners* (draft proposed professional capabilities). The draft proposed professional capabilities are being developed in a separate document (and as an appendix) to the revised accreditation standards (2019 accreditation standards).

Most professions in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) have professional capabilities or competency standards that describe the threshold level of competence required for general registration as a practitioner in that profession in Australia. The current threshold level of competence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners is defined by the performance indicators in the units of competency of the HLT40213 qualification. There is not currently a separate document that describes the threshold level of competence required for general registration as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioner.

This is an exciting development for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practice profession, as the draft proposed professional capabilities are informed by capability principles to recognise that registered practitioners must be capable of taking appropriate and effective action to formulate and solve problems in both familiar and unfamiliar, complex and changing settings, rather than just showing that they know how to, and can perform practice-related tasks in isolation. In other words, practitioners should be capable of 'doing' rather than simply 'knowing'.

The Committee is currently consulting on the draft professional capabilities. Information on how to respond can be found on the Board's [accreditation consultation page](#).

Contact

For any queries related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practice program accreditation, please contact AHPRA's Program Accreditation Team via email at program.accreditation@ahpra.gov.au.

Follow AHPRA on social media

Connect with AHPRA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#) to receive information about important topics for your profession and participate in the discussion.



Please feel free to pass this information through your networks.