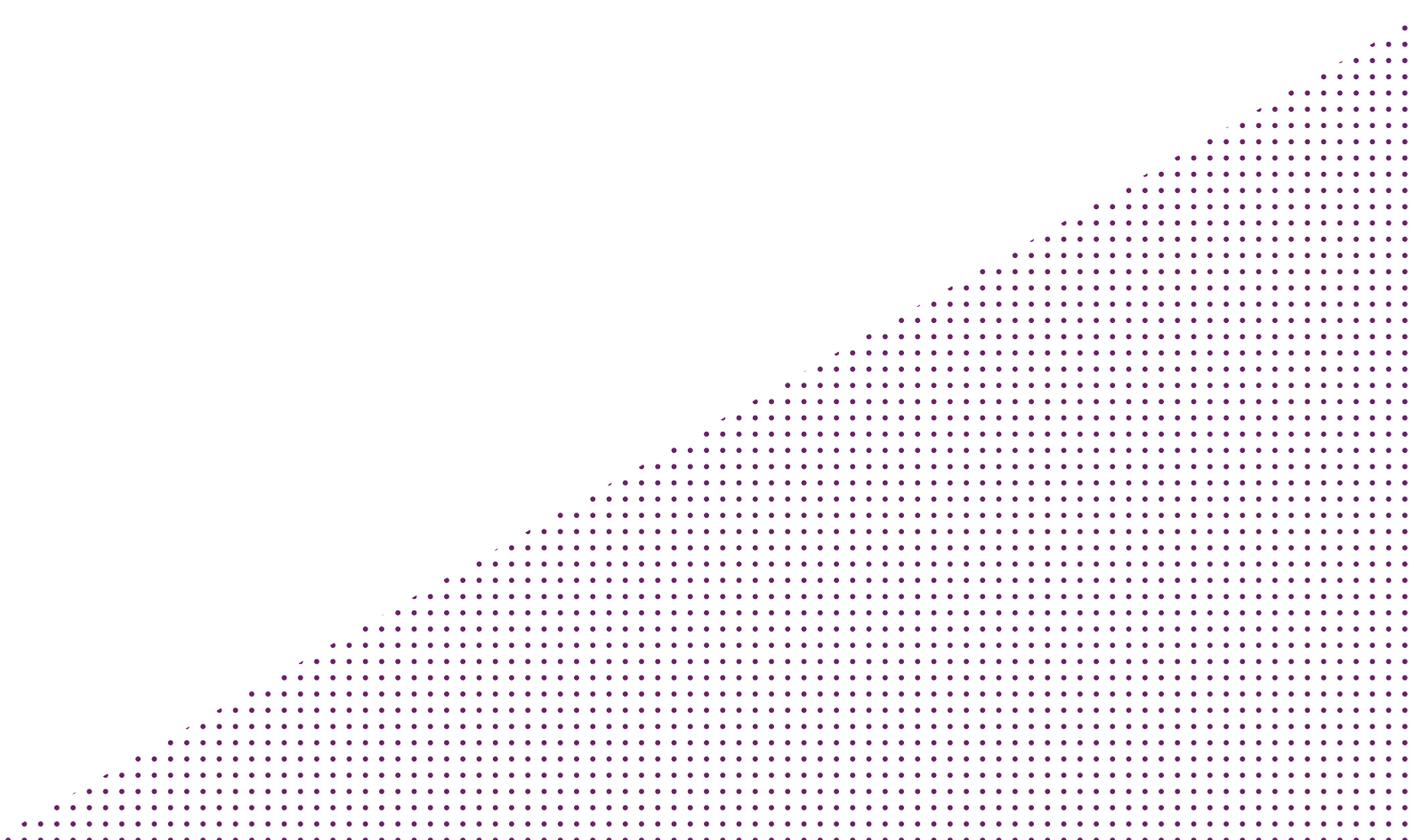




ACCREDITATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR AUDIOLOGY PROGRAMS

Effective from 1 January 2023



DATE OF EFFECT: 1 JANUARY 2023

The Accreditation Policies and Procedures for Audiology Programs (January 2023) replaces the Accreditation of Audiology Degree Programs v 2.2 (October 2018).

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Why Audiology Australia accredits audiology degree programs

Audiology Australia (AudA) is recognised by the Federal Government of Australia's Department of Education as the largest peak professional body representing Audiologists in Australia.

AudA grants accreditation to audiology degree programs that meet certain requirements as outlined in the *Accreditation Standards for Audiology Programs* (the Accreditation Standards).

Accreditation assures the general public that the audiology degree programs in Australia have the appropriate qualities to produce professional Audiologists who are eligible for full membership of AudA.

An audiology degree program accredited by AudA can graduate only those students who have achieved the *Graduate Competencies for Audiology Programs* (the Graduate competencies).

By accrediting audiology degree programs, AudA aims to:

- Maintain appropriately high minimum standards of the audiology profession in Australia
- Stimulate maintenance of high standards and continuing improvement in the quality of professional education in audiology
- Provide support to the university programs to encourage excellence in professional preparation
- Support varied and flexible degree programs that are aligned with the changing realities of the audiology workplace.

Benefits of accreditation

The key benefits of accreditation are:

- to assure the public of the quality and minimum standards of the audiology degree programs provided in Australia, while respecting individual university's strengths
- to assure the quality of professional Audiologists graduating from these accredited programs in that they are appropriately competent and ready to undertake the AudA Clinical Intern Program
- to promote accountability in the universities for the programs they provide.

AudA accreditation offers:

- A guarantee to be accepted into the AudA Clinical Intern program, upon employment in an appropriate setting
- A guarantee to be eligible for full membership of AudA which confers professional recognition
- Reassurance and information for employers regarding the minimum standard of competency when employing a graduate
- Information for prospective students and the general public about the standard, range and context of the competencies to be achieved in a program in order to practise as an Audiologist on graduation
- Information for international associations on the level of competency expected of a newly graduated Audiologist in Australia and how that is assured
- Information for institutions of the requirements for entry into the audiology profession.

Accreditation

Accreditation is the status granted by AudA to Masters level programs of study in audiology that meet, and that continue to meet, the Accreditation Standards, or that meet most of the Accreditation Standards, with those not met at the time of assessment likely to be met within the time specified by AudA in accordance with conditions set.

The Accreditation Standards include the Graduate competencies.

If AudA has accredited a program, it signifies that the program is expected to ensure graduating students have the professional competencies (the knowledge, skills and attributes) necessary to graduate from a program and enter their Clinical Internship.

Accreditation will ensure that a high standard of competency is achieved through maintenance of rigorous broad-based academic and clinical standards.

The degrees recognised are Masters degrees. Rigorous standards are demanded and will continue to be demanded in recognition of the need for a high standard of professional competency in audiology in Australia.

Principles of accreditation

Flexibility

AudA's accreditation framework, while requiring compliance with the Accreditation Standards including the Graduate competencies, is sufficiently flexible to allow for the development of diverse and distinctive degree programs.

AudA does not seek to prescribe the input of audiology degree programs by way of hours of study or, with the exception of requirements for clinical experience hours, other inputs. The accreditation process is an outcomes focused approach which recognises that the universities involved are responsible for the educational process, and accepts that varying program structures, pedagogy and assessment strategies may be used to develop students' skills and to assess students' competency.

Goodwill

The accreditation process highlights the important relationship and goodwill between AudA and the universities. This relationship is focused on providing high quality audiology services for the people of Australia.

Accreditation is a shared experience, which AudA seeks to make pleasant, reasonable and collaborative. Communication between AudA and the universities about matters relating to the accreditation of programs will occur regularly.

AudA accredits each university program individually, reviewing and assessing each program on its merits as assessed by its ability to meet the Accreditation Standards. In the spirit of goodwill and collaboration, it provides the university with the draft accreditation assessment report to allow the university to submit a rejoinder/response before the final report and recommendations are made.

Accreditation process

A university applying for accreditation with AudA must be a TEQSA registered higher education provider.

The accreditation process has been designed to operate over a five-year cycle (the accreditation period) so that the university's existing accredited program is assessed and considered for accreditation in the final year of that cycle.

New programs are assessed out-of-cycle at any time.

The onus is on the university to ensure that AudA has received information submitted by the program. This includes the Application for Accreditation, the Annual Report and any further information provided outside of these regular formats.

The onus is on the university to demonstrate that the program meets the Accreditation Standards and to show how it will continue to meet the Standards during the accreditation period.

New programs and established programs are assessed against the same Accreditation Standards, although the assessment of a new program may be varied according to the circumstances of the program and the university.

The accreditation process will assess the university's operations, specifically of the audiology discipline, and how they impact on the program being offered and being assessed for accreditation.

In conducting an assessment for accreditation, AudA will consider:

- Written material provided with the Application for Accreditation
- A report of observations made by the Accreditation Assessment Panel during a site visit to the university
- The university's response to any matters that have been raised by the panel, and
- Any other relevant information or material obtained by AudA.

General sequence of events

Once a university submits an application for accreditation for a program to demonstrate how the program meets the Accreditation Standards, the general sequence of events for an accreditation assessment is as follows:

- The Accreditation Assessment Panel reviews and analyses the documentation
- The panel informs the university of any clarifications required or further information to be submitted
- The panel conducts a site visit to review the degree program within the university context
- A preliminary report is prepared, to which the university may submit a rejoinder/response
- The panel considers any rejoinder, revises its report if needed, and submits the report and recommendations to AAUACC
- AAUACC reviews the final report and recommendation, and makes a recommendation to the AudA Board
- The Board considers the report and recommendations, and determines the accreditation outcome
- Following successful accreditation, the university will supply an annual report to AudA in each year following their accreditation assessment
- If accreditation is refused, revoked, or granted with conditions, the university may appeal the decision.

Decision-making and lines of communication

Bodies with roles in the accreditation process include:

- The AudA Board (the Board)
- The Audiology Australia University Accreditation and Competencies Committee (AAUACC)
- The Accreditation Assessment Panel
- The Chair of the Accreditation Assessment Panel
- The Moderator
- AudA staff
- The Council of Deans

The Board

The Board has the responsibility for formal accreditation assessment decisions, for example in response to applications for accreditation, and in response to recommendations relating to conditions met or to be imposed. The Board makes decisions informed by recommendations from AAUACC.

AAUACC

AAUACC oversees the accreditation process and provides advice to the Board on formal accreditation assessment decisions. These include recommendations informed by the assessment carried out by the Accreditation Assessment Panel. AAUACC also reviews program information which may not impact on accreditation status, providing advice or seeking clarification as required. It may be assisted in this regard with advice from a current, experienced accreditation assessor.

The Accreditation Assessment Panel

The Accreditation Assessment Panel comprises three accreditation assessors, all audiology academics of current accredited programs who are AudA members, and are trained in accreditation assessment by AudA. Panel members are selected based on the following criteria:

- Three accreditation assessors on the panel, each from a different university
- Maximum of one panel member with no prior accreditation assessment experience
- All panel members should be members of AudA
- All members should have completed AudA accreditation assessor training
- Unless necessary (depending on assessor availability), no assessor should be a panel member for a university in the same geographic location as their own university
- Gender mix where possible
- All panel members and Chair to be experienced accreditation assessors where an assessment is expected to be particularly challenging
- Review and decide on panel membership based on any conflict of interest as identified by the accreditation assessor, and by the university to be assessed.

The Accreditation Assessment Panel has three key functions:

- to review the available evidence and determine whether a program meets the Accreditation Standards
- to provide an overall recommendation to AAUACC on whether a program should be accredited (with or without conditions)
- to make quality improvement recommendations and to identify areas for commendation for a program.

Chair of the panel

One of the three panel members acts as the Chair of the panel – an experienced accreditation assessor. The Chair should be a member of the Council of Deans, or a member of the university nominated by the Council of Deans, and should have served on a minimum of one previous accreditation assessment panel.

The moderator

The Moderator, usually an AudA staff member, oversees the accreditation process and ensures accreditation assessment visits are conducted consistently across accreditation assessments and across programs.

AudA staff

AudA staff facilitate the communications between the various stakeholders.

Council of Deans

The Council of Deans, comprising heads of the audiology discipline overseeing accredited audiology programs in Australia, is a valuable source of advice to AudA as an independent advisory body. It provides guidance and recommendations to the Board for strategic activities relating to audiology programs and accreditation, and contemporary trends in university education.

Cycle accreditation assessments

Timeline

In the fourth year of its accreditation period, AudA will write to the university advising that its five-yearly accreditation assessment is due the following year. The university will submit written confirmation via a Notice of Intended Application form (NOIA) that it will seek assessment, and acknowledge that an application will be submitted by a date advised by AudA. The university will also notify AudA of any dates potentially suitable for the site visit.

AudA will advise the university of the selected site visit dates, with the application due date to be three months prior to the site visit.

AudA publishes on its website the timelines for accreditation cycles.

If an assessment is conducted outside an AudA accreditation cycle, the dates and the steps in the timeline listed may be varied at AudA's sole discretion.

The accreditation assessment

AudA considers each application as a new accreditation assessment. AudA may have regard for previous assessments in reviewing the application details for the program to be assessed, but will assess each application for accreditation on its merits, against all of the Accreditation Standards. All accredited programs must meet these standards, or be deemed as able to meet them within a set period as specified in any conditions on accreditation.

Out of cycle initial accreditation assessments

Timeline

A university which proposes a new program is required to inform AudA of its intention to apply for accreditation for the program (an out of cycle initial accreditation assessment) as early as possible. This will be followed by discussions with AudA to explore and clarify the university's intentions, and to outline the nature of the accreditation assessment process and estimated timelines. It may be possible for AudA to informally review plans for the new program and provide general advice about any potential major issues that should be addressed prior to the application being submitted.

Once the university submits an application for accreditation, there is no guarantee that the outcome of the accreditation assessment will be one of Accreditation (whether without conditions or with conditions).

A university may submit its out of cycle initial application for an accreditation assessment at any time. Notification of an accreditation determination may take up to twelve (12) months from receipt of the application for an out of cycle initial assessment.

A program must receive a determination of accreditation prior to the first students graduating in order for this cohort to be eligible for full membership of AudA and to be eligible to complete a Clinical Internship to qualify as an Audiology Australia Accredited Audiologist.

Meeting the Accreditation Standards

In making an application for accreditation assessment of a new program, a university must demonstrate how the program meets the Accreditation Standards, or how it intends to meet the Accreditation Standards.

For programs yet to commence, or yet to have students in the second year of the program, it will not be possible to assess all elements of a program. Should it be determined that the program meets most of the Accreditation Standards and those not met at the time of assessment are likely to be met within the time specified by AudA (of no more than 12 months), conditions will be set that require further information to be submitted or viewed as the program progresses. This process is outlined on our website.

Advertising new programs

Universities who wish to make public announcements (such as in promotional literature or program information on websites) about proposed new programs prior to receiving an outcome of accreditation, may state that they will submit or have submitted an application for an accreditation assessment with AudA. However, they must not imply in any way that accreditation itself is in process, or that an outcome of accreditation is expected.

Conflict of interest

The university is given an opportunity to comment on the proposed membership of an Accreditation Assessment Panel and may query the composition where the provider believes a proposed assessor has a bias or conflict of interest that could cast doubt on their capacity to objectively evaluate a program.

Accreditation assessors are also responsible for advising AudA of any potential conflict of interest they may have when the accreditation assessment panels for each university visit are being selected.

The university involved may lodge an objection to nominated member/s of the panel. AudA will consider any objections before the final appointment of panel members is made.

Confidentiality

The accreditation process is confidential to the participants. In order to undertake its role as the accreditation assessor, AudA requires detailed information from universities. This typically includes sensitive or commercial-in-confidence information such as plans, budgets and other confidential information. AudA requires members of Accreditation Assessment Panels, members of AAUACC, AudA Board members and staff to keep confidential all material provided to AudA by universities for the purpose of accreditation assessment of their programs.

Information collected is used only for the purpose for which it is obtained.

A final decision on accreditation is made only when the AudA Board has considered AAUACC's recommendation. The overall recommendation on accreditation remains confidential until an accreditation decision has been made by AudA.

Outcomes from the accreditation assessment process

Once AudA has made a determination of the accreditation status of a program, it will advise the program, and, where relevant, update the list of accredited programs on the AudA website.

The program may be granted the following accreditation outcome:

- Accreditation without conditions
- Accreditation with conditions
- Accreditation revoked
- Accreditation expired
- Accreditation refused

Any program which is unsuccessful in gaining Accreditation without conditions, or Accreditation with conditions, will not be accredited.

AudA reserves the right to make the final decision on whether or not it accredits a degree program.

Accreditation without conditions

Accreditation without conditions will be granted if the program meets all of the Accreditation Standards. An Accreditation Standard is regarded as met when each and every criterion within is met.

Accreditation with conditions

Accreditation with conditions will be granted when AudA has determined that:

- the program meets most of the Accreditation Standards, and those not met at the time of assessment are likely to be met within the time specified by AudA
- following the accreditation process, the university has made changes to its accredited program and/or its supporting resources such that the program is at risk of not meeting, or no longer meets, the Accreditation Standards, and the Accreditation Standards not met at the time of assessment are likely to be met within the time specified by AudA
- following an audit of a university's program, it no longer meets the Accreditation Standards, and the Accreditation Standards not met at the time of audit are likely to be successfully addressed within the time specified by AudA.

A university with a program having the status of Accreditation with conditions is required to submit a mandatory report to AudA setting out the progress made towards meeting the Accreditation Standards by a date specified by AudA. This date will be no more than 12 months (and could be considerably less than 12 months), from the date of the accreditation determination.

If all conditions are addressed by the specified date, then the accreditation status may be reassessed and a status of Accreditation without conditions may be granted.

If any condition has not been addressed to AudA's satisfaction, then the program may be determined as having Accreditation revoked.

Accreditation revoked

A status of Accreditation revoked will apply to any previously accredited program that no longer meets the Accreditation Standards.

The Board may revoke accreditation from a program of study if:

- a program is identified, at any time, as having serious deficiencies or weaknesses such that it no longer meets one or more Accreditation Standards, and the deficiency or weakness is considered to be of such a nature that it cannot be corrected within a reasonable period of time
- a provider fails to demonstrate that progress has been made towards meeting any conditions of accreditation within the prescribed period of time.

AudA will advise the university that accreditation of the program is to be revoked, providing reasons for the decision, and it will require the university to advise how it proposes to manage and protect the interests of students who are enrolled in the program.

The university must undertake the following process for students who are currently enrolled:

- make arrangements with another suitable provider to transfer students into an accredited program, and
- ensure that the alternative provider is able to incorporate the extra students to enable them to graduate under the aegis of the alternative accredited provider, or
- allocate resources, engage contract staff, or do whatever else is necessary to enable a 'teach out' of the program within a short term accreditation period agreed by AudA, or
- take such other steps as agreed by AudA as necessary to protect the interests of students.

Accreditation expired

A status of Accreditation expired will be determined for an accredited program if:

- the accreditation period has come to an end and either no Application has been received or no assessment for accreditation has been undertaken, or
- an application for accreditation has been made after the expiry of the accreditation period and the program has not been assessed for accreditation.

Accreditation refused

An outcome of accreditation refused means AudA has determined that a new program or an established program seeking a cycle accreditation assessment has a serious deficiency or weakness in one or more Accreditation Standards that cannot be corrected within a reasonable period of time. Accreditation is refused if the information and supporting evidence provided in an application for accreditation is assessed as unsuccessful in gaining Accreditation without conditions or Accreditation with conditions.

Change of accreditation status

The accreditation status of a program may be changed as a result of:

- the closure of the university or the unit out of which all or part of an accredited program is taught
- the cessation of a program by the university
- an AudA accreditation assessment
- an AudA audit or monitoring process
- failure to meet the requirements of Accreditation with conditions.

The university that has its program accreditation status changed may:

- appeal the decision to change accreditation status, or
- resubmit a new application for accreditation at any time.

Monitoring

AudA monitors accredited programs to ensure that they continue to meet the Accreditation Standards. A range of monitoring activities are undertaken and are listed here.

Annual reports

AudA requires an annual report from each university for each accredited program.

The format of annual reports is focussed on gathering information to help AudA determine whether an accredited program continues to meet the Accreditation Standards. AudA provides a reporting template for this purpose, which must be used by education providers. Programs are notified of their reporting requirements three months in advance of the reporting deadline.

Regular collection of information via annual reporting is intended to help identify risks at an early stage so that they may be addressed.

Condition and monitoring reports

Additional reports (that is apart from annual reports) may be required for programs where there are conditions applied to an accredited program. Any requirements for additional reporting will accompany notification of an accreditation decision.

There may also be instances where at the time of review a program meets the Accreditation Standards, but there is a planned or future change that brings into question whether the program will continue to meet the Accreditation Standards. In this instance it may be appropriate for a monitoring requirement to be imposed, such as a report to be submitted or a further review to be undertaken.

AudA reserves the right to apply conditions or additional monitoring requirements to a program at any time if AudA identifies a program is at serious risk of not meeting, or no longer meets, the Accreditation Standards. When applying conditions to accredited programs, AudA seeks to be proportionate to the issues identified.

Monitoring site visits

There may be instances where at the point of an accreditation visit a program meets the Accreditation Standards, but there may be a known future event or activity that gives rise to uncertainty over whether one or more of the Standards will continue to be met during the period of accreditation.

This could, for example, include cases where an education provider is moving to new clinical facilities that could not be viewed by the Accreditation Team at the time of the site visit, or a new program that appears compliant on paper, but which has not yet graduated any students. In such cases, AudA may undertake a monitoring visit to ensure that the program continues to meet the Standards.

Concerns about program

AudA may receive concerns which appear to bring into doubt whether an accredited program continues to meet the Accreditation Standards.

AudA will consider such concerns and undertake further investigation as necessary. If a concern is investigated, AudA will inform the university of the concerns and the grounds on which they are based, and the university will have an opportunity to respond. The outcome of an investigation will be a decision about what action (if any) is necessary. In appropriate cases, this may include putting in place monitoring requirements or undertaking a paper-based review or site visit.

Self-reporting material changes to programs

Universities must inform AudA of material changes to an accredited program so that the impact on the ongoing compliance of the program with the Accreditation Standards can be assessed.

It is the responsibility of the university to inform AudA as soon as possible of any material changes or proposed changes to its accredited program. A material change to a program is one that will or may significantly affect the way the program meets the requirements of the Accreditation Standards.

AudA regards the following as examples of material changes:

- discontinuation of a unit or part of a unit, or a significant change in the length of a unit
- marked changes in the design of a program that may affect learning opportunities and/or achievement of learning outcomes
- significant changes to the clinical experience program
- a change in the mode(s) of delivery or participation
- a change in delivery partner or arrangements with a delivery partner
- substantial changes in the expected learning outcomes for graduates
- changes to admission requirements that potentially present barriers to the achievement of learning outcomes
- significant changes to student assessment
- significant change to arrangements for monitoring program quality and graduate outcomes of programs
- a substantial change in student numbers for the program relative to available resources, including capital, facilities and staff
- significant changes in the staffing profile
- a significant change in overall funding of the program, and
- any conditions imposed on the university by TEQSA.

AudA can provide general advice about whether proposed changes are likely to impact on the program's accreditation status. Where there is any doubt about whether a proposed change represents a material change, it should be discussed at the earliest opportunity with AudA.

Publication of accreditation status

AudA will maintain a publicly available list of all current AudA accredited programs on the AudA website. The list will state the current accreditation status (without conditions or with conditions).

It is the responsibility of the university, at all times, to inform students and stakeholders accurately of the AudA accreditation status of its program.

If the university changes the title of the qualification awarded on completion of an AudA accredited program, or changes any other significant part of a program, the university must not represent that the amended program is accredited by AudA.

Programs in teach out and discontinued programs

If an accredited program is in teach out (i.e., no new students are being enrolled) and students remain enrolled in the program (i.e., the program is being taught out), AudA must be advised.

On receipt of the advice, AudA may request further information on teach out arrangements from the university in order to review the program's compliance with the Accreditation Standards.

Where a program's teach out period extends beyond the end of its current accreditation period, the program is required to be accredited until all students have either completed or transitioned out. If a program continues to be taught after the expiry of its accreditation, it will have a status of Accreditation Revoked. Any student who has completed a program whose accreditation has been revoked will be deemed to have graduated from a program that is not accredited. See Accreditation Revoked (above), for requirements universities must meet in order to protect the interests of students who are enrolled in the program.

The accreditation assessment report

Following an accreditation assessment site visit, a preliminary accreditation assessment report is written. The university has an opportunity to review and comment on the preliminary report in a rejoinder before it is finalised for consideration by AAUACC. AudA will make clear that the content of the preliminary report sent to the university for comment, including any proposed conditions, monitoring requirements or recommendations, is provisional and may change.

The purpose of sending the report to the university is to give an opportunity to comment on factual accuracy and outcomes. The information that the university might submit as part of this process could include evidence that was available at the time of the visit that they consider may have been overlooked, as well as evidence not available at the time of the visit.

AudA will advise the date by which any comments or further evidence must be received. Any comments or further evidence will be considered by the Accreditation Assessment Panel and the report will then be finalised for submission to AAUACC.

Recommendations and commendations

In addition to determining whether a program should be accredited, and if so with or without conditions, the accreditation process and report also allow for the inclusion of Recommendations and Commendations.

A Recommendation is made where the Accreditation Assessment Panel has identified one or more areas of the program that meet a particular Accreditation Standard, but where they have identified an opportunity to further improve the quality of the program and its outcomes in relation to that Standard. Recommendations are intended to support development of a program, and, unlike conditions, universities are not required to act on them. However, acting on the Recommendations is encouraged as a way of demonstrating a commitment to quality improvement by the university.

The Accreditation Assessment Panel may also identify areas for Commendation where they have found aspects of the program being assessed as significantly exceeding the minimum requirements for accreditation.

The application for accreditation

The accreditation application is the university's self-assessment demonstrating how the program seeking accreditation meets the Accreditation Standards, and includes evidence gathered by the university to demonstrate this.

AudA has provided a list of required documentary evidence which define the minimum documentation that is expected to be included with every application for accreditation. Universities are also at liberty to include any further evidence and information that they wish in support of their application. Refer to the Guidance and Evidence section in the Accreditation Standards document for details.

Documentation can be submitted in its original format that has been prepared for other purposes, and one piece of evidence may apply to multiple Accreditation Standards. Electronic submissions are encouraged, along with the use of hyperlinks rather than attaching large documents.

An application template is available on the AudA website for universities to guide the application process.

Site visit

An accreditation assessment visit normally includes a structured visit by the Accreditation Assessment Panel to the university. The site visit is arranged in consultation with the university. For existing programs, the visit typically comprises a series of meetings with selected individual staff, clinical educators, groups that contribute to the delivery of the program, students, and other relevant stakeholders. For new programs the visit and the groups met with will be adapted according to the circumstances of the university and the program.

These interactions will usually occur over a period of two days. Visits are held on-site and in-person, except where circumstances may require the visit to be conducted on-line.

It is important that interviewees are encouraged to give free and frank answers to questions from the Accreditation Assessment Panel. For this reason, staff cannot be interviewed in the same session as their line manager or with another staff member with whom there is a reporting relationship. Similarly, staff cannot be present during meetings with students, clinical educators or other stakeholders.

To maintain confidentiality and encourage free and frank responses, individuals that are interviewed are not identified in reports, and interviewees are not privy to comments made in interview sessions other than their own.

The accreditation visit schedule should provide maximum opportunities for interactive discussions with staff, students, and other relevant stakeholders to enable them to present their views and for the Accreditation Assessment Panel to verify statements through other sources; and for the Panel to view relevant facilities. An indicative schedule for a site visit is available on the AudA website.

The final schedule will be developed by the university, in consultation with AudA and the Chair of the panel. Each schedule will vary depending on practical matters such as the availability of persons for interview and on the issues identified by the panel from its prior assessment of the accreditation application. Additional meetings may be requested to address issues that arise during the visit.

The final meeting of the site visit will allow for the panel to discuss its preliminary findings with the head of the program. The advice given will be provided verbally and framed as preliminary and subject to change as the report is written. The report will be subject also to a review of any rejoinder that the university submits. The panel will make clear that the information discussed reflects the views of the panel only, and that the final determination is made by the Board.

Duration of accreditation

Existing accredited programs

For an existing accredited program, the standard accreditation cycle is for a period of five years. The accreditation assessment takes place prior to the expiry of the current five year accreditation period, in the last year of that period. If accreditation (whether without or with conditions) is the determination that results from the accreditation assessment, it will commence on 1 January of the following year and will expire in five years' time on 31 December, subject to any conditions on accreditation and results of monitoring activities during that period.

New programs

For new programs, the accreditation assessment can take place at any time, but with the accreditation determination to be achieved prior to the first cohort graduating. If accreditation is the determination that results from the

accreditation assessment, the program will be regarded as being accredited from the date of the AudA Board determination.

Accreditation will expire on 31 December, four years from the start of the year following the initial accreditation determination. For example, a new program that receives an outcome of accreditation in July 2023, will have its accreditation expire (subject to any conditions on accreditation and results of monitoring activities) on 31 December 2027. This is to allow for the fact that the Board determination may occur at any time during the year and that its initial period of accreditation may therefore range from anywhere between four and five years. It ensures that a new program is reviewed for its second accreditation assessment within five years, to ensure the quality of the program is maintained as it develops.

The program will then have its accreditation assessment in the final year of its cycle, in 2027, with the next period of accreditation running for the standard five years: 1 January 2028 – 31 December 2032.

Fees

Fees for accreditation assessment are set annually by AudA and listed in AudA's schedule of fees, available on the AudA website. Fees apply to cycle accreditation assessments for existing programs, and to out of cycle initial assessments of new programs.

AudA will issue tax invoices for payment of fees for accreditation assessments, for monitoring site visits (with these fees to be determined on a case by case basis), for associated site visit costs, and for annual fees.

The invoice for the accreditation assessment is issued on receipt of the application for accreditation.

The associated site visit costs of travel, airfares, accommodation, meals, taxi fares and any other expenses associated with a site visit by the Accreditation Assessment Panel will be the responsibility of the university. The university will be invoiced for these costs after the site visit.

Failure to pay outstanding invoices by the time specified by AudA may result in accreditation being revoked, or an assessment being delayed or not being undertaken.

The appeal process

Grounds for appeal

There are three grounds for appealing an accreditation determination of Accreditation with Conditions, Accreditation revoked, or Accreditation refused.

These grounds are:

- The accreditation procedures and processes as set out in this document were not implemented or adhered to in the established manner or format
- There is proven prejudice or bias exhibited by the Accreditation Assessment Panel in the undertaking of the accreditation assessment
- Significant new information or documentation has become available after the accreditation assessment process, where this would add to or change the university's claims and capacities to demonstrate compliance with the Accreditation Standards.

An appeal will not be considered on the basis of:

- Dispute or questioning of the Accreditation Standards
- Dispute or questioning of AudA's accreditation procedure or process
- The university's failure to meet dates and appointments established under AudA's process.

Timeline and sequence of the appeal process

The university must inform AudA of the grounds for the appeal, and provide evidence supporting the appeal, within one month from the date that the accreditation determination was issued.

Within two weeks of having been notified that the university is appealing, AudA will confirm membership of an appeals committee.

The Accreditation Appeals Committee shall consist of three accreditation assessors. Wherever possible, members of the Appeals Committee should not have been involved with the accreditation assessment of the program that is being appealed in any manner to this point. There will be a Chair, whose nomination must be agreed upon by the university.

Within two weeks of receipt of the appeal information from the university, AudA will send the following documentation to the Accreditation Appeals Committee:

- The original documentation provided by the university seeking accreditation
- The preliminary and final accreditation reports
- The university's stated grounds for appeal, and the supporting evidence for the appeal.

The Accreditation Appeals Committee will study the documentation presented and make a decision on the validity of the appeal. This Committee may call for more evidence from the university and/or AudA. It will then come to a decision on whether or not the appeal should be upheld.

The Accreditation Appeals Committee then makes its recommendation to AAUACC. AAUACC will be informed if the Accreditation Appeals Committee's decision is a split decision.

Based on its review of the Accreditation Appeals Committee's recommendation, AAUACC will forward to the AudA Board for ratification its final recommendation on whether or not to change the accreditation determination being appealed. No appeal of this decision will be considered. AudA then informs the university of the outcome of the appeal.

Costs of the appeal

The costs of the appeal will be borne by the university that submitted the appeal.

Key Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Accreditation	The status, whether with or without conditions, granted by AudA to Masters level programs of study in audiology that meet, and that continue to meet, the Accreditation Standards, or that meet most of the Accreditation Standards, with those not met at the time of assessment likely to be met within the time specified by AudA in accordance with conditions set.
Accreditation assessment	An assessment that takes place as a result of an application for accreditation for an existing accredited program, or a new program. May also refer to an assessment in response to an annual report, a monitoring activity, an investigation in response to concerns raised, or other assessments undertaken outside of the formal application for accreditation process.
Accreditation Assessment Panel	The panel comprises three accreditation assessors, with one acting as Chair. The panel reviews the available evidence and determines whether a program meets the Accreditation Standards. It provides an overall recommendation to AAUACC on whether a program should be accredited (with or without conditions), and it makes quality improvement recommendations and identify areas for commendation for a program.
Accreditation assessor	An audiology academic of a current accredited program who is an AudA member, and has completed AudA's accreditation assessment training. The accreditation assessor as part of the accreditation assessment panel considers the available evidence gathered from documentation, interviews, and reviews of a range of materials and resources, makes a professional judgement on which accreditation standards have been met, and recommends an accreditation outcome on that basis.
Accreditation revoked	A status that applies to any previously accredited program that no longer meets the Accreditation Standards.
Accreditation refused	An outcome of an accreditation assessment that means AudA has determined that a new program or an established program seeking a cycle accreditation assessment has a serious deficiency or weakness in one or more Accreditation Standards that cannot be corrected within a reasonable period of time. Accreditation is refused if the information and supporting evidence provided in an application for accreditation is assessed as unsuccessful in gaining Accreditation without conditions or Accreditation with conditions.
Accreditation with conditions	Status granted by AudA to programs of study in audiology that meet most of the Accreditation Standards, with those not met at the time of assessment likely to be met within the time specified by AudA in accordance with conditions set. Programs that have the status of Accreditation with conditions are accredited, signifying that the program is expected to ensure graduating students have the professional competencies (the knowledge, skills and attributes) necessary to graduate from a program and enter their Clinical Internship.
Accreditation without conditions	Status granted by AudA to programs of study in audiology that meet, and that continue to meet, all the Accreditation Standards. The programs are accredited, signifying that the program is expected to ensure graduating students have the professional competencies (the knowledge, skills and attributes) necessary to graduate from a program and enter their Clinical Internship.
Accredited	See Accreditation

TERM	DEFINITION
Audiology Australia University Accreditation and Competencies Committee (AAUACC)	<p>A committee of the Board with the primary function to oversee the university accreditation processes and assist the Board to discharge its obligations as the final decision-maker of accreditation of university audiology programs. It oversees the accreditation process, and provides advice to the Board on formal accreditation assessment decisions.</p> <p>AAUACC also reviews program information which may not impact on accreditation status, providing advice or seeking clarification as required.</p>
Program / Program of study	<p>A program of study in audiology delivered by an education provider that leads to the issuance of a qualification, which typically consists of a number of sub-elements (see Unit). Note the term 'course (of study)' is also used by some education providers.</p>
Rejoinder	<p>A response to a Preliminary Accreditation Assessment Report. Can include clarifications or corrections of any matters discussed in the report, and submission of further information that may not have been available to the panel at the time of the accreditation assessment visit.</p>
Unit	<p>A separate and identifiable component of an audiology program, usually with its own assessment components and with a member of the academic staff responsible for coordination. Note the terms 'course', 'module' 'subject' or 'topic' are also used by some providers.</p>



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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