

Writing accreditation conditions

Guiding principles for assessors

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Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to help assessors to write conditions that are consistent with the Australian Dental Council's (ADC's) role as the accreditation authority for the dental profession.

The ADC may apply a condition to a program of study if that program is found to have substantially met an approved accreditation standard and imposing conditions will ensure the program meets the standard in a reasonable time.

The guiding principles of the national registration and accreditation scheme include that the scheme is to operate in a transparent, accountable, efficient and fair way.

To be consistent with these guiding principles, any conditions imposed by the ADC on an accredited program must be fair and clear. The purpose of a condition is to allow an education provider to address the shortfall against the standard within the time specified.

The ADC can reduce the regulatory burden of accreditation by ensuring that conditions are necessary and proportionate to the risk (either perceived or actual) of the program's ability to meet the Accreditation Standards.

These 'Guiding principles' have been developed having considered the following reference documents:

- Joint Statement of Principles for Professional Accreditation, Universities Australia and Professions Australia, March 2016
- Quality Framework for the Accreditation Function, Forum of Australian Health Professions Councils and Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, July 2013
- Council of Australian Governments, Best Practice Regulation – A Guide for Ministerial Councils and National Standard Setting Bodies, October 2007.

Guiding principles

Guiding principle 1 – The purpose of a condition is to address a shortfall against an approved Accreditation Standard

The [ADC/DC\(NZ\) guidelines for accreditation of education and training programs for dental practitioners](#) state:

‘Conditions may be imposed on a program if a standard is substantially met and the imposition of conditions will ensure full compliance with the standard within a reasonable timeframe.’

The ADC will only impose a condition or conditions on an accredited program of study and the provider that provides that program of study if it is determined that an approved Accreditation Standard is substantially met.

If an education provider satisfies a condition, it demonstrates that the approved Accreditation Standard is met in full.

Guiding principle 2 – The timeframe by which a condition must be met is to be fair and reasonable.

The *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law) allows an accreditation authority to impose conditions on an accredited program if the condition will ensure the program meets an approved Accreditation Standard within a ‘reasonable’ time.

The National Law does not specify or provide guidance on what is considered reasonable.

In setting the timeframe by which a condition is to be met the ADC will consider:

- The impact on patient and/or public safety should the shortfall not be addressed.
- The impact on student welfare.
- The ability of students to achieve the required professional competencies and stated learning outcomes.
- The resources available to the education provider to address the shortfall.

Any shortfall against an approved Accreditation Standard that raises concerns over patient and/or public safety must be addressed quickly or the program’s accreditation may be revoked.

Guiding principle 3 – The condition must focus on the outcome required to demonstrate that an Accreditation Standard is met.

The *ADC/DC(NZ) Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs* are outcomes focused. Providers can demonstrate that a program meets the Accreditation Standards in a variety of ways. Similarly, the way in which the provider addresses a condition is for the provider to determine based on a variety of factors (e.g. resources, time).

A condition imposed on an accredited program of study must focus on what is required to demonstrate that the Accreditation Standard is met in full. Conditions that are overly prescriptive are inconsistent with an outcomes focused process and may unnecessarily restrict innovation.

Guiding principle 4 – A condition must be clear.

When imposing a condition on an accredited program, it must be clear to the education provider how to respond and demonstrate that the approved Accreditation Standard is met in full.

The wording of a condition must be unambiguous and clear.

The condition must:

- Advise how the provider is to address the shortfall (e.g. providing further documentary evidence, a site visit, provide evidence of a process being implemented)
- The timeframe or due date by which the condition is to be addressed.
- Not be open to misunderstanding or misinterpretation.