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**PARAMEDIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS ACCREDITATION**

**INFORMATION FOR UNIVERSITIES SEEKING  
ACCREDITATION OF PARAMEDIC EDUCATION PROGRAM(S)**

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## Contents

1)	Glossary of terms .....	3
2)	Key components of the Accreditation Process .....	3
3)	Purpose of the Accreditation submissions .....	4
4)	Accreditation application - support documents .....	4
5)	Submission of accreditation applications.....	5
6)	Site Evaluation Team (SET) visits and meetings.....	5
7)	Site Visit Scheduling.....	6
8)	Site Evaluation Team Visit Initial Feedback.....	6
9)	Initial written (Draft) report/final report .....	7
10)	Notification of accreditation decision .....	7
11)	Graduate outcomes .....	7
12)	Clinical placements .....	8
13)	APPENDIX 1 – Flow chart/timeline: new or changed programs .....	9

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*(This document is to be read in conjunction with the 'Guidelines for the Assessment and Accreditation of Entry-level Paramedic Education Programs'. It is the intent of this document to not duplicate information contained in the Guidelines; each paragraph has the applicable page and/or standard annotated for ease of reference and further information.)*

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## 1) Glossary of terms

The following are terms and definitions used within the accreditation process:

<b>AEC</b>	Ambulance Education Committee
<b>PEPAC</b>	Paramedic Education Program Accreditation Committee
<b>PEPAS</b>	Paramedic Education Program Accreditation Scheme
<b>SET</b>	Site Evaluation Team

## 2) Key components of the Accreditation Process<sup>1</sup>

The process of accreditation includes the following steps:

- Submission of an application for accreditation at the nominated level.
- Re-applying Universities need to submit a response document to the recommendations from the previous accreditation report. Universities must show evidence that they have considered the recommendations made, even if no action has occurred in relation to the recommendations since the last review.
- An assessment by an evaluation team (a composition is described in the *Guidelines for the Assessment and Accreditation of Entry-level Paramedic Education Programs*).
- A draft report by the team will go to the University for comment.
- A final review of the report by the Chair of the team will occur following the University's review and feedback.
- A final report, including recommendations regarding the level accreditation status to be awarded, or not awarded, will go to the accreditation committee.
- The decision on accreditation status is made.
- Advice to the University on the decision.
- Annual reporting is required as part of the maintenance of all accreditation levels.

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<sup>1</sup> see Standard 4, *Guidelines for the Assessment and Accreditation of Entry-level Paramedic Education Programs*, for more information

### 3) Purpose of the Accreditation submissions<sup>2</sup>

Preliminary judgements about the appropriateness and effectiveness of the university's processes and programs are based on the accreditation application submission.

The Evaluation Team will read the submission on two levels:

- For information on the university's policies, processes and programs and to form preliminary views on these; and
- To form an opinion on the quality of the university's self-assessment and the depth of the analysis itself.

### 4) Accreditation application - support documents

**The following list provides some indication of what documents could be included with an application to support responses to accreditation requirements:**

- Mission statement
- Strategic plan
- Learning, research and practice objectives
- University, Faculty, School and/or Departmental organisation charts
- Policies and procedures – academic matters
- Policies and procedures – recruitment, selection and appointment of academic staff
- Policies and procedures – student admissions and assessment
- Committee membership lists – indicating paramedic representation on relevant committees such as finance, admissions, curriculum, research, etc
- Minutes of meetings
- Budget papers, reports
- Staff/student ratio numbers
- Capital equipment list
- Material resources
- Risk management plans – OH&S, disaster, business recovery plans with regards to loss or disruption to infrastructure, IT resources, personnel
- Profiles of academic staff and other university academic staff teaching in the paramedic program
- Staff list – course coordinators, year coordinators, etc
- Subject outlines
- Unit of study hours
- Mapping of curriculum to indicative curriculum
- Clinical placements information
- Quality Assurance Plan
- Details of student support services
- Learning outcomes statements

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<sup>2</sup> see Standard 4

## 5) Submission of accreditation applications

Applications for accreditation must address the standards as set out in the *Guidelines*. Universities must submit the application on the application form (available on the CAA website or emailed on request). Electronic submission of application should be directed to the PEPAS Co-ordinator:

PEPAS Co-ordinator  
Council of Ambulance Authorities  
PO Box 7108  
Melbourne Vic 8004  
Email: [pepas@caa.net.au](mailto:pepas@caa.net.au)

## 6) Site Evaluation Team (SET) visits and meetings<sup>3</sup>

Following the submission of an application for Provisional and Full Accreditation, PEPAS Co-ordinator will organise an on-site visit for one to three days (or part thereof) depending on the size and complexity of the paramedic programs at the particular university.

The objectives of the Site Visit are:

- to confirm the main findings of the self-assessment submission
- to take the self-assessment as a starting point to engage in a constructive dialogue with faculty members
- to seek additional information as necessary in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of the university's processes
- to make an overall assessment of the university's paramedic education program
- to provide recommendations for future development and quality improvement
- to write a report formally setting out the findings, assessment and recommendations of the team for use by the university
- to state the accreditation status achieved, as recommended by the team and approved at a meeting of AEC.

The team will gather information during the visit through a variety of methods such as collection of documents and statistics (e.g. study guide, reading lists, statistics on pass/failure at exams); individual interviews (with dean, department heads, etc); group interviews (academic staff, administration staff, students); and/or direct observation (through a tour of the campus and visits to labs, departments and classrooms).

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<sup>3</sup> Standard 4.1.3 Full Accreditation

## 7) Site Visit Scheduling<sup>4</sup>

- The schedule for a site visit will be put together in cooperation between the Chair of the SET, the PEPAS Co-ordinator and coordinating staff member of the University.
- The duration of the site visit will depend on the size and complexity of the program and will vary from between 1 to 3 days. The duration will be decided well prior to the organisation of the actual visit.
- University staff required for interview may include, (but not limited to):
  - Chancellor, Dean, Head of School (all or some depending on the size and complexity of the University)
  - Head of Paramedic Education
  - Professors and Associate Professors of Paramedic programs
  - Senior lecturers/Lecturers in Paramedic programs
  - Academic staff from other disciplines who teach in the Paramedic program
  - Representatives of the Research Committee (however named) and research support staff
  - General finance and administration personnel, i.e. Finance Manager, HR Manager, Technical Officer)
  - Student services personnel
  - Personnel involved in arranging/coordinating clinical placements
  - Students from each year of the program(s)

## 8) Site Evaluation Team Visit Initial Feedback

- Prior to the end of the site visit, the team will discuss separately and record:
  - their overall findings and conclusions concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the program; and
  - identify any Guidelines/Standards which it considers the submission/application has not met
- The team will meet with the Head of School prior to the close of the visit (this time will be scheduled on the visit timetable) to provide feedback on the above points. This initial feedback will be verbal; more detail will follow in the Draft Accreditation report. The purpose of the initial feedback is to offer the University some understanding as to how well it has done following the site visit. The subsequent report will contain more information, but it should not offer any unexpected information of a negative nature.
- The initial feedback also offers the opportunity to commend the positive aspects of the visit and the program offered at the University.

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<sup>4</sup> Standard 4.2.1 Site Evaluation Teams

## **9) Initial written (Draft) report/final report<sup>5</sup>**

Within 4 weeks of the site visit, the team will complete a draft report of its findings and conclusions. The draft report will be sent to the Program Co-ordinator and is then referred to the Head of School (or appropriate nominated University member of staff) to review and make corrections or comments to. The Head of School, or nominee, has 4 weeks to respond to the Director of PEPAS.

The Chair of the SET will finalize the report, taking into consideration the University's comments and send the final report to the committee with recommendations. Comments from the University not incorporated in the final report will also be sent to the accreditation committee for consideration alongside the final report.

## **10) Notification of accreditation decision<sup>6</sup>**

The Director of PEPAS will provide the school with the final report and of the decision made by the committee in writing. The PEPAS Co-ordinator will then update the website on the accreditation status of the school.

## **11) Graduate outcomes<sup>7</sup>**

In order to clearly define graduate attributes the CAA, in partnership with the Paramedics Australasia, has developed the Paramedic Professional Competency Standards (PPCS).

The Universities must provide evidence through the collection and evaluation of assessment data that graduates of their paramedic program demonstrate the attributes as defined in the PPCS.

Evidence required to meet this expectation:

1. the University can show it has undertaken evaluations of student attributes at each stage in the program and those of its graduates (in collaboration with their employers).

Note: the University must ensure sample sizes and response rates in these evaluation activities are sufficient to supply a valid conclusion as to the standard and ability of graduates

2. the University can show it has responded appropriately to the results of these evaluations in order to continually improve and have confidence in the standards of its graduates

Examples of evidence may include:

- student self-reported attainment of PPCS attributes
- annual surveys of graduates and employers

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<sup>5</sup> Standard 4.2.1 Site Evaluation Teams

<sup>6</sup> Standard 4.3 Final Decision on Accreditation

<sup>7</sup> Note: an Evidence Guide is currently being developed to clarify this section further (20/05/2010)

- course experience questionnaires and other surveys
- other review methods and associated reports
- data on response rates to surveys in relation to course student FTEs
- comparison data over time and analysis
- feedback mechanisms
- plans and action taken to address issues highlighted through the analysis of the data collected
- on-going quality activities

## 12) Clinical placements<sup>8</sup>

It is essential that students have opportunities to participate in a broad range of practical clinical learning experiences. Universities must provide evidence that the paramedic education program includes clinical experience that provides opportunities to develop competencies as described in the PPCS.

The Site Evaluation Team (SET) will need to be assured that:

- All students are assured access to clinical experience
- That there is agreement in place for the current cohort of students that employers will provide supervised clinical practice

Examples of evidence of meeting this requirement may include:

- a schedule of clinical placements across each year of the program, as appropriate
- a schedule for simulated clinical practice across each year of the program
- written clinical agreements and/or letters of intent from all clinical education sites
- details of covering highly relevant professional knowledge and skills prior to the first clinical placement

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<sup>8</sup> Standard 3.2.3 Work Readiness; Standard 3.2.4 The Paramedic Professional Competency Standards



**13) Flow chart/timeline: new or changed programs**

