



# Consultation paper

Draft model standards and procedures for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings

This consultation seeks feedback on the draft model standards and procedures for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings.

## Background

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) has been working collaboratively with specialist medical colleges and jurisdictional health departments on the implementation of [Ministerial Policy Direction 2023-01](#) and the recommendations contained in the National Health Practitioner Ombudsman (NHPO) report, [Processes for progress - Part one: a roadmap for greater transparency and accountability in specialist medical training site accreditation, October 2023](#).

The AMC has engaged the Miller Blue Group consultancy to support the AMC and colleges in this work, and has established a governance structure comprising the following to oversee this project:

- The **Project Governance Group** supports the implementation of the NHPO report recommendations and is the overarching governance body that is accountable to the HWT for the project.
- The **College Working Group** works with the project team to provide subject matter expertise on college policies and procedures.
- The **AMC Project Implementation Team** (the AMC project team) reports regularly to the HWT secretariat and to the Medical Board of Australia and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) on progress.

The NHPO report contains 22 recommendations for implementation by colleges (and one recommendation in relation to implementation). In addition, the NHPO made specific recommendations to each college in the report appendices. Many of these college-specific recommendations are common across colleges and also appear in the main report. Some recommendations have been identified as matters for individual colleges to implement in accordance with their own processes.

The scope of the Joint AMC/College project is restricted to the 15 recommendations that go towards meeting the Ministerial Policy Direction 2023-01 and can be implemented consistently by colleges. These 15 recommendations have been categorised into the following four broad work streams:

### 1. Development of a set of model accreditation standards [Recommendations 1-3]

*This workstream aims to address consistency in the matters to be dealt with in college standards for the accreditation of training settings. It also aims to ensure that accreditation standards are relevant to training program outcomes.*

### 2. Development of best practice accreditation policies and procedures [Recommendations 4, 7-12, 16, 18 and 21]

*This workstream aims to develop resource documents for use by colleges to address the issues in their own processes identified by the NHPO in individual college reports, and to improve consistency across colleges in processes and terminology. Resources include: guidance on procedural fairness/due process; a risk matrix for accreditation decisions, including when accreditation may be revoked; a model accreditation report that addresses relevancy, provides for reasons for decisions and outlines appeal processes; and guidance on complaints management processes.*

### 3. Development of an agreed framework between colleges and jurisdictions for managing concerns and complaints about a training setting [Recommendation 13]

*This workstream aims to develop a framework document agreed by colleges and jurisdictions that will inform each party's approach to dealing with concerns and complaints regarding accredited training settings.*

### 4. Development of a data collection model and reporting process [Recommendation 5]

*This workstream aims to develop a data set for the future that is meaningful and provides an evidence base for improvements. It will identify data for publication that is meaningful to the public and enhances transparency.*

## Model standards for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings

### Rationale and relevant NHPO report recommendations/Ministerial direction

Recommendation 2 of the NHPO report states that *"The AMC should work with colleges to ensure specialist medical training site accreditation standards are outcome-centric and evidence-informed with measurable and achievable attributes."*

The Ministerial Policy Direction 2023-01 requires the AMC to review *"...existing arrangements to achieve greater consistency of accreditation processes, policies, procedures and decisions for training site accreditation across the medical specialist colleges (paragraph 1(c)(i))."*

The AMC and jurisdictional health departments have agreed that the development of model accreditation standards will meet the intent of both the NHPO recommendations and the Ministerial Policy Direction.

### Development approach

The draft model accreditation standards have been developed through a collaborative process involving the project's College Working Group which includes representation from all specialist medical colleges, the Medical Council of New Zealand, and the AMC Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Māori Committee.

The development process has taken account of previous work by the Australian Health Ministers' Medical Advisory Council (AHMAC) Health Workforce Principal Committee (*Accreditation of Specialist Medical Training Sites Project Final Report, 2013*) and has included a review of all existing college standards for accreditation of training settings.

The AMC is developing a shared sovereignty approach to reviewing its accreditation standards in which the drafting of standards related to Indigenous health, cultural safety and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Māori wellbeing is led by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Māori peoples in a parallel, culturally safe process. Due to the timelines set by Health Ministers for completion of the model accreditation standards, in this instance, the AMC has adopted an integrated approach where the perspectives of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Māori stakeholders has been integrated into the development and consultation process.

The draft model standards are at **Attachment 1**, and have been developed with reference to the following principles. The standards:

- are based on relevant evidence and best practice
- are outcomes focused
- align to training program outcomes and support high-quality training
- support patient safety
- are transparent with a sufficient level of detail for consistent interpretation

- are flexible to accommodate:
  - the training requirements of each college’s specialty and subspecialty programs
  - the various entities that colleges accredit, including sites, posts, practices and networks
  - all relevant settings, including hospital and non-hospital settings; public, private and non-governmental organisation settings; and rural, regional and remote settings.
- support training opportunities for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Māori trainees and cultural safety for those trainees
- support cultural safety for trainees of other diverse backgrounds.

## Endorsement and implementation

It is anticipated that the model accreditation standards will be endorsed by Australian Health Ministers and by individual colleges through their own governance processes. Feedback on timeframes for adoption of the model standards by colleges is part of this consultation process.

## Model procedures for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings

### Rationale and relevant NHPO report recommendations/Ministerial direction

The NHPO report found there was variation in the approaches of colleges to operationalise accreditation standards, and considered there would be benefit in the AMC setting expectations on the requirements for accreditation assessment processes (p.48). Ministerial Policy Direction 2023-01 requires the development of a uniform process for accreditation decisions.

In addition, while not an explicit recommendation in the NHPO report, the report noted inconsistent terminology in use by colleges across accreditation processes as a whole, which likely increases confusion for all stakeholders (p.46). One of the key goals of the model accreditation procedures document is therefore to establish common terminology for use by all colleges, such as the wording used for meeting/not meeting a standard and for the accreditation decision. Use of common terminology will greatly assist with standardisation, as well as with other NHPO recommendations including the purpose, format and availability of training setting accreditation reports (recommendation 4), and establishing a comparative data collection model and reporting process (recommendation 5).

The draft model accreditation procedures document covers NHPO report recommendations 7-12, and 16 and related college-specific recommendations. These recommendations are interlinked, being part of the end-to-end accreditation lifecycle and, from an end user perspective, benefit from being brought together in a single model procedures document.

### Development approach

The draft model accreditation procedures document has been developed through a collaborative process involving the project’s College Working Group and are at **Attachment 2**. The draft procedures have been developed with reference to the:

- recommendations (and commentary) in the NHPO report (including those relating to each college individually)
- review of existing accreditation procedures and terminology used by colleges
- existing accreditation procedures of the AMC (*Procedures for the assessment and accreditation of specialist medical programs by the Australian Medical Council 2023*), as well as other organisations, including the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care and the Australian Dental Council.

## Implementation

The timeframe for implementation of common terminology by colleges is part of this consultation process. The implementation approach for other aspects of the model accreditation procedures is expected to vary between colleges, involving either:

- adopting the model accreditation procedures in their entirety; or
- incorporating content from the model procedures into their individual accreditation procedures to ensure their college-specific NHPO recommendations are met.

## Consultation feedback and enquiries

There will be a six-week public consultation from 30 September to 11 November 2024.

The AMC welcomes your feedback on the draft model standards and procedures for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings.

To facilitate responding, a number of consultation questions are provided. Please complete the **Consultation Feedback Form** and email in **MS Word format** to [accreditation@amc.org.au](mailto:accreditation@amc.org.au) by **Monday 11 November 2024**.

The draft documents are at:

**ATTACHMENT 1** – *Draft model standards for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings*

**ATTACHMENT 2** – *Draft model procedures for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings*

For enquiries relating to this consultation, please email: [accreditation@amc.org.au](mailto:accreditation@amc.org.au).