



Guidelines for the Accreditation of immunisation education programs using the National Framework for Immunisation Education for Health Professionals.

Background

The National Immunisation Strategy 2019-2024 identifies immunisation as a cost-effective national public health priority in Australia. The Strategy also recognises the diverse range of health professionals that play an important role in providing accurate and comprehensive information about vaccines and immunisation programs.

The National Framework for Immunisation Education for Health Professionals (the Framework) has been established to assist in the development of nationally consistent immunisation education programs. The National Framework sets an agreed curriculum benchmark for all immunisation education programs to meet in order to be considered a nationally recognised program, and to support transferability of qualifications across states and territories. Through a nationally agreed set of core standards, the National Framework aims to ensure the provision of high-quality immunisation education programs for health professionals who are not medical practitioners but are seeking authorisation to possess and administer vaccines without a medical order.

The Framework specifies minimum curriculum content requirements and must be used as a resource to assist with the education of eligible health professionals at undergraduate or post-graduate levels.

Nationally agreed program standards relate to curriculum design, assessment, program management, resourcing and evaluation. Assessment against these standards will result in accreditation of a program leading to mutual recognition of immunisation education programs across all states and territories.

It should be noted that pharmacist immunisation training requirements are currently specified in state and territory legislation. These reference the Australian Pharmacy Council's (APC) 'Standards for the accreditation of programs to support pharmacist administration of vaccines' as the basis by which appropriateness or equivalence of pharmacist delivered immunisation education can be determined. The APC vaccination training standards have been recently revised to align to the National Framework. As such APC accredited providers may continue to deliver pharmacist and pharmacy student immunisation training subject to state and territory legislation.

Governance

The Australian Nursing and Midwifery Accreditation Council was requested by the Commonwealth Department of Health through the Chief Nurse and Midwifery Officer as the Chair of the Australian Health Protection Principle Committee working Group for the Implementation of the National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals; to act as the single point of entry for immunisation education provider courses seeking to be accredited against the National Immunisation Education Framework for Health Professionals (The Framework). The ANMAC Board determined that a separate entity, Health Education Services Australia (HESA), would be established to separate ANMAC's role in providing the accreditation functions under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (2009)* from services provided to other entities.

Health Education Services Australia will undertake the accreditation of immunisation education programs as requested by education providers that are seeking to be accredited against the Framework. Please note that each State and Territory may require additional competencies to be met prior to authorisation.

Health Education Services Australia has been authorised to deliver the following functions:

- Development and review of minimum education provider standards
- Accreditation of immunisation education programs that may lead to authorisation of health care professionals to independently vaccinate, subject to each state and territory's legislation. Accreditation is valid for 3 years
- Establish a central national register of accredited immunisation education programs, this will be maintained on the HESA website

Health Education Services Australia to send an annual review form to education providers to inform of any program changes.

Health Education Services Australia will assign an assessment panel for each program to be accredited. The panel will consist of the following members:

- One Associate Director as chairperson
- One health professional with current qualification and skills in education
- Authorised Immuniser of relevant professional group
- Health professional with current knowledge and experience in immunisation

Accreditation Framework

This section outlines the Immunisation Accreditation Framework for Immunisation Education Providers, including assessment processes and responsibilities.

Accreditation Assessment

1. The education provider provides an 'intention to submit' notification to Health Education Services Australia
2. Health Education Services Australia assigns an assessment panel and schedules timelines

3. Health Education Services Australia sends an application pack to the education provider together with an invoice for the \$4,000 (GST exclusive) accreditation fee
4. The education provider sends the application to Health Education Services Australia and makes payment
5. Health Education Services Australia receives the application
6. Payment confirmed by the Finance Officer of Health Education Services Australia
7. Desktop assessment commences. The application is assessed against the learning domains and learning outcomes of Framework
8. Any outstanding information is requested from the education provider (if applicable)
9. The 'Outcome of Assessment Report' is prepared by the assessment panel
10. The 'Outcome of Assessment Report' will be sent to the Education Provider
11. The assessment panel submits the report and makes a recommendation to the Managing Director of Health Education Services Australia. The Managing Director reviews the report. A recommendation will be made for the finalised assessment report to go to the Board to approve the accreditation
12. Education provider informed of outcome of assessment
13. Education program information added to approved immunisation programs list on Health Education Services Australia website

The Health Education Services Australia will provide the education provider with opportunity throughout the assessment process to provide additional information to support their application for program accreditation.

Accreditation decision

The outcomes of the accreditation process will be:

- accreditation is granted
- accreditation is not granted

Accreditation is granted

Accreditation is granted when Health Education Services Australia is satisfied the immunisation education program to be conducted by the Education Provider meets the approved standards. Accreditation is usually granted for a period of three years.

Accreditation is not granted

If the Education Provider does not submit a program that meets the requirements as set out in the Framework, Health Education Services Australia must provide written notification to the Education Provider.

The written notice must state:

- the reason for the decision
- within 30 days after receiving the notice, the education provider can apply to the accreditation authority for an internal review of the decision (Cost to be determined)
- how the education provider can apply for a [review/appeal decision]

Appeal of accreditation decision

The education provider must submit the requests within 30 days of notification of the decision. Appeal requests must be in writing and addressed to the Managing Director, HESA. The education provider must include details of why Health Education Services Australia should reconsider its decision.

The Managing Director will designate a review committee, and this will not include anyone who originally assessed the program.

The committee will:

- review the original report and recommendations
- discuss proposed program with the education provider to resolve issues
- takes other reasonable steps that are required.

Once the review is completed the committee finalises the report and provides it to the Managing Director who provides the outcome to the authoriser and to the education provider.

The results of the review are final.

Continuity of accreditation

Education providers should regard every application as a new one, even if it draws on past curricula, evaluations and previously submitted information.

Accreditation of a course is granted for a period of three years. Education providers should apply for re-accreditation at least 6 months prior to expiry. HESA will send a reminder to the education provider 6 months prior to expiration of accreditation.

If there is an issue identified with program delivery of an established program accreditation may be revoked following an investigation by Health Education Services Australia (refer to Complaint Policy).

Health Education Services Australia works with education providers to ensure continued compliance with accreditation standards does not stifle innovation or continuous quality improvement. While program changes are supported and encouraged it is important that an education provider reports program changes to Health Education Services Australia.

To be reassessed as per below.

Annual declaration review

An annual declaration Report completed by the education provider, is designed to confirm a program continues to be delivered as accredited, against the relevant accreditation standards.

As a general condition of accreditation, Health Education Services Australia requires education providers to routinely submit a Program Monitoring Report on the annual anniversary of the program's accreditation. Health Education Services Australia sends the report template to the education provider 6 weeks before the anniversary. Submitting the completed report by the due date is a condition of accreditation. If an education provider fails to submit the report on time, Health Education Services Australia reserves the right to do an unplanned visit to the education provider to determine if the approved accreditation standards are being met. The education providers will be invoiced for all costs incurred.

Health Education Services Australia can place additional reporting requirements on an accredited program if:

- complaints have been made against the education provider and/or program this would normally be processed at a local level / or with the provider
- Annual Declaration has not been adequately completed
- Annual Declaration has not been submitted on time

Additional reporting requirements are an essential part of Health Education Services Australia ongoing monitoring since they ensure accreditation standards are being met. The reporting requirements required at the time of the accreditation decision are outlined in the Outcome of Accreditation Assessment Report sent to the education provider after the accreditation decision has been made. Health Education Services Australia reviews the reporting requirements when provided by the education provider. If reporting requirements change during a program's accreditation cycle, the education provider will be formally notified (in writing) by Health Education Services Australia.

Enrolment of students

Education providers must make students who are applying to undertake an accredited program of study aware of current state and territory legislation relating to the authorisation of immunisers.

Students who are seeking a pathway to mutual recognition are required to complete an accredited course, students should not be enrolled until a course has been accredited. Approved programs of study will be listed on the Health Education Services Australia website. Completion of an accredited Program of study may lead to mutual recognition across all states and territories

Education providers must ensure advertising material used to inform potential students contains accurate information on the accreditation status of both the education provider and the program being advertised.

Students who are applying to undertake an accredited program of study should be made aware of all course requirements.

Complaints management

Health Education Services Australia values complaints in relation to program delivery recognising effective complaints management fosters an environment of safety, continuous quality improvement and promotes accountability and transparency.

Health Education Services Australia works cooperatively with all stakeholders to manage and resolve complaints in an impartial and confidential way. Health Education Services Australia recognises those administering a program are often best placed to decide how to resolve a grievance. However, compliance with accreditation standards remains a key focus of Health Education Services Australia strategy for managing complaints.

Please refer to Health Education Services Australia Complaints Handling Policy for more information on our complaints management processes.

Quality cycle

This section outlines Health Education Services Australia quality cycle which includes the regular review of all aspects of its standards, policies and procedures relating to accreditation. This includes the review of the:

- Policies, processes and procedures that relate to Health Education Services Australia in managing the accreditation of immunisation education programs
- Accreditation standards

Health Education Services Australia review of policies and processes

A formal review of Health Education Services Australia policies and processes, including those relating to accreditation, takes place every three to five years. This review is undertaken through formal planning and with relevant staff. Information is gathered through research and stakeholder consultation. Collated information is provided to Health Education Services Australia for discussion and action.

Health Education Services Australia review of accreditation standards

A formal review of Health Education Services Australia approved accreditation standards for immunisation education programs in Australia takes place generally every five years.