

## AMC accreditation requirements for specialist medical programs in 2020 in response to COVID-19

This statement provides advice on AMC actions to apply flexible accreditation requirements while Specialist Colleges are dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 on their operations, fellows, trainees and the health services.

The AMC accredits programs under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* which requires it to assess whether medical programs and their providers meet approved accreditation standards and the graduates have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes to practise the profession and then to monitor whether accredited programs continue to meet standards.

On 10 March, the AMC advised accredited education providers that it would work with them to minimise the impact of its accreditation program of site visits and meetings on health services. The AMC proposes to vary its processes for Specialist Medical Colleges as set out below. While some of these changes are specific to 2020, the AMC recognises that changes will also be needed beyond 2020.

### ***Accreditation assessments***

The accreditation of a small number of Colleges' programs expires between now to March 2021. Some of these Colleges may have undertaken significant preparations for their accreditation assessment or comprehensive report for a paper based accreditation assessment. The AMC is open to varying processes already begun and will contact Colleges to discuss.

As the AMC had no accreditation assessments scheduled for the second half of 2020, it was planning to review and further streamline some elements of the accreditation processes for 2021. AMC staff will work on these plans with the Specialist Education Accreditation Committee and Colleges. In the second half of 2020, the AMC will contact Colleges with accreditation assessments scheduled for 2021 to discuss varying processes. The AMC is also open to postponing accreditations for Colleges that meet the accreditation standards or substantially meet the standards with few accreditation conditions.

### ***Monitoring of accredited programs through progress reports***

The AMC sent progress report templates to Colleges in December 2019. The AMC is open to waiving progress reports from Colleges with routine reports due in 2020. AMC staff will discuss with Colleges.

### ***Expectation of program changes***

The AMC recognises Colleges will need to vary approaches in a number of areas relevant to the accreditation standards including: teaching and learning approaches; clinical assessments; trainee selection; accreditation of training sites and posts, policies on recognition of learning from medical care provided as part of COVID-19 (where reasonable); and supervision. The AMC's focus is on being assured that trainees are able to progress through training, although training and education structures may be different; that College communication about training requirements supports trainees and supervisors to meet program objectives; and that specialist medical trainees graduating from accredited programs will be prepared to practise as specialists.

### ***Advising the AMC of program changes***

Normally Colleges advise the AMC of changes through progress reports. The AMC's Progress Reports Sub Committee and the Specialist Education Accreditation Committee review the College's proposals and decides on any monitoring required. If the change has a significant impact on the accredited program, the Committee decides on a process to assess the changes.

In the context of the COVID-19 response, the AMC has developed the attached proforma for reporting. This information will allow the AMC to report to the Medical Board that programs continue to meet standards. The AMC acknowledges that Colleges will make other changes as the situation evolves, but

these need only be recorded internally for reporting to the AMC in 2021 along with any necessary adjustment to compensate for these adjustments.

## Notifying the AMC of short-term significant changes to an accredited specialist medical program in response to COVID-19

### *When to use this form*

Please inform the AMC when you are making a significant change to your AMC-accredited program in response to COVID-19 developments. The form attached provides spaces to detail significant changes.

### **This form is not for advising the AMC about long term changes planned to accredited programs.**

The AMC's focus is on being assured that trainees are able to progress through training; that College communication about training requirements supports trainees and supervisors to meet program objectives; and that specialist medical trainees graduating from accredited programs will be prepared to practise as specialists. Colleges should advise the AMC of changes as they are planned. The AMC accepts that plans and changes will evolve, and is open to receiving multiple forms across the year.

Retrospective information: The AMC acknowledges that Colleges will make changes other than those captured in this form as the situation evolves. The AMC will provide additional guidance for 2021 accreditation assessment submissions and progress reports later this year.

The Australian Government Department of Health has shared with the AMC information Colleges have provided directly to the Department. To avoid duplication, Colleges may refer to this information in responding to the AMC about program changes.

### *AMC process for consideration of changes*

The AMC will consider notifications of changes in the following way:

- Provider lodges *Notification of changes* form and AMC acknowledges receipt.
- AMC staff review the information provided. If additional information is necessary, staff will contact the provider.
- Staff will provide the form and a summary for the Progress Reports Sub Committee and the Specialist Education Accreditation Committee:
  - Current accreditation status of the program
  - Standards related to the change and whether the program and provider currently meet the relevant standards related to the change proposed

The AMC will assess changes as a desktop exercise. The AMC's response to the change(s) will depend on the type of change and impact, but as much as possible will be confirmation that with the change the program either continues to meet or substantially meet standards during 2020.

- The AMC will advise the provider of the outcome.

### *Instructions for form submission*

Complete the form, providing detail of the change, the impact on the program, and the impact on trainees. Send the completed form to [specaccred@amc.org.au](mailto:specaccred@amc.org.au)

### *Questions/advice?*

If you have questions or need advice, you are welcome to contact the Specialist Medical Program Assessment section via the **above email**, or by phoning Juliana Simon, Manager, Specialist Medical Program Assessment at (02) 6270-9752.