

# Assessor Handbook

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# Purpose of the assessor handbook

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The Assessor Handbook is designed for assessment team members.

The Assessor Handbook is informed by and forms part of a broader policy framework developed for the accreditation of nursing and midwifery programs leading to eligibility to apply for registration or endorsement in Australia.

This should be read in conjunction with the relevant accreditation standards and the ANMAC [National Accreditation Guidelines](#)

# Background and governance

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This part of the handbook contains an:

- outline of the objectives and guiding principles of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme relevant to accreditation
- overview of the assessment team's responsibilities.

## Principles Guiding the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council (ANMAC) is the independent accrediting authority for nursing and midwifery under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. ANMAC develops standards for accreditation and accredits nursing and midwifery programs of study leading to eligibility to apply for registration and endorsement.

A primary function of ANMAC as the accreditation authority for the nursing and midwifery professions is to ensure that programs leading to eligibility to apply for registration and endorsement as nurses and midwives in Australia, meet the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) approved standards for accreditation.

The objectives of the national registration and accreditation scheme are –

- a. to provide for the protection of the public by ensuring that only health practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered; and
- b. to facilitate workforce mobility across Australia by reducing the administrative burden for health practitioners wishing to move between participating jurisdictions or to practise in more than one participating jurisdiction; and
- c. to facilitate the provision of high quality education and training of health practitioner; and
- d. to facilitate the rigorous and responsive assessment of overseas-trained health practitioners; and
- e. to facilitate access to services provided by health practitioners in accordance with the public interest; and
- f. to enable the continuous development of a flexible, responsive and sustainable Australian health workforce and to enable innovation in the education of, and service delivery by, health practitioners.

The guiding principles of the national registration and accreditation scheme are as follows –

- a. the scheme is to operate in a transparent, accountable, efficient, effective and fair way;
- b. fees required to be paid under the scheme are to be reasonable having regard to the efficient and effective operation of the scheme;
- c. restrictions on the practice of a health profession are to be imposed under the scheme only if it is necessary to ensure health services are provided safely and are of an appropriate quality.

Assessors are required to have a working knowledge of the objectives and guiding principles of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* (2009).

## Overview

This section describes the composition and processes relevant to assessment teams.

ANMAC maintains a register of approved individuals as assessors based on current knowledge, skills, expertise and experience.

Nurses and midwives, with current registration in Australia, can apply to ANMAC for consideration as an assessor by submitting an [Expression of Interest](#) to ANMAC together with a current resume. It is the responsibility of the assessor to notify ANMAC of any changes in their contact, employment and registration details.

### Establishing an Assessment Team

ANMAC will establish an assessment team to review program accreditation and possibly for program changes and investigation of complaints.

An assessment team will generally comprise four members - an Associate Director, two academics and a clinician, manager or a nurse/midwife working in policy or regulation roles. One of whom will be appointed as Chair of the team.

### Selection

To be eligible for selection for an assessment team, an assessor is required to:

- hold current registration as a nurse and/or midwife with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) without conditions relating to conduct or competence to practice
- have relevant (education, clinical and/or management) knowledge, skills, expertise and experience for the program being assessed
- be available to participate in all stages of the assessment of the program, which may vary in length
- have no potential or perceived conflict of interest

If you are deemed to be unsuitable you may request ANMAC's reason for the decision.

### Notice to education provider

ANMAC will notify the education provider of the names and current places of employment of the proposed assessment team.

The education provider has 3 working days to advise ANMAC of acceptance of the proposed team. An alternative member may be substituted by ANMAC. If notification of acceptance is not received within this timeframe, the proposed team is deemed to be accepted.

The education provider has the right to decline team member(s) on grounds of potential or perceived conflict of interest of a personal or professional nature. For example:

- Personal conflicts could include close friendship, family relationship or animosity between an assessor and staff of the education provider.
- Professional conflicts could include affiliations with the institution or associations with an institution competing with the provider/program being accredited.

# Responsibilities of the assessment team

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## All team members responsibilities:

- review the accreditation submission independently
- participate in the teleconference/s
- contribute to accreditation reports and documentation
- participate in the site visit meeting/s
- meet agreed timelines

## Additional responsibilities:

The Associate Director:

- leads the assessment team throughout the accreditation process
- advises on matters relating to the application of the accreditation standards
- liaises with all parties involved in the accreditation process
- writes accreditation reports and documents
- establishes and manages the accreditation process timelines

The Team Chair:

- chairs the teleconference/s
- chairs the site visit meeting/s
- attends the nominated Accreditation Committee meeting

## Accreditation administrative support

Accreditation administration staff will provide support for the team including, accessing documents and travel arrangements.

## Steps in the accreditation process

Prior to reviewing the submission each member of the assessment team should be familiar with the:

- [National Accreditation Guidelines](#)

Relevant ANMAC accreditation standards:

- [Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards 2017](#)
- [Re-entry Enrolled Nurse Accreditation Standards 2010](#)
- [Midwife Accreditation Standards 2014](#)
- [Programs Leading to Endorsement for Scheduled Medicines for Midwives Accreditation Standards 2015](#)
- [Re-entry to the Register Midwife Accreditation Standard 2016](#)
- [Nurse Practitioner Accreditation Standards 2015](#)

- [Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2012](#)
- [Re-entry Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2014](#)
- [EPIQ Registered Nurse Accreditation Standards 2014](#)

Each member of the assessment team is required to:

#### **Review the submission**

- independently analyse and evaluate the evidence provided against the criteria for each standard
- determine and record to what extent the evidence provided meets the criteria, using the following:
  - criterion met – no further evidence required
  - criterion not met – identify what further evidence or clarification is required
- forward the completed review document to the Associate Director prior to the teleconference.

#### **Participate in the tele/video conference**

- contribute to the collated review document by discussing additional evidence or clarification required for each criterion
- contribute to the development of the site visit agenda
- discuss travel arrangements and dietary requirements

#### **Prepare for the site visit**

- Familiarise yourself with the following:
  - Travel policy
  - Travel arrangements
  - Collated review and site visit agenda

#### **Participate in the site visit**

- participate in the site visit activities as per the site visit agenda
- take notes to contribute to the
  - assessment team’s oral report to the education provider at the conclusion of the site visit
  - final written site visit report.

#### **Review post site visit**

- review the final site visit report and indicate the accuracy of the content
- review additional evidence submitted by the education provider
- review the outcome of accreditation assessment report and indicate the accuracy of the content.

# Guiding principles for assessment team members

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## Assessment against the ANMAC Accreditation Standards

It is important all members of an assessment team focus their review on the analysis and evaluation of the evidence submitted by the education provider against the specific ANMAC accreditation standards. It is crucial to the integrity of the process that only information relevant to the accreditation standards is requested and considered by members of the assessment team.

## Privacy

ANMAC is committed to responsible privacy practices and complying with its obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)* (including the National Privacy Principles) and all other relevant legislation governing privacy and handling of personal information.

Personal information is, generally, information or an opinion relating to an individual which can be used to identify that individual. This includes a person's name, address, telephone number, email, date of birth, image, employment details, and other information of a personal nature.

ANMAC may collect personal information in submissions from the education provider, and during the site visit(s). Such personal information will only be used for the purpose for which it was obtained by ANMAC.

Accreditation assessors must ensure any personal information is only used for the purpose for which it was obtained by ANMAC and is kept secure and confidential. Please refer to the [ANMAC Privacy Statement](#)

## Confidentiality and conflict of interest

During any accreditation process, members of the relevant assessment team will have access to a significant amount of information about the respective education provider and program. Information will be accessed in submissions from the education provider to ANMAC and during the site visit(s). This information may include information of a sensitive nature such as staff details, financial information, planned changes and innovation by the education provider and commercial-in-confidence material.

ANMAC requires all individuals involved in its accreditation processes to maintain the confidentiality of any information accessed during any assessment. All information obtained during any assessment is confidential and must not be released in any way, even after an individual's active involvement with ANMAC ceases, to third parties without prior approval from the ANMAC Board, or as required by law.

Assessors must sign a confidentiality statement and standing notice of interest form as a condition of appointment. This is a legally binding agreement by the individual to keep confidential information that is accessed during any accreditation assessment. The ANMAC accreditation assessor confidentiality statement and standing notice of interest form will be available to you on appointment to an assessment team.

It is particularly important that assessors maintain confidentiality of discussions with staff, students, and others by ensuring the details of such discussions are de-identified, unless the person who provides the information agrees to be identified.

### **Secure destruction of accreditation materials**

It is particularly important assessors arrange for the secure destruction of any materials once an assessment has been completed. The ANMAC office can make these arrangements for any assessor who does not have access to secure destruction facilities. The ANMAC office will store a complete set of materials and reports securely so there is no reason for any member of an assessment team to retain a copy in any format.

### **Intellectual property**

Intellectual property is a juridical concept used to describe rights arising from intellectual effort and innovation that are recognised and governed by law. Under intellectual property law, owners are granted certain exclusive rights to a variety of intangible assets, such as literary and artistic works, inventions and designs. Common types of intellectual property rights include copyright, trademarks, patents, industrial design rights and in some jurisdictions trade secrets. ANMAC Assessors are required to comply with the legislated requirements of intellectual property.

### **Identifying and managing conflict of interest**

ANMAC requires all individuals involved in its accreditation processes to declare any personal or professional interest that may, or may be perceived to, interfere or conflict with the individual's ability to fulfil their responsibilities to ANMAC's accreditation assessments.

A potential or perceived conflict of interest exists when a person's interests could improperly influence the performance of his/her duties, even though in reality this may not be the case.

The existence of a potential or perceived conflict of interest does not reflect negatively on the person who has the conflict but ANMAC must manage any conflicts of interest.

ANMAC can only manage conflicts of interest effectively if individuals declare all such interests and duties prior to the start of any assessment.

### **Payment of assessors**

The role of an assessor is voluntary; however, ANMAC will provide remuneration for participation in an assessment team. The payment to assessors is intended to offset some of the personal costs of attending the site visit and participating in teleconferences related to the accreditation process. The fee is not payable in respect to travelling time. Assessors are also reimbursed for costs associated with the site visit, including meals, incidentals, motor vehicle allowance, taxi fares, parking etc. The Expense Claim Form is provided to the assessment team before the site visit takes place. Relevant receipts and appropriate documentation such as odometer readings should be kept. The Assessor Payment Claim Form is provided to the assessment team at the beginning of the assessment process and is available in the submission folder under assessor documents.

## Work Health and Safety for assessors

ANMAC has a statutory duty to ensure as reasonably practicable, the health and safety of assessors while they are undertaking their responsibilities as an ANMAC assessor. This includes the provision and maintenance of a work environment without risks to health and safety. Assessors also have a statutory duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to comply with instructions, policies and procedures of ANMAC relating to health and safety in the workplace.

ANMAC assessors undertake their responsibilities in work environments that are outside the direct control of ANMAC. Therefore, ANMAC requires all assessors, while they are undertaking their responsibilities as an ANMAC assessor, to:

- report immediately to the allocated Associate Director, any risk to health and safety in the workplace, including during site visit(s)
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety
- take reasonable care that they do not adversely affect the health and safety of other people
- follow any instructions, policies and procedures of ANMAC relating to health and safety in the workplace

## Code of Conduct

- Board, Committee members, Assessors and ANMAC staff are expected to behave ethically and with honesty and integrity at all times
- act with care and diligence, and in accordance with ANMAC's purpose, objectives, values and principles
- treat fellow members, staff and stakeholders of ANMAC with respect and courtesy, and without harassment
- comply with all applicable Australian laws, in particular the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law)
- maintain appropriate confidentiality about all matters raised in the course of ANMAC meetings/business and not seek to take unfair advantage of knowledge so gained
- disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with ANMAC business
- use ANMAC resources in a proper manner
- recognise and respect the intellectual property of ANMAC, its members, education providers, contractors and other stakeholders of ANMAC
- behave in a way that upholds and promotes the good reputation of ANMAC

# Glossary

Term or abbreviation	Explanation
National Guidelines	The <i>National Guidelines for the Accreditation of Nursing and Midwifery Courses Leading to Registration, Enrolment, Endorsement and Authorisation in Australia</i>
ANMAC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council
Annual declaration	A Declaration made by the education provider each year for the life of the accredited program. ANMAC uses this Annual Declaration to monitor whether education programs and the education providers offering them are continuing to meet approved Accreditation Standards
Education provider	A university or higher education provider, or a registered training organisation, responsible for a program, the graduates of which are eligible to apply for registration or endorsement as a nurse or midwife
Modification of a program	A change to an accredited program
National Law	The National Law is contained in the Schedule to the <i>Health Practitioners Regulation National Law Act 2009 (Qld)</i>
NMBA	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
NRAS	National Registration and Accreditation Scheme
Procedural fairness	Is underpinned by the following principles: the decision-maker must be impartial and unbiased regarding the matter to be decided, and must have no pecuniary or propriety interest in the outcome  those who may be adversely affected by a decision must be given prior notice of the case and a fair opportunity to answer the case and present their own case  the decision must be based on sound argument and evidence  those affected must be given the reasons for the decision
Program	A full program of study and experiences that are required to be undertaken before a qualification recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework, such as a Bachelor of Nursing, can be awarded.