

**AUSTRALIAN PHYSIOTHERAPY COUNCIL**

**ACCREDITATION  
OF  
ENTRY LEVEL PHYSIOTHERAPY PROGRAMS  
- a manual for universities**

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## PREAMBLE

Accreditation of entry level physiotherapy education programs including relevant aspects of the universities that offer them is one method of maintaining quality of physiotherapy practice.

A consistent national approach to the accreditation of physiotherapy education programs has been implemented in Australia for more than a decade. In 1995, the Australian Council of Physiotherapy Regulating Authorities (now the Australian Physiotherapy Council) formed a working party to develop a accreditation process for physiotherapy education programs in Australia. A process for accreditation of physiotherapy education programs in Australia was introduced in 1997.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council continues to work with all stakeholders including the physiotherapy profession, students, universities, employers and the community to achieve a accreditation process that:

- is focused on outcomes;
- is based on definitive criteria; and
- is implemented in a consistent national manner.

A variety of factors have transformed the context of entry level physiotherapy education over the past decade. Key factors impacting on the accreditation process over this period include a more than threefold increase in the number of programs, the introduction of graduate entry programs, restructuring of health service delivery and changes in the funding of higher education.

In developing this Accreditation Manual, the Australian Physiotherapy Council completed a comprehensive review of relevant literature, and other relevant professional accreditation guidelines, as well as broad consultation with key stakeholders and persons experienced in accreditation. The outcomes of the comprehensive review and the current context of entry level physiotherapy education are reflected in the accreditation process, the stages of accreditation and the Accreditation Requirements described in this Accreditation Manual.

This Accreditation Manual is intended to serve as a resource for universities engaged in the planning, design, review and continuous quality improvement of entry level physiotherapy education programs. It provides guidance for universities developing submissions as part of the process of application for, and maintenance of, accreditation.

The procedures in this Accreditation Manual may be updated from time to time as the context of entry level physiotherapy education changes and the regulatory framework in which the accreditation is conducted changes. Updated versions will be placed on the Australian Physiotherapy Council website.

Any change to the Accreditation Requirements will be conducted in accordance with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency document "*Procedures for development of accreditation standards*" available at [www.ahpra.gov.au](http://www.ahpra.gov.au).

A formal review of the Accreditation Manual will commence in the second half of 2012.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 About the Australian Physiotherapy Council

The Australian Physiotherapy Council is an independent national organisation and is constituted as a company limited by guarantee registered with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council has been appointed by the Health Ministers of Australia as the accreditation authority for physiotherapy under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*.

The Federal Minister for Immigration and Citizenship has specified and gazetted the Australian Physiotherapy Council as the assessing authority for the occupation of physiotherapy under the *Migration Regulations 1994*.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council engages locally and globally in oversight of the guidance, development and assurance of standards for health professional practice in the public interest. The Australian Physiotherapy Council is a member of the Forum of Australian Health Professions Councils and the International Network of Physiotherapy Regulating Authorities. The Australian Physiotherapy Council values integrity, excellence, collaboration, reliability and accountability.

### 1.2 Difference between the Physiotherapy Accreditation Standards and the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy

The Accreditation Requirements described in this manual are the Physiotherapy Accreditation Standards under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (the National Law).

In accordance with the National Law, the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors will decide to accredit a physiotherapy education program if, after assessing the program, they are reasonably satisfied that the program and the university that offers the program, have met the Accreditation Requirements. The Accreditation Process described in this manual is used by the Australian Physiotherapy Council to assess whether physiotherapy education programs and the universities that offer those programs have met the Accreditation Requirements.

The Australian Standards for Physiotherapy must be read in conjunction with, this manual. The Australian Standards for Physiotherapy provide the physiotherapy profession with a benchmark for the knowledge, skills and professional attributes of a safe and effective entry level physiotherapist in Australia. The Accreditation Requirements include elements that embed the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy in entry-level physiotherapy education programs.

### 1.3 Program Accreditation and Registration of Graduates

In Australia, the registration of physiotherapists is subject to statutory regulation. In order to practise physiotherapy and use the title physiotherapist or physical therapist, a person must be currently registered with the Physiotherapy Board of Australia.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council assesses and accredits physiotherapy education programs offered by universities in Australia as part of the accreditation functions under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (National Law).

A program of study leading to a physiotherapy qualification and the relevant education provider must be accredited by the Australian Physiotherapy Council prior to approval of the

qualification by the Physiotherapy Board of Australia as meeting the qualification requirement for General Registration.

When a university does not provide evidence that the program has met the requirements for Provisional or Full Accreditation it may impact on the ability of graduates of the program to qualify for registration to practise as a physiotherapist in Australia.

A university must inform students of the current accreditation status of the program and how it may the impact on the ability of graduates of the program to qualify for registration to practise as a physiotherapist in Australia.

#### **1.4 Entry level physiotherapy education in Australia**

Entry level physiotherapy education in Australia commenced in the late 1890s. By 1908, physiotherapy students were completing biomedical science subjects at the University of Adelaide, University of Melbourne and University of Sydney, and undertaking clinical education at the major teaching hospitals in these cities. In 1997, there were six physiotherapy programs at baccalaureate level; in 2011 there are more than twenty entry level physiotherapy programs with graduates being prepared to enter the profession at baccalaureate, masters and doctoral levels.

Physiotherapy education in Australia is grounded in research, scholarship and clinical practice. Entry level education is conducted within an environment that supports the development of, and fosters excellence in, these activities.

#### **1.5 Accreditation Fees**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council charges universities accreditation fees. The fees for accreditation are set by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors (the Directors) based on the cost of the accreditation process to the Australian Physiotherapy Council. Costs include the review and evaluation of university submissions at each stage of accreditation, the writing of Program Specific Accreditation Panel reports, meetings of the accreditation committee, site visits and other operational activities associated with the implementation of the accreditation process. The Accreditation Fees are reviewed annually by the Directors and published at [www.physiocouncil.com.au](http://www.physiocouncil.com.au).

## 2.0 THE ACCREDITATION PROCESS – AN OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Planning and Initial Assessment of a program

A university that is planning to develop an entry-level physiotherapy program must advise the Australian Physiotherapy Council as soon as the planning process commences and request a copy of the Accreditation Manual. As soon as the university decides to proceed with development of a new program, the university must notify the Australian Physiotherapy Council of its intention. At the time of the notification, the university must provide contact details for the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit<sup>1</sup> and indicate whether it intends to offer a bachelor, master or doctoral level program and the intended duration of the program.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Accreditation Manager will negotiate with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit at the university to establish an agreed date for the submission of the application for Initial Assessment. The notification from the university must enable the application for Initial Assessment to be submitted as early as possible and not less than eight months in advance of program commencement.

The Initial Assessment of a program comprises a document-based application and an initial on-site meeting. The initial on-site meeting is held at the university not less than two months after the application for Initial Assessment is received by the Australian Physiotherapy Council. The fee for Initial Assessment is included in the schedule of Accreditation Fees.

The Accreditation Requirements focus on the evidence provided by a university that specific outcomes have been met or can be demonstrated. It will not be possible for a program or a university to provide evidence to meet all Accreditation Requirements when the application for Initial Assessment is submitted. Many Accreditation Requirements will only be met as the first cohort progresses through the program. When the application for Initial Assessment is submitted, a university should submit details of what is already in place and its future plans to meet the Accreditation Requirements.

The Initial Assessment is undertaken in a cooperative manner and can assist the university with the preparation of the application for Provisional Accreditation. It provides the university with an opportunity to showcase its plans and to seek feedback and guidance. It fosters the collegial spirit of the Australian Physiotherapy Council Accreditation Process.

#### *Initial on-site meeting*

The Australian Physiotherapy Council will conduct an on-site meeting as part of the evaluation of an application for Initial Assessment. This meeting provides an opportunity for face to face discussions with representatives of the Australian Physiotherapy Council.

The agenda for the initial on-site meeting is driven by the university and provides an opportunity for the university to showcase its teaching facilities and to provide further information about the plans for the physiotherapy program. It also provides an opportunity to seek advice and guidance from members of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel.

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<sup>1</sup> In the early stages of planning the university may not have appointed the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit and should provide contact details for the academic person with current responsibility for physiotherapy.

Two members of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel will attend the Initial on-site meeting; wherever possible this will include the Chair of the Panel. The university will plan the meeting schedule in consultation with the Panel members who will be attending the meeting.

Following the initial on-site meeting, the Panel will complete the Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report. The Panel will evaluate what the university already has in place and its future plans to meet the Accreditation Requirements. The Program Specific Panel Report will be sent to the Accreditation Committee for approval prior to being sent to the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit and the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors.

The report will include commendations, affirmations, comments and recommendations. The report will identify aspects of the program and the university that, based on the information submitted, are likely to meet the Accreditation Requirements. The report may identify matters that the university will need to specifically address in order to meet the Accreditation Requirements.

Completion of the Initial Assessment does not confer any type of accreditation on the program or university. When the Australian Physiotherapy Council has completed the Initial Assessment, the program status will be updated on the Australian Physiotherapy Council website and the Australian Physiotherapy Council will notify the Physiotherapy Board of Australia that the program has completed the Initial Assessment.

The timeframes and tasks for Initial Assessment are summarised in the following table.

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Task</b>
As soon as the university commences the planning process for a new program	The university advises the Australian Physiotherapy Council that it is planning an entry level physiotherapy program and requests a copy of the Accreditation Manual.
As soon as the university decides to proceed with development of a new program	The university confirms its intention to proceed with the program and requests accreditation.
As early as possible and not less than eight months prior to commencement of first cohort	The university submits an application for Initial Assessment using the form provided by the Australian Physiotherapy Council
At a date agreed between the Australian Physiotherapy Council & university – not less than two months following receipt of the application for Initial Assessment	Initial onsite meeting conducted
Four months following receipt of the application for Initial Assessment	Initial Assessment process completed

It is important to note that a university should be preparing the application for Provisional Accreditation prior to the completion of the Initial Assessment.

## 2.2 Stages of Accreditation

Accreditation is a sequentially staged process designed to reflect the university context in which entry-level physiotherapy programs are developed and offered in Australia. The accreditation process includes the following stages:

1. Provisional Accreditation
2. Full Accreditation
3. Monitoring to maintain Full Accreditation
4. Major review as part of monitoring and to confirm further period of Full Accreditation

The timeframes and tasks for these stages are summarised in the following table. The flowchart on page 9 demonstrates the sequentially staged Accreditation Process.

### Provisional Accreditation

Timing	Task
Not less than six weeks prior to first cohort commencing program	The university submits the first part of an application for Provisional Accreditation
At a date agreed between the Australian Physiotherapy Council & university – not usually prior to the first cohort completing the first half of the program	The second part of the application for Provisional Accreditation – a Site Visit – is conducted
By the date agreed prior to application for Provisional Accreditation – not less than eight months prior to the first cohort completing program	The university submits the third part of an application for Provisional Accreditation
When all requirements satisfied or three months prior to first cohort completing program - whichever occurs first.	Provisional Accreditation process completed <sup>2</sup>

### Full Accreditation

Not more than twelve months after first cohort completes program	The university submits an application for Full Accreditation
During first teaching period following submission of application for Full Accreditation	Site Visit conducted
When all requirements satisfied or three months prior to expiration of period of Provisional Accreditation - whichever occurs first	Full Accreditation process completed <sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> If the Accreditation Standards are substantially met and the imposition of conditions will ensure the university takes action, the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors may decide to impose conditions on the Accreditation. If the Accreditation Requirements are not substantially met, the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors may decide not to accredit the program.

**Monitoring to maintain Full Accreditation**

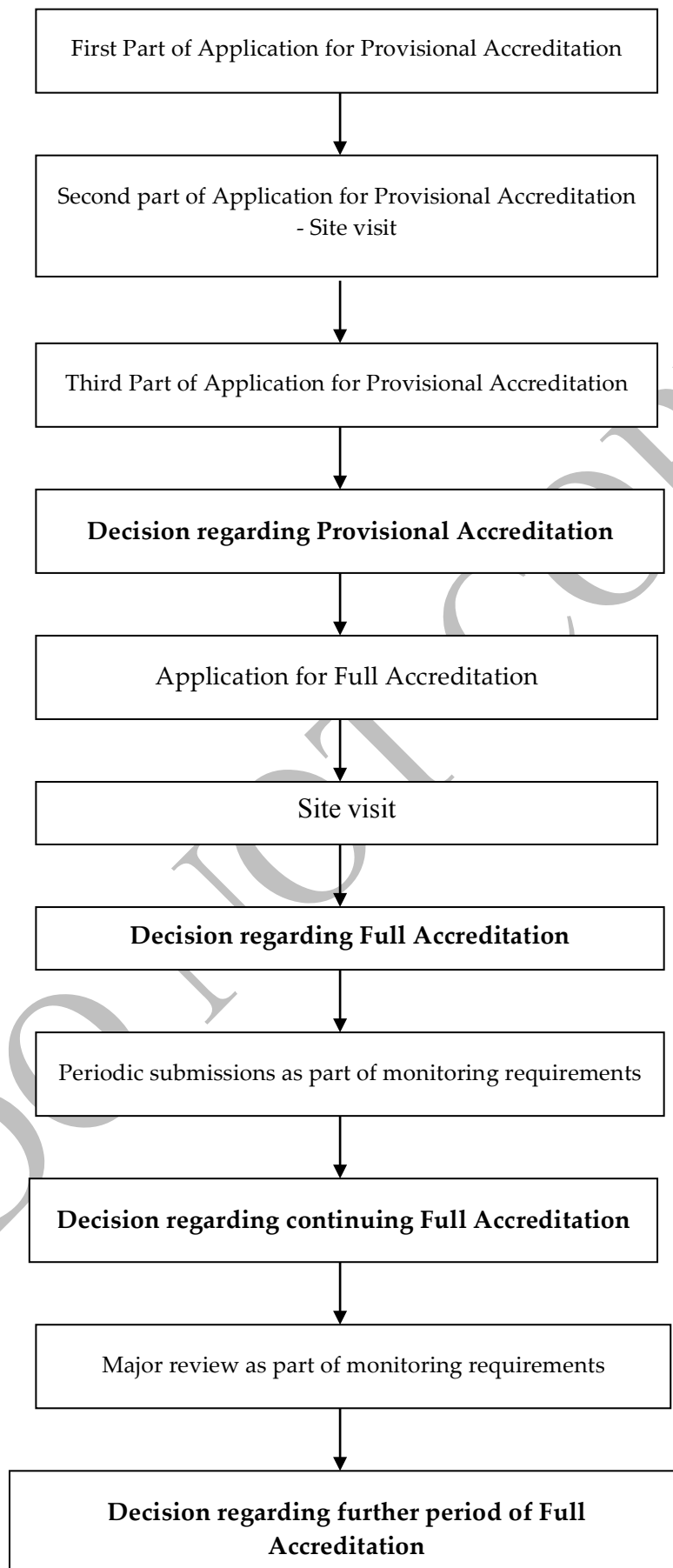
For four years following Full Accreditation of the program	Periodic submission(s) required as part of monitoring following Full Accreditation <sup>3</sup>
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**Major review as part of monitoring and to confirm further period of Full Accreditation**

In the fifth year following Full Accreditation of the program	Application for further period of Full Accreditation required as part of monitoring following Full Accreditation
If required, during first teaching period following Application for further period of Full Accreditation	Optional site visit conducted
Not less than three months prior to expiration of period of Full Accreditation	Further period of Full Accreditation confirmed <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> If, during monitoring, the Accreditation Standards are substantially met and the imposition of conditions will ensure the university takes action, the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors may decide to impose conditions on the Full Accreditation. If the Accreditation Requirements are no longer being met, the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors may decide to withdraw accreditation.



### **2.3 Provisional Accreditation of a program**

The Accreditation Requirements focus on the evidence provided by a university that specific outcomes have been met or can be demonstrated. It will not be possible for a program or a university to provide evidence to meet all Accreditation Requirements when the first cohort commences the program. Many Accreditation Requirements will only be met as the first cohort progresses through the program. For example, detailed teaching materials for later semesters and details of staffing are usually not available prior to commencement of the program.

The application for Provisional Accreditation comprises three parts – this enables the program and the university to progressively meet the Accreditation Requirements during the period that the first cohort undertakes the program.

A university must submit the first part of the application for Provisional Accreditation no later than six weeks prior to the time that the first cohort commences the program. The second part of the application for Provisional Accreditation is a site visit. This is conducted before the first cohort completes the first half of the program. The third and final part of the application for Provisional Accreditation is submitted when the first cohort have eight months remaining.

After evaluation of each of the first two parts of the application for Provisional Accreditation, the Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report will be sent to the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit. The report will include commendations, affirmations, comments and recommendations. The first report will identify matters that already meet the Provisional Accreditation Requirements as well as matters that the university will need to specifically address at the site visit and in the third part of the application for Provisional Accreditation.

After evaluation of each of the third and final part of the application for Provisional Accreditation, the Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report will be sent to the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit for correction of any errors of fact or omissions of information previously submitted. The university is also able to send comments about the report for consideration by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors when they also receive the Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report. The Directors will decide whether the program and university are accredited at the Provisional Accreditation stage. Provisional Accreditation is valid for a period of two years from the date that the first cohort completes the program.

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report will be sent with a letter advising the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit of the Directors' decision. The report will include commendations, affirmations, comments and recommendations. The report will identify matters that the university will need to specifically address in the application for Full Accreditation.

### **2.4 Full Accreditation of a program following Provisional Accreditation**

A university must apply for Full Accreditation within twelve months of the date that the first cohort completes the program. The application for Full Accreditation will address any affirmations and recommendations in the previous Program Specific Accreditation Panel report and provide an analysis of program outcomes for the first cohort of graduates. Program outcomes are evaluated through standard surveys of the graduates and their employers, and by additional mechanisms selected by the individual university. A site visit is conducted during the first teaching period following submission of the application for Full Accreditation.

After evaluation of each of the application for Full Accreditation and the site visit, the Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report will be sent to the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit for correction of any errors of fact or omissions of information previously submitted. The university is also able to send comments about the report for consideration by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors when they also receive the Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report. The Directors will decide whether the program and university are accredited at the Full Accreditation stage. Full Accreditation is valid for a period of five years from the date that the Directors make their decision.

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report will be sent with a letter advising the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit of the Directors' decision. The report will include commendations, affirmations, comments and recommendations. The report will identify matters that the university will need to specifically address in the first periodic submission.

## **2.5 Monitoring to maintain Full Accreditation**

A university offering a program that has Full Accreditation must apply to maintain Full Accreditation. Each time the Directors make a decision about Full Accreditation or maintenance of Full Accreditation, the Australian Physiotherapy Council will set the timeframes for the next application in consultation with the university. Wherever possible, the timing of applications to maintain Full Accreditation will coincide with complementary university program reviews.

## **2.6 Major review as part of monitoring**

A university offering an accredited program is not required to formally apply to the Australian Physiotherapy Council for re-accreditation. A decision about a further period of Full Accreditation beyond the current period of validity will be made as part of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel evaluation of an application for a further period of Full Accreditation. A university will apply for a further period of Full Accreditation not less than eight months prior to expiration of its current period of Full Accreditation. The Program Specific Accreditation Panel may recommend to the Accreditation Manager that a site visit be conducted prior to the confirmation of a further period of Full Accreditation. The Australian Physiotherapy Council may call for submissions from the profession and the community as part of the major review as part of monitoring.

## **2.7 Imposition of Conditions on Accreditation**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors may decide to impose conditions on accreditation when:

- (i) the requirements for Provisional or Full Accreditation have been substantially met and the Directors consider that the imposition of conditions is necessary to ensure the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time; or
- (ii) if the evaluation of the periodic submission following Full Accreditation finds that the requirements for Full Accreditation are no longer all being met and the Directors consider that the imposition of conditions is necessary to ensure the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.

If the Directors decide to impose conditions on Provisional or Full Accreditation, the correspondence accompanying the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will include a statement of the reasons for the decision, a list of Accreditation Requirements that have not

been met, and a date by which the university must submit evidence that it has met the requirements. The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors will decide upon a period that is reasonable in the circumstances. The correspondence will also state that, within 30 days after receiving the report, the university may apply for an internal review of the decision to impose conditions. Details of how to apply for an internal review of the decision will be attached to the correspondence.

If the university submit evidences that it has met the requirements by the due date, the conditions will be removed. If the university does not submit evidences that it has met the requirements by the due date, the conditions may continue to be imposed, or accreditation may be revoked.

## **2.8 Program not accredited**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors may decide to refuse to accredit a program, or to revoke accreditation when the requirements for accreditation have not been substantially met and the university cannot provide evidence that the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.

If the Directors decide to refuse to accredit a program, the correspondence accompanying the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will include a statement of the reasons for the decision, a list of Accreditation Requirements that have not been met, and that, within 30 days after receiving the correspondence, the university may apply for an internal review of the decision to refuse to accredit the program. Details of how to apply for an internal review of the decision will be attached to the correspondence.

## **2.9 Accreditation revoked**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors can decide to revoke accreditation if the evaluation of the periodic submissions submitted as part of monitoring indicates that the requirements for Full Accreditation are no longer being met and the university cannot provide evidence that the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.

If the Directors decide to revoke the accreditation of a program, the correspondence accompanying the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will include a statement of the reasons for the decision, a list of Accreditation Requirements that have not been met, and that, within 30 days after receiving the correspondence, the university may apply for an internal review of the decision to refuse to accredit the program. Details of how to apply for an internal review of the decision will be attached to the correspondence.

## **2.10 Application for accreditation following refusal or revocation**

A university may apply to the Australian Physiotherapy Council for accreditation following a decision by the Directors to refuse to accredit a program, or to revoke accreditation. As soon as the university decides to proceed with an application for accreditation of the program, the university must advise the Australian Physiotherapy Council of its intention. The Australian Physiotherapy Council will negotiate with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit at the university to establish an agreed date for the submission of the application for accreditation and provide copies of the current application forms and Accreditation Manual

## **3.0 ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE AND PANELS**

### **3.1 The Accreditation Committee**

The Accreditation Committee is a constituted standing committee of the Australian Physiotherapy Council. The Accreditation Committee has been delegated responsibility by the Board of Directors to:

- (i) Develop, monitor and report on, the implementation of processes that will enable the Company to perform the functions of an accreditation body under Division 3 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*; and
- (ii) Undertake other activities as directed by the Board from time to time.

The membership of the Accreditation Committee comprises, as a minimum, six people and a representative of the Board. The members of the Accreditation Committee will be appointed by the Board of Directors following a call for nominations from the Members of the Australian Physiotherapy Council and, where necessary, by a vote of the Board. At least three members of the Accreditation Committee shall each be nominated by and from the education; regulation; and professional categories of the Members of the Company. Nominees must have knowledge of university and accreditation processes as they relate to entry level physiotherapy education. Nomination does not mean a person will be appointed to the Accreditation Committee.

At least three members of the Accreditation Committee will be identified and appointed by the Board of Directors to provide expertise relevant to the responsibilities of the Accreditation Committee. The term of appointment to the Accreditation Committee is three years and members are eligible for re-nomination. The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors must appoint a Chairperson from within the membership of the Accreditation Committee. The term of appointment of the Chairperson is two years.

### **3.2 The Standing Panel of Reviewers**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors has established a sub-committee of the Accreditation Committee called the Standing Panel of Reviewers (the sub-committee). The sub-committee has been established by the Board of Directors to provide a pool of suitably qualified people from which the Board of Directors can appoint Program Specific Accreditation Panels. There is no maximum number of members of the sub-committee.

Each member of the sub-committee is appointed by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors following submission of an expression of interest that provides evidence of appropriate knowledge of university and accreditation processes as they relate to entry level physiotherapy education. The term of appointment to the sub-committee is three years and members are eligible for re-appointment. A member of the sub-committee will attend an information session conducted by the Australian Physiotherapy Council prior to appointment to a Program Specific Accreditation Panel.

The members of the Standing Panel of Reviewers include:

- i. members of the Accreditation Committee; and
- ii. registered physiotherapists with a sound knowledge of physiotherapy clinical practice and experience in clinical education; and
- iii. registered physiotherapists with a sound knowledge of entry level physiotherapy education and experience in teaching and learning; and

- iv. registered physiotherapists who are members of physiotherapy registration boards in Australia.

### **3.3 The Program Specific Accreditation Panel**

The evaluation of an application for accreditation is undertaken by a Program Specific Accreditation Panel. Each member of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel considers documentary evidence provided by the university, interview evidence of academic staff, clinical educators, students, recent graduates and employers of recent graduates gained during a site visit, and evidence from surveys of recent graduates and their employers.

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel is initially selected by the Accreditation Manager from the Standing Panel of Reviewers. Each Program Specific Accreditation Panel comprises a minimum of four and a maximum of six members. The Accreditation Manager will base the initial selection on the following criteria:

- i. The Chair of the panel must be a senior academic with a sound knowledge of physiotherapy education and an understanding of university and accreditation processes;
- ii. At least one member must be a member of the Accreditation Committee;
- iii. The panel cannot include a registered physiotherapist who works in the State or Territory where the program is offered;
- iv. There must be an appropriate balance of clinical and academic experience;
- v. There may be a member of the local community who is not a registered physiotherapist; and,
- vi. There must be a reasonable gender balance.

The Accreditation Manager will send the initial selection to the Accreditation Committee for approval. Following approval, the Accreditation Manager will send the list of proposed members of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel to the university to identify any matters that could influence or be perceived to influence the ability of a member of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel to serve effectively. Confirmation of membership of each Program Specific Accreditation Panel is subject to appointment of members by the Board of Directors.

Wherever possible, the members of a Program Specific Accreditation Panel will remain the same from Initial Assessment to Full Accreditation of a program. If resignation of a member of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel causes there to be less than four members and/or the criteria above are no longer met, the Board of Directors will appoint a member of the sub-committee to fill the vacancy in accordance with the procedures described above.

### **3.4 Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality**

Each member of the Accreditation Committee, the Standing Panel of Reviewers and the Program Specific Accreditation Panel must formally declare to the Australian Physiotherapy Council any matters that could influence or be perceived to influence their ability to serve effectively on a Program Specific Accreditation Panel. Where a declaration of actual or potential conflict is made, the Board of Directors will remove the person from the conflicted position and fill the vacancy in accordance with the Constitution or this document.

Each member of the Accreditation Committee, the Standing Panel of Reviewers and the Program Specific Accreditation Panel will formally agree to maintain the confidentiality of information acquired during the accreditation process or associated activities.

Prior to confirmation of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel, the university that has applied for accreditation will have an opportunity to advise the Australian Physiotherapy Council of any matters that could influence or be perceived to influence the ability of a member of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel to serve effectively.

## **4.0 ACCREDITATION PROCEDURES**

### **4.1 Submission of accreditation applications**

Applications for accreditation must be submitted using the standard application form and include appendices and attachments as indicated in the form.

Seven copies of the standard application form are to be submitted as a spiral bound hardcopies. Seven copies of the appendices/attachments must be submitted in an electronic printable format such as CD or USB flashdrives.

Applications sent via Australian Post must be addressed to:

Accreditation Manager  
Australian Physiotherapy Council  
GPO Box 587  
Canberra ACT 2601

Applications sent via Courier must be addressed to:

Accreditation Manager  
Australian Physiotherapy Council  
Upper level, Unit 1  
9 McKay Gardens  
Turner ACT 2602

A university must send an email to [enquiries@physiocouncil.com.au](mailto:enquiries@physiocouncil.com.au) advising the Australian Physiotherapy Council when an application is sent. The Australian Physiotherapy Council will confirm receipt by return email.

### **4.2 Evaluation of applications by the Program Specific Accreditation Panel**

The Accreditation Manager will send each member of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel the application (one hardcopy and the appendices/attachments) together with an Individual Report Template. Each member of the panel will evaluate the application and complete the Individual Report Template. The completed Individual Reports will clearly identify whether the Accreditation Requirement has been met and include any commendations, affirmations, comments and recommendations made by the individual.

The completed Individual Reports will be returned to the Accreditation Manager. The Accreditation Manager will collate the content of the completed Individual Reports into a single document (identifying each Panel Member's content) and send the document to the Chair of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel. The Chair will edit the collated document into a Final

Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report including commendations, affirmations, comments and recommendations. The Final Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will be sent to all members of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel with a copy of each of the individual reports. Each member of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel will indicate whether he or she approves the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report. The Chair of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel will sign the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report following approval by other members of the Panel.

If a member of the Panel does not approve the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report prepared by the Chair, he or she may submit individual comments or a dissenting report to the Accreditation Committee.

#### **4.3 Evaluation of Program Specific Accreditation Panel reports by the Accreditation Committee**

All members of the Accreditation Committee (other than any members of the relevant Program Specific Accreditation Panel) will evaluate the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report to consider whether the content is adequate and consistent with the Accreditation Requirements. If two thirds of the members of the Accreditation Committee consider that the report is inadequate or inconsistent with the Accreditation Requirements, the Accreditation Committee return the report to the panel for further consideration and/or can request further information from the Panel.

If a member of the Panel has submitted individual comments or a dissenting report to the Accreditation Committee, members of the Accreditation Committee are under an obligation of confidentiality not to disclose any internal discussions regarding the individual comments or a dissenting report.

#### **4.4 University opportunity to submit comments about the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report**

If two thirds of the members of the Accreditation Committee agree that content of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report the content is adequate and consistent with the Accreditation Requirements, the Accreditation Manager will forward the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report to the university.

Except in the case of a Program Specific Accreditation Panel report following Initial Assessment or the first part of Provisional Accreditation or the Provisional Accreditation site visit, a university will have 30 days from the time the report is received to submit comments regarding the content of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report to the Accreditation Manager. The university cannot respond in detail to matters raised in the report, but can correct any errors of fact or refer to information already provided by the university as part of an application or at a site visit. The university can also provide details of the timeframes for the university to submit evidence that it has met any outstanding requirements.

#### **4.5 Decision making by the Board of Directors**

After 30 days from the time the report is received by the university, the Accreditation Manager will forward the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report and any response from the university to the Board of Directors for a decision regarding the accreditation of a program.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Board of Directors will consider the information provided by the Accreditation Committee and, where received, comments by the university and make a decision about accreditation of a program. The Board of Directors can request further information from the Accreditation Committee or the university to enable a decision to be made.

#### **4.6 Outcome of the Accreditation process**

The Board of Directors will consider the information provided by the Accreditation Committee and the university and make one of the following decisions regarding the accreditation of a program:

1. That the program be accredited at the relevant stage of accreditation. This decision will be made:
  - (i) when the Accreditation Requirements have been met; or
  - (ii) when the Accreditation Requirements have been substantially met and, on the basis of the Program Specific Panel report and response from the university, the Directors do not consider that the imposition of conditions is necessary to ensure the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.
2. That the program be accredited with conditions at the relevant stage of accreditation. This decision will be made when the Accreditation Requirements have been substantially met and, on the basis of the Program Specific Panel report and response from the university, the Directors consider that the imposition of conditions is necessary to ensure the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.
3. Refuse to accredit a program. This decision will only be made if the Accreditation Requirements have not been met and, on the basis of the Program Specific Panel report and response from the university, the Directors cannot identify evidence that the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.
4. That Full Accreditation is revoked. This decision will only be made if during the monitoring period, the Accreditation Requirements are no longer met and, on the basis of the Program Specific Panel report and response from the university, the Directors cannot identify evidence that the outstanding requirements will be met within a reasonable time.

#### **4.7 Communication of accreditation decisions made by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel Report including commendations, affirmations and recommendations will be sent to the university with written advice regarding the accreditation decision made by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors.

Written advice of accreditation decisions made by the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors will be sent to the Physiotherapy Board of Australia.

The accreditation status of each physiotherapy program within the accreditation process will be published in the public access area of the Australian Physiotherapy Council website after the appeal period has elapsed.

#### **4.8 Appeals Process**

If the Directors decide to refuse to accredit a program, or revoke accreditation, the correspondence accompanying the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will include a statement of the reasons for the decision, a list of Accreditation Requirements that have not

been met, and that, within 30 days after receiving the correspondence, the university may apply for an internal review of the accreditation decision. Details of how to apply for an internal review of the accreditation decision will be attached to the correspondence. They are provided below.

The university must apply to the Australian Physiotherapy Council in writing within 30 days from the date of the letter advising the university of the accreditation decision.

There are two grounds for an application for internal review of the decision.

1. On the grounds that the manner in which the accreditation process was conducted was procedurally unfair; and
2. On the grounds that the decision of the Directors was unjustified or patently unreasonable in the circumstances.

The university applying for an Internal Review of the Accreditation Decision will be required to pay the scheduled fee to cover the cost of the review. The fee will be refunded in part or full if the outcome of the review is in favour of the university.

An application for an Internal Review of Accreditation Decision must clearly state the grounds for a review to be conducted and be supported by evidence. The onus is on the university to provide such evidence.

The Internal Review of Decision on the grounds of procedural unfairness is limited to a review of the procedural aspects of the accreditation process of the program. This may include, but is not limited to, matters such as the sequence and timing of the accreditation process, the process of review and evaluation of documentation and the conduct of the site visit.

For an Internal Review of Decision on the grounds that the decision of the Directors was unjustified or patently unreasonable in the circumstances, the onus is on the university to prove that the decision was not supported by substantial evidence on the record or that the decision was made on capricious or arbitrary grounds and not the application of objective standards.

Upon receipt of an application for Internal Review, the Australian Physiotherapy Council Chief Executive Officer will refer the application to a three member Internal Review Committee. The Internal Review Committee will comprise a nominee of the Australian Physiotherapy Association, a nominee of the Council of Physiotherapy Deans, Australia and New Zealand and a person appointed by the Board of Directors with experience in investigation of complaints in an administrative law framework. If a member of the Internal Review Committee has a conflict of interest, the Chief Executive Officer will request a nominee from the relevant group to fill the vacancy.

The nominees must be familiar with the accreditation process, and must not have been involved in the accreditation of the program that is the subject of the review, in accordance with procedural fairness. The nominees to the Review Panel shall be provided with the application for Internal Review and may request any documents from the complete record of the accreditation process of the program including submissions by the university, all correspondence and the accreditation reports.

The Internal Review Committee will limit its scope to the grounds stated by the university in the application for internal review of the decision.

Although the Internal Review Committee will predominantly make its decision based on documentary material, it has the discretion to make any such inquiries as it feels necessary, to review the decision before coming to its conclusions.

The Internal Review Committee may invite the university to make additional formal written representations to the Review Panel.

The Internal Review Committee is entitled to obtain independent legal advice if a question of law arises during the review. The Australian Physiotherapy Council is bound to pay for the independent legal advice.

The outcome of the review by the Internal Review Committee will be conveyed in writing to the Australian Physiotherapy Council Chief Executive Officer and will include the reasons for the outcome. The decision of the Internal Review Committee is taken to be the decision of the Board of Directors and supercedes any prior decision made by the Board of Directors.

The Chief Executive Officer will advise the Board of Directors of the outcome of the review within 90 days of receipt of the application for a Review of Process.

In terms of avenues for appeal within the Australian Physiotherapy Council, the decision by the Internal Review Committee is final.

## **5.0 SITE VISITS**

The accreditation process includes up to three types of site visits to the university. The first two are compulsory and the third is at the discretion of the Australian Physiotherapy Council Directors.

### **5.1 Provisional Accreditation Site Visit**

The first site visit is conducted as part of the evaluation of an application for Provisional Accreditation and is normally held over a period of three days. The Provisional Accreditation Site Visit is conducted prior to the time that the first cohort completes the first half of the program. The purpose of the site visit is for the university to provide further evidence regarding Accreditation Requirements that cannot be adequately assessed from the first part of the application or that the Program Specific Accreditation Panel has specifically identified. The Australian Physiotherapy Council will plan the schedule for a Provisional Accreditation site visit in consultation with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit. A sample schedule is available on request.

### **5.2 Full Accreditation Site Visit**

The second site visit is conducted as part of the evaluation of an application for Full Accreditation and is conducted during the first teaching period following submission of the application for Full Accreditation. The purpose of this visit is to evaluate those aspects of the resources and program that have been developed since the time of the first site visit and to address any matters that were specifically identified at the time of Provisional Accreditation. The Australian Physiotherapy Council will plan the schedule for a Full Accreditation site visit in consultation with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit.

### **5.3 Monitoring site visits**

Site visits can be conducted at the discretion of the Accreditation Committee as part of the monitoring, including the major review in the fifth year following Full Accreditation. The purpose of this type of site visit is to evaluate those aspects of the resources and program that have changed since Full Accreditation of a program and to address any matters that are specifically identified in a Program Specific Accreditation Panel report. The Australian Physiotherapy Council will plan the schedule for a discretionary site visit in consultation with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit.

### **5.4 Additional site visits**

Where a university offers an entry level physiotherapy program in an off-campus, offshore or other multi-campus formats, additional site visits are required to demonstrate that the Accreditation Requirements are met at all campuses. The need for additional site visits and the associated costs will be identified following advice from a university that it will offer the program in an off-campus, offshore or other multi-campus formats. The Australian Physiotherapy Council will plan the schedule for additional site visits in consultation with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit.

### **5.5 Site Visit Panel**

Normally, each site visit panel will comprise a minimum of four members of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel.

### **5.6 Site visit arrangements**

Arrangements for site visits will be made by the Accreditation Manager in consultation with the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit. The duration of the site visit will depend on the number and the complexity of the matters to be addressed.

The Accreditation Manager may be directed by the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit to operate through the office of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit or similar.

During each site visit, the university will provide a dedicated lockable room or similar space for use by the Program Specific Accreditation Panel for the duration of the site visit. The university must give the Program Specific Accreditation Panel access to electricity, internet connection, telephone, photocopier and printer.

The Accreditation Manager will work with the Chair of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel to prepare a summary of the matters to be addressed at the site visit. The summary will be circulated to the other members of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel prior to being sent to the university. The schedule and the summary of matters must be finalised at least one week prior to the scheduled site visit.

Depending upon the matters to be addressed, the Program Specific Accreditation Panel will inspect such areas as physical resources, including teaching facilities, research laboratories, staff offices and meeting rooms, student study and recreational spaces, libraries, computer assisted learning facilities, and all major clinical sites utilised for clinical education, including the student facilities at each site. The university will provide access to all teaching and learning resources and any documents or online materials requested by the Program Specific Accreditation Panel.

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will consult with a range of personnel, and these would include, as appropriate, the Vice Chancellor and other senior academic staff, the Dean of the Faculty (or equivalent) offering the physiotherapy program, the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit, a representative group of staff, members of the program's advisory committee, clinical managers with responsibility for offering clinical education programs, clinical educators and committees responsible for teaching and learning and for research. The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will meet with students and, where applicable, graduates and their employers. The schedule will include opportunities for informal interaction with academic staff such as lunch and/or dinner.

### **5.7 Outcomes of the site visit**

At the conclusion of the site visit, the Chair of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel may choose to provide the Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit with a verbal overview of the key aspects of the visit. A copy of the updated Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will be sent to the university following completion of the site visit. The university will have 30 days to submit a response identifying any factual inaccuracies and any relevant significant omissions of information that had been previously submitted to the Program Specific Accreditation Panel. The Program Specific Accreditation Panel report will be finalised following receipt of the university response.

## **6.0 ACCREDITATION REQUIREMENTS**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council Accreditation Process seeks to provide assurance to the community, the physiotherapy profession and the Physiotherapy Board of Australia that graduates of entry level physiotherapy programs in Australia are suitable to be registered to practice physiotherapy in Australia.

The Australian Physiotherapy Council has developed a quality framework for the accreditation process. The framework is based upon a set of four broad Accreditation Requirements that are each described in terms of a number of elements and criteria. The criteria must be demonstrated by the evidence about different aspects of the university, the program, the staff, the students and the graduates of physiotherapy. The focus of the Australian Physiotherapy Council accreditation process is on evidence that a university has in place the academic staff, clinical education staff and facilities, financial provisions, physical resources and a research environment required to demonstrate quality in physiotherapy graduate outcomes, teaching and learning outcomes and research outcomes. The university must also have in place processes to measure and analyse these outcomes, and to respond to the analysis in the form of a quality improvement cycle.

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel evaluates the evidence provided by a university to consider whether the program and the university offering it meet the criteria. The examples of evidence are only intended as a guide to universities regarding the type of documents that it might choose to submit. The task of the Program Specific Accreditation Panel is not simply to “tick off” the indicators, but to complete a holistic evaluation of each element based on the evidence in relation to the relevant accreditation criteria. A university must provide evidence to demonstrate that it has met each criterion. There must be sufficient evidence to enable the Program Specific Accreditation Panel to complete a holistic evaluation against the criteria using the indicators as the descriptors of expected content of the evidence.

Whilst the focus of the Accreditation Requirements is on quality systems and outcomes, the accreditation criteria describe inputs, processes, content and outputs related to fundamental aspects of the teaching and learning environment, the operating environment and the academic program. The accreditation process recognises the diverse and unique character and strengths of individual programs and universities and the criteria indicators are not intended to be absolutely prescriptive. If the university is unable to provide evidence of the inputs, processes, content and outputs that are identified as the indicators for any criterion, a statement must be provided with supporting evidence to explain how the university still meets the relevant criterion. In this way, the accreditation process encompasses innovation in program development and delivery.

### **Requirement 1 – Program attributes**

#### **Element 1.1: Program and Degree Nomenclature**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council recognises that new program titles may be expected to emerge and does not wish to be prescriptive about titles. At the same time, the Australian Physiotherapy Council does not wish to encourage excessive variation in titles and reserves the right to query a title that does not emphasise the profession of physiotherapy.

**Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the title of the program and the title of the degree emphasise the profession of physiotherapy.

**Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The program title includes the word 'Physiotherapy'
- The program leads to a degree title that includes the word 'Physiotherapy'
- The only discipline name appearing in the degree title is 'Physiotherapy'
- There is no reference to a specialisation in physiotherapy in the degree title

*Examples of evidence include excerpts from documents such as:*

- Relevant university policies related to naming of degrees and programs
- Minutes of meetings where plans for the physiotherapy program are discussed
- Documents related to internal university approval of the physiotherapy program
- Information for prospective students

**Element 1.2: Duration of programs**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council recognises that new and innovative approaches to delivery and structure of entry level physiotherapy education programs will emerge. It is important that the Accreditation Requirements are such that the quality of physiotherapy graduates is achieved and maintained without stifling these innovative approaches. The Australian Physiotherapy Council recognises that student engagement in learning over a minimum period is necessary to achieve the graduate outcomes required for accreditation as described in the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy. The duration of a graduate entry physiotherapy education program depends on its specified prerequisite areas of study<sup>4</sup>.

**Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the program is of sufficient duration to provide adequate opportunity for the personal and professional development required for entry the professional practice of physiotherapy as defined by the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.

**Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

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<sup>4</sup> If the university's specified prerequisite areas do not include the sciences fundamental to physiotherapy including the biomedical sciences of cell biology, anatomy, physiology (including comprehensive exercise physiology), pathology, the physical sciences including biomechanics, and the behavioural sciences including psychology, sociology and public health, these areas must be included in the program.

- An entry level physiotherapy program leading to a degree at bachelor level is the equivalent of no less than four academic years of full-time study, based on entry following a satisfactory level of achievement at Year 12 level or equivalent.
- An entry level physiotherapy program leading to a coursework degree at masters level is the equivalent of no less than two academic years of full-time study based on entry following a satisfactory level of achievement in a three or four year university-based baccalaureate degree and the successful completion of defined prerequisite areas prior to a student commencing the physiotherapy program.
- An entry level physiotherapy program leading to a degree at doctoral level is the equivalent of no less than three academic years of full-time study following a satisfactory level of achievement in a three or four year university-based baccalaureate degree and the successful completion of defined prerequisite areas prior to a student commencing the physiotherapy program.
- The physiotherapy component of a double degree program is the equivalent of no less than two academic years of full time study following successful completion of defined prerequisite areas.

*Examples of evidence include excerpts from documents such as:*

- Relevant university policies related to duration of programs
- Minutes of meetings where plans for the program are discussed
- Documents related to internal university approval of the program
- Credit transfer arrangements
- Student selection processes
- Advanced standing arrangements
- Results of student evaluation
- Results of staff evaluation
- Interviews with staff, students, employers and clinical educators

### **Element 1.3: Entry-level Doctoral Programs**

The Australian Physiotherapy Council recognises that decisions regarding whether or not an entry level physiotherapy program meets the requirements for a particular academic award are made by university appointed bodies typically with the decision being ratified by the University Council or Senate. There is an expectation from universities and the physiotherapy profession that the Australian Physiotherapy Council will have in place additional requirements to distinguish entry level physiotherapy education programs that lead to an academic award at doctoral level from baccalaureate and masters level programs. It is reasonable for the physiotherapy profession to expect graduates of a doctoral level qualification to have a higher level of profession-specific clinical and/or research knowledge and skills than graduates of a baccalaureate qualification.

#### **Criterion and indicators:**

A university offering an entry level physiotherapy education program leading to a doctoral degree must provide evidence that:

- The academic level of the program has been approved by the university appointed body and the decision has been ratified by the University Council or Senate.
- Learning outcomes are related to education in the professional practice of physiotherapy and in physiotherapy research.
- Course requirements include development of a research proposal to a stage that could be submitted for ethics approval. The university may require a research project to be completed following ethics approval.
  
- Where there is a research proposal/project, it must
  - have relevance to the practice of physiotherapy;
  - be original to the extent normally required at doctoral level;
  - be structured so that students develop under supervision all of the steps involved in the research proposal/project including the formulation of the research question(s), the design of the study including the selection of appropriate methodology; and
  - be supervised either solely or jointly, but in all cases at least one supervisor must be an academic member of staff from the Physiotherapy Academic Unit offering the program, and at least one supervisor should hold a professional or research doctoral qualification in an area of physiotherapy.
- Course requirements include demonstration of profession specific clinical knowledge and skills at a higher level than graduates of a baccalaureate level physiotherapy degree.

*Examples of evidence include excerpts from documents such as:*

- Minutes of meetings of the university appointed body and University Council or Senate
- Handbook entries and promotional material related to the program
- Overview of the structure of the physiotherapy program including timing of each unit of instruction
- Unit outlines which provide sufficient detail on the learning outcomes, learning experiences, assessments (including assessment criteria) and tuition pattern

## **Requirement 2 – Quality Systems**

In order to achieve and maintain the quality of physiotherapy graduates required to meet the needs of the community and the profession, a physiotherapy education program and the university offering it must have established and applied quality mechanisms. Quality mechanisms are evidenced by the systems and processes that are in place to monitor, evaluate the quality and standards related to the physiotherapy education program and, where indicated, make changes to address the outcomes of evaluation.

### **Element 2.1: Program outcomes**

#### **Criterion**

The philosophy and learning outcomes of the program are clearly stated and are consistent with the professional practice of physiotherapy and the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.

**Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The university undertakes regular progressive monitoring of program outcomes using a range of appropriate and valid methods
- The university analyses and evaluates the findings of the evaluation of program outcomes to monitor the quality of the education process
- The university takes action in response to the findings of the evaluation of program outcomes to improve the quality of the education process
- The university has appropriate mechanisms to monitor and report the results of responses to the findings of the evaluation of program outcomes to relevant stakeholders

*Examples of evidence include excerpts from documents such as:*

- Relevant policies
- Details of the evaluation methods that are used
- Details of the process of implementation of the evaluation methods
- Details of when the evaluation is undertaken
- Details of the university's continuous quality improvement cycle, its embeddings and its implementation

**Element 2.2: Graduate outcomes**

Most Australian universities offering entry level physiotherapy education have clearly defined graduate attributes that must be developed in conjunction with profession specific knowledge, skills and attributes. Graduate attributes may include:

- a comprehensive and well founded knowledge of the profession
- capacity for independent critical thought, rational inquiry and self directed learning
- cultural competence and ethical and social responsibility based on understanding and appreciation of social and cultural diversity and respect for individual human rights and dignity
- cognitive, analytical and problem solving skills.

**Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence through the collection and evaluation of longitudinal assessment data that graduates of the program demonstrate the specific attributes defined in the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy in conjunction with the graduate attributes defined by the university.

**Indicators**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The university undertakes evaluative procedures to assess students at each stage within the program in terms of the specific attributes defined in the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy and the graduate attributes defined by the university
- The university undertakes evaluative procedures, including standard surveys and mechanisms selected by the individual university, to assess graduates and their employers in terms of the specific attributes defined in the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy and the graduate attributes defined by the university
- The university takes action in response to the findings of the evaluation of student and graduate outcomes to improve the standard of graduates
- The university implements strategies to ensure the sample of graduates and employers and response rate are sufficient to reach valid conclusions regarding the standard of graduates

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Student self-reported attainment of graduate attributes and specific attributes defined in the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy
- Annual surveys of graduates and employers
- Course experience questionnaires and other surveys<sup>5</sup>
- Details of efforts made to optimise return rates of annual surveys of graduates and employers
- Other review mechanisms such as focus groups or interviews with graduates and employers
- The return rates of annual surveys of graduates and employers and participation in other review mechanisms
- Evaluation of the results of surveys and other review mechanisms
- Comparison of evaluation findings with those of previous year(s)
- Feedback of evaluation findings to employers, graduates, academic staff, clinical educators and program advisory committee(s)
- Planned and implemented responses to address the evaluation findings
- Formal mechanisms for re-evaluation

### **Element 2.3: Benchmarking**

Physiotherapy programs should engage in some form of comparative analysis, including systematic benchmarking, to compare graduate outcomes against national performance measures.

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence of comparative analysis of the program including systematic benchmarking and an evaluative commentary.

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<sup>5</sup> The Australian Physiotherapy Council acknowledges the 2001 Code of Practice prepared by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and the Graduate Careers Council of Australia to provide guidelines for the public disclosure of data from the *Graduate Destination Survey*, *Course Experience Questionnaire* and *Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire* <http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/content/view/full/1455>

**Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- the university uses the outcomes of the Australian Graduate Survey and other mechanisms to rank the university's physiotherapy program with like physiotherapy programs

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- the university undertakes benchmarked comparisons of the recognised subscales within the Australian Graduate Survey with the national means for like physiotherapy programs where such comparisons provide information that can be used within a quality process
- the university undertakes or plans to undertake other national or international comparisons where such comparisons provide information that can be used within a quality process

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Details of the comparative analyses that are planned or have been completed
- Planned and implemented responses to address the outcomes of comparative analyses
- Commencing and total student retention rates
- Pass rates in each year of the program
- Graduate Destination Survey results
- Indicators used in the Commonwealth Government Learning and Teaching Performance Fund<sup>6</sup>

#### **Element 2.4: Research environment and outcomes**

Physiotherapy practice is informed by physiotherapy specific research and relevant biomedical and psychosocial research and published literature. In this way physiotherapists in Australia engage in evidence-based practice. Physiotherapy programs must be based in universities that have clearly stated research goals and frameworks and resources that support physiotherapy research. Universities that are in the planning stages must provide evidence that they are in a position to support the infrastructure required for physiotherapy research.

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the program is conducted in an academic unit that fosters and explicitly supports research and scholarship in physiotherapy.

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- There is adequate provision of resources for physiotherapy research including research leadership, initial funding, space and equipment.<sup>7</sup>
- There is adequate provision of support for staff to access grants and professional development related to research and scholarship.
- Staff and students are actively involved in and are planning for research and scholarship related to physiotherapy.
- The program schedule includes adequate time for academic staff to devote to research and teaching and learning preparation and review.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup>[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/learning\\_teaching/ltpf/2009ltpf](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/learning_teaching/ltpf/2009ltpf)

<sup>7</sup> Adequacy of resources will be evidenced by factors such as the research outcomes, feedback from staff and students, and similar sources of evidence.

<sup>8</sup> Adequacy of time will be evidenced by factors such as staff feedback, student feedback, research output and teaching and learning outcomes.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Excerpts of strategic research plans and associated funding
- Existence of dedicated research space, equipment and technical support
- Lists of publications and conference presentations by staff and students
- Number of honours, and research masters and doctoral students in the Physiotherapy Academic Unit

## **Requirement 3 – Academic program**

### **Element 3.1: Pedagogy**

Entry level physiotherapy programs must be based on teaching and learning strategies that facilitate attainment of graduate attributes that encompass the specific attributes defined in the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy and the generic attributes defined by the university.

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the program is based on a philosophical pedagogy that facilitates attainment of graduate attributes through the progressive development and integration of knowledge, clinical skills and independent thinking, ethical and value analysis, communication skills, clinical reasoning and decision-making.

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The program is structured to ensure that all the key areas of physiotherapy practice are core components of the program.
- The teaching plan for each unit of instruction includes a range of teaching, learning and assessment methods appropriate to the achievement of the specific learning outcomes for the unit and accommodates the learning styles of the students.
- The program schedule includes adequate time for consolidation of student learning.<sup>9</sup>

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Evidence of mapping of graduate attributes and how these are embedded in the physiotherapy curriculum
- Overview of the structure of the physiotherapy program including timing of each unit of instruction
- Unit outlines which provide sufficient detail on the learning outcomes, learning experiences, assessments (including assessment criteria) and tuition pattern

### **Element 3.2: Curriculum**

Curriculum design and content is fundamental to the development and continuous improvement of entry level physiotherapy education programs. The Australian Physiotherapy

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<sup>9</sup> Adequacy of time for consolidation of student learning will be evidenced by factors such as student feedback, student results, clinical educator feedback and employer feedback.

Council Accreditation Requirements do not include a prescriptive curriculum. Each university will design a curriculum within a particular educational philosophy and pedagogical framework. The curriculum must be designed in sufficient depth and breadth to prepare graduates who are safe and effective entry-level physiotherapists and have met the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.

**Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the curriculum addresses the Australian Standards of Physiotherapy and that there are appropriate processes in place to develop and improve the curriculum.

**Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The curriculum is designed such that the program is aligned to the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.
- The curriculum is structured to include lectures, tutorials, practical classes and clinical education experiences that are sequenced and integrated to ensure effective learning and include:
  - the sciences fundamental to physiotherapy including the biomedical sciences of cell biology, anatomy, physiology (including comprehensive exercise physiology), pathology, the physical sciences including biomechanics, and behavioural sciences including psychology, sociology and public health;
  - the practice of physiotherapy including but not limited to assessment, diagnosis, interpretation, planning, interventions, measurement of outcomes and reflection on practice; and
  - aspects of broader professional practice including but not limited to professional ethics and legal responsibilities, leadership, administration, education, consultation and collaborative health care provision.
- The content of the curriculum and the organisation of the learning experiences foster a commitment to continuing professional growth including learning through self-directed, independent study.
- The content of the curriculum addresses contemporary clinical practice and professional issues.
- Students undertake formal practical classes as part of their coursework in professional physiotherapy skill development.
- The curriculum is developed and regularly reviewed at a university level by the appropriate university board/committee and by academic staff of the program with input from the program advisory group, representatives of the profession, the student body and other interested groups.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Evidence of mapping of the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy throughout the physiotherapy curriculum (a standard format is available for this mapping exercise)

- The student learning resources for each unit of instruction
- The teaching materials that support student learning
- Outcomes of student evaluation and the university's response to the outcomes
- Outcomes of staff evaluation and the university's response to the outcomes
- Outcomes of employer and graduate evaluation and the university's response to the outcomes
- Minutes of relevant program advisory group and university committee meetings
- Details of membership of program advisory group(s)
- Interviews with staff, students and employers/clinical supervisors during the site visit

### **Element 3.3: Assessment**

Assessment is a powerful driver of learner behaviour and achievement. Therefore it is important that assessment approaches are designed and used to reflect and facilitate achievement of learning outcomes. A range of methods of assessment is desirable and those used must reflect the outcomes being evaluated. Consideration must be given to assessment that is practicable, comprehensive and equitable.

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the academic and clinical staff utilise a range of appropriate assessment methods to report whether students know and understand theoretical material and are competent and safe to function in the clinical setting according to the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The breadth and depth of knowledge of the core areas in physiotherapy is adequately assessed.<sup>10</sup>
- The program utilises a range of assessment methods appropriate to the learning outcomes for both formative and summative purposes.
- There is a formal process of regular review of student assessment load.
- Students receive useful and timely feedback on their academic and clinical assessments.
- Students must pass all units in order to complete the program.
- A comprehensive evaluation of students' clinical competence based on the elements of the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy is included.
- There are regular reviews of assessment methods that consider the emphasis, balance and appropriateness of methods and relevance to the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.

*Examples of evidence include:*

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<sup>10</sup> Adequacy of assessment will be evidenced by a breadth of modes of assessment across the core areas of musculoskeletal, cardiorespiratory and neurological physiotherapy. Part Three of the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy focuses on evidence to demonstrate achievement of the Standards.

- Assessment tasks that are clearly linked to learning outcomes
- Assessment is criterion based, not norm-referenced
- Policies and procedures relating to assessment and to academic progression (including conceded passes, special and supplementary assessment)
- Use of the Assessment of Physiotherapy Practice instrument or other validated tool for the assessment of student clinical competence

#### **Element 3.4: Research/Evidence based Practice**

The practice of physiotherapy in Australia uses an evidence-based, clinical reasoning process.

##### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that graduates of the program can apply an evidence-based approach to their own practice.

##### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- Students are given adequate grounding in relevant research methods and research ethics.<sup>11</sup>
- Students have skills to conduct all contemporary forms of searches for research based evidence for physiotherapy practice.
- Students can critically analyse and evaluate the usefulness of research papers and presentations.
- The content of all units in the program is supported by relevant and up-to-date reference material which includes references to journal articles.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Units and assessment tasks that require students to develop skills in question formulation, searching for evidence, critical appraisal and application of evidence to practice
- Assessed outputs such as critically appraised papers, critically appraised topics, and systematic reviews

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<sup>11</sup> Adequacy will be evidenced by factors such as student feedback, clinical educator feedback and employer feedback.

### **Element 3.5: Clinical Education Model**

The physiotherapy program must include a sustainable clinical education program covering the required range and depth of clinical placements for all students in all key areas of physiotherapy, across all ages and from acute to community contexts.

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the program includes a clinical education model that has sufficient breadth, depth and comprehensive coverage to ensure that the learning outcomes of the program are met.

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- Students are given sufficient grounding in professional ethics prior to undertaking supervised clinical practice
- There is adequate coverage of professional knowledge and skills within the program for all students prior to beginning their first clinical placement<sup>12</sup>
- Clinical education is sequential and integrated within the program
- The clinical education model includes progressive exposure to a variety of clients with problems of increasing complexity
- Periods of supervised clinical practice are scheduled following relevant theoretical and practical education
- The supervised clinical practice experience provides opportunities for students to:
  - integrate theoretical and practical concepts into clinical practice
  - perform professional responsibilities under appropriate levels of supervision
  - observe professional role models
  - receive timely and constructive feedback regarding their professional skills and clinical reasoning
  - reflect on practice
  - progressively build and develop clinical and professional expertise

*Examples of evidence include:*

- A description of the clinical education model
- A description of the type, sequence and duration of clinical placements and their relationship to non-clinical units
- Policies related to the clinical education program
- Unit descriptions for clinical units, including learning outcomes and assessment
- Tools used to assess clinical competencies

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<sup>12</sup> Adequacy of coverage will be evidenced by staff feedback, student feedback and clinical educator feedback.

### **Element 3.6: Clinical education placements**

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the clinical education program includes clinical education placements that provide opportunities to develop competence in the key areas of physiotherapy<sup>13</sup>, exposure to a range of settings (acute, rehabilitation and community) and to clients of all ages. In the early stages of planning for a new program in physiotherapy, universities must ensure that adequate clinical placement experience<sup>14</sup> is available for the students who will enter the proposed program.

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- All students have assured access to clinical education placements in all core areas of practice and across the lifespan
- The university ensures appropriate policies and mechanisms are in place for student safety, reporting, accommodation, travel and insurance during clinical education placements
- Students have online access to the university resources, professional and research databases whilst on clinical education placements
- There are specific procedures established for communication between the clinical educators and the students for both issues of client care and for teaching and learning whilst on clinical education placements
- There is written evidence of an ongoing and reasonable expectation that clinical facilities will provide supervised clinical practice experiences for the students who will enter the program in the period of accreditation
- It is reasonable to expect that a comprehensive clinical education placement experience will be provided to all students who will enter the program in the period of accreditation

#### *Examples of evidence include:*

- The schedule of theoretical and practical teaching and clinical education placements across each year of the program
- Written clinical agreements and/or letters of intent from all clinical education sites
- A de-identified matrix of the clinical education placements completed by each student
- Details of professional ethics teaching prior to undertaking supervised clinical practice
- Details of the sequencing and integration of clinical education within the program
- Details of coverage of professional knowledge and skills prior to the first clinical education placement

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<sup>13</sup> Key areas of physiotherapy refer to musculoskeletal physiotherapy, neurological physiotherapy, cardiorespiratory physiotherapy and electrophysical agents across all ages and from acute to community contexts.

<sup>14</sup> Adequacy will be evidenced by a depth and breadth of experience that is consistent with the Australian Standards for Physiotherapy.

## Requirement 4 - Resources and Infrastructure Elements

The university must provide evidence that it has the necessary and appropriate level of staffing and other resources and facilities to provide an entry level physiotherapy program.

### Element 4.1: Academic and research leadership

#### Criterion:

The university must provide evidence that it has the necessary and appropriate level of academic and research leadership to provide an entry level physiotherapy program in an environment that fosters research and scholarship. Universities that are in the planning stages must provide evidence that they are in a position to appoint academic and research leaders and that a full professorial appointment in physiotherapy will be advertised within the first year of offering the program.

#### Indicators:

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The staffing profile includes at least one full-time Level D or E appointment in Physiotherapy and at least two other appointments at Levels C or D who have a physiotherapy qualification
- The university is committed to appointing, at level E, a physiotherapy program leader who is a physiotherapist and who has completed a PhD or equivalent
- The academic staff appointed at Level D and E have well developed track records in research leadership at national and international level

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Profiles of academic staff
- Curriculum vitae of academic staff appointed at levels D and E
- Schedule of intended appointments

### Element 4.2: Academic staffing

#### Criterion:

The university must provide evidence that it has appointed academic staff at a level that enables provision of an entry level physiotherapy program that satisfies all of the Accreditation Requirements. Universities that are in the planning stages must provide evidence that they are in a position to appoint academic staff with appropriate postgraduate qualifications and experience in each of the key areas of physiotherapy practice to assist in the development and delivery of the program.

#### Indicators:

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The areas of expertise of the physiotherapy academic staff are sufficient to cover the key areas of physiotherapy practice in Australia, any elective units and research.

- The full-time equivalent physiotherapy academic staffing level can support the current and planned teaching and research requirements of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- Students have sufficient and timely access to academic staff to support their learning.
- the majority of academic staff have established or promising research records with demonstrated research activity in the forms of grants, conference presentations, and publications in refereed journals.
- There is systematic monitoring of teaching quality such as participation in regular formal university teaching/unit evaluation and a university performance management scheme.
- There is an ongoing program of professional development for all staff that is linked to evaluation of performance.
- Each academic staff member is undertaking or has a commitment to undertake an appropriate qualification in teaching and learning
- The university provides staff with adequate support and training in teaching and learning
- Each academic staff member has documented expertise in the area of teaching responsibility
- Each academic staff member has demonstrated effectiveness in teaching and evaluation of students.
- Each academic staff member has a record of involvement in scholarly research and professional activities consistent with the philosophy of the program.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Profiles of academic staff
- Curriculum vitae of academic staff appointed at levels D and E
- Schedule of intended academic appointments
- Interviews with staff and students

#### **Element 4.3: Clinical educators**

Clinical education and clinical supervision are inter-related but not synonymous. Clinical education includes all experiences that contribute to a student's clinical learning. Whether or not clinical learning occurs during a supervised clinical placement may depend on the quality of clinical supervision and the placement. In the early stages of planning for a new program in physiotherapy, universities must establish a plan to ensure there will be a sufficient number of clinical educators who are, or who will be, appropriately trained and supported in their clinical education role.

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that students within, and those who will enter, the program have access to adequately and experienced clinical educators to provide a comprehensive clinical education experience.

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- Clinical educators are experienced and trained in the key areas of physiotherapy, in a range of settings (acute, rehabilitation and community) and in physiotherapy management of clients of all ages.
- The university provides educational programs for all clinical educators to continue to develop the knowledge and skills relevant to their educational roles
- The university provides suitable programs to support clinical educators in their roles
- Students are supervised on all clinical placements by a person or persons with qualifications and experience appropriate to the particular environment
- An evaluation program is in place that allows students to provide feedback on the performance of clinical educators, and of their clinical experience
- A formal process of continuous quality improvement is in place to enable this information to be shared with clinical educators
- There are specific procedures established for communication on professional, curriculum and administrative matters between the clinical educators and the academic staff

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Details of the quality assurance process used by the university to ensure clinical educators are appropriately qualified and prepared for the teaching students
- A statement of standards/expectations for clinical educators and agencies
- Resumes of key clinical educators such as heads of clinical schools, university-employed educators and adjunct appointments
- Details of the evaluation program that allows students to provide feedback on the performance of clinical educators, and of their clinical experience
- Specific procedures for communication on professional, curriculum and administrative matters between clinical educators and academic staff
- Workbooks for clinical educator programs
- Clinical educator manuals
- Resources for clinical educators
- The schedule of workshops for clinical educators

### **Element 4.3: General staffing**

#### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the level of general staff and services is adequate to meet the needs of the students and the academic staff including adequate access to secretarial, administrative, technical, laboratory and computing support.<sup>15</sup>

#### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- There are sufficient general staff to meet the needs of the students and academic staff

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<sup>15</sup> Adequacy will be evidenced by staff feedback and student feedback.

- There are sufficient support services to meet the needs of the students and academic staff
- Students and academic staff have sufficient and timely access to secretarial, administrative, technical, laboratory and computing support

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Documentation of general staffing structures and functions
- Documentation of academic support services (eg: administrative, technical, laboratory and computing)
- Interviews with staff and students

#### **Element 4.5: Physical resources**

##### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the physical resources reflect contemporary teaching and learning both on campus and at off-campus clinical education sites.

##### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The students have assured access to services including student counselling, educational support including language instruction, health facilities, financial aid and, where appropriate, residential facilities
- Appropriate computing and audiovisual equipment is available
- Staff and students have assured access to adequate and dedicated computer laboratory space<sup>16</sup>
- The Physiotherapy Academic Unit has assured access to dedicated facilities that meet the needs of the research programs of the academic staff and of the students completing physiotherapy units with research components
- The quantity and quality of lecture theatres, practical rooms, laboratories, clinical facilities, offices and space for students, academic and general staff meet all teaching and research requirements
- Students have access to high quality human anatomical specimens, preferably in wet laboratories
- The equipment, particularly physiotherapeutic and electronic equipment relevant to physiotherapy technology, and consumables enables the provision of effective learning and research experiences.
- The university library provides assured access to a comprehensive and up-to-date range of physiotherapy texts, monographs and journals in hardcopy and electronic formats.
- The university library provides substantial and widespread access to appropriate biomedical, behavioural and physiotherapy sciences databases as well as commonly used online resources.

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<sup>16</sup> Adequacy will be evidenced by factors such as staff and student feedback. Dedicated does not mean discipline specific space.

- The university library provides regular training to staff and students in the use of library resources relevant to physiotherapy and the foundation sciences.
- The students have assured access to computers and appropriate electronic databases on campus and at all clinical sites.
- Staff and students have ready access to a range of software packages to support research and teaching needs.
- Staff and students have assured access to a computer network which has full electronic mail facilities and is linked to the Internet and on-line databases.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Information on student services that is available on the university website
- A statement of available teaching spaces, facilities and equipment
- Viewing the facilities at the site visit

#### **Element 4.6: Funding**

##### **Criterion**

The university must provide evidence of a program funding model that enables provision of an entry level physiotherapy program that satisfies all of the Accreditation Requirements.

##### **Indicators**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- There is a sound business plan reflecting current commitments, proposed developments and sustainability of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- The Physiotherapy Academic Unit has the ability to deliver current commitments and projected developments
- There is an appropriate funding formula or equivalent for funding to and within the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- The leader of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit has discretion with respect to the allocation of Physiotherapy Academic Unit funds within university budget guidelines
- Physiotherapy academic staff are involved in the development of ongoing program budgets and the allocation of financial resources within Physiotherapy Academic Unit budget guidelines.
- Funding for senior academic staff levels is adequate for the number of current and future students<sup>17</sup>
- Funding of physiotherapy academic staff is adequate to provide time and access for students seeking consultations with staff outside of teaching contact times<sup>21</sup>
- Funding of biomedical, behavioural, physiotherapy and clinical sciences is adequate.<sup>21</sup>
- Funding is allocated to update and maintain physical resources as required to support research and teaching needs

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<sup>17</sup> Adequacy will be evidenced by funding projections, staffing plan and staff and student feedback.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- The business plan for the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- A description of the funding model for the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- A description of the level of financial responsibility and delegations within the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- Rolling five year indicative funding projections
- Records that demonstrate compliance with policies viewed at the site visit

#### **Element 4.7: Organisational structure**

##### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that the structure of the university is appropriate for the delivery of an entry level program in physiotherapy.

##### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- The university is recognised by the Australian Government and Universities Australia
- There are cognate clinical sciences enabling collaboration with physiotherapy academic or clinical staff
- The university is supportive of physiotherapy both as an academic and professional discipline
- There is a Physiotherapy Academic Unit that features the term 'Physiotherapy' in its title (e.g., School of Physiotherapy)
- The Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit is a senior (level D or E), experienced and recognised academic with postgraduate qualifications in physiotherapy and a strong academic track record
- The Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit has resource responsibility for the Physiotherapy Academic Unit.
- The Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit has responsibility for the academic programs offered by the Physiotherapy Academic Unit.
- The Physiotherapy Academic Unit has the capacity to simultaneously offer an entry level physiotherapy program and higher degree in physiotherapy by research programs.
- The Physiotherapy Academic Unit has academic and administrative responsibility for the delivery of the program.
- The Physiotherapy Academic Unit has established mechanisms of accountability to the university and to the physiotherapy profession.
- The organisational structure provides a career path for all staff.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Inspection of university website by review panel

- Organisational charts
- University, Faculty (or equivalent) and Academic Unit policies and procedures
- Feedback from senior management and Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit
- Feedback from staff and students

#### **Element 4.8: Policies**

##### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that it has in place appropriate policies for program development, approval, delivery, assessment, evaluation and review to ensure that standards of education are maintained.

##### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- There are clear and comprehensive policies on program development
- There are clear and comprehensive policies for periodic review of program goals, content, relevance and quality
- There are policies and processes that enhance the nexus between research and teaching
- There are policies that ensure entry into the program is offered on principles of equity of access with respect to race, religion, colour, national or ethnic origin, sex, age, disability, and socio-economic and marital status
- The selection criteria for entry to the program are clearly stated and are compatible with the requirements of the program including appropriate prerequisite knowledge
- There are occupational health and safety policies relating to a safe working environment, freedom from harassment and reasonable adjustment for disability
- The university has policies to ensure adequate workload determination for staff
- The university has policies to ensure adequate staff study leave

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Excerpts of relevant University, Faculty (or equivalent) and Academic Unit policies
- Feedback from senior management and Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit at the site visit
- Feedback from staff and students at the site visit

#### **Element 4.9: Procedures**

##### **Criterion:**

The university must provide evidence that it has in place appropriate procedures for program development, approval, delivery, assessment, evaluation and review to ensure that standards of education are maintained.

##### **Indicators:**

The Program Specific Accreditation Panel will evaluate the evidence to report whether:

- Appropriate procedures are in place to deal with cases of plagiarism or other instances of unethical conduct.
- Students have assured access to current policies, procedures and program information particularly related to the learning outcomes, assessment, progression and requirements for graduation, appeals processes, costs and academic review processes.
- Prospective students are clearly informed of the locations of study and any potential lack of equity of access at some locations.
- Procedures are in place to ensure students on placement conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner.
- Appropriate procedures are in place to deal with student appeals.

*Examples of evidence include:*

- Excerpts of relevant University, Faculty (or equivalent) and Academic Unit procedures
- Excerpts of relevant handbook entries and promotional material related to the program
- Unit outlines
- Feedback from senior management and Head of the Physiotherapy Academic Unit at the site visit
- Feedback from staff and students at the site visit

**Table 1 Accreditation Application Minimum Expectations**

<b>MINIMUM EVIDENCE REQUIRED</b> ≅ The University must provide plans for this element ✓ The University must provide details for this element ✓± The University must provide details not previously provided and updated details for this element	<b>Application type</b>					
	Initial Assessment	1 <sup>st</sup> part of Provisional Accreditation	3 <sup>rd</sup> part of Provisional Accreditation	Full Accreditation	Monitoring following Full Accreditation	Major Review of Full Accreditation
<b>REQUIREMENT 1: PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES</b>						
Element 1: Program and Degree Nomenclature	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 2: Duration of Programs	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 3: Entry Level Doctoral Programs	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
<b>REQUIREMENT 2: QUALITY SYSTEMS</b>						
Element 1: Program Outcomes	≅	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 2: Graduate Outcomes	≅	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 3: Benchmarking	≅	≅	≅	✓	✓±	✓
Element 4: Research Environment and Outcomes	≅	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓
<b>REQUIREMENT 3: ACADEMIC PROGRAM</b>						
Element 1: Pedagogy	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 2: Curriculum	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 3: Assessment	≅	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 4: Research/Evidence Based Practice	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 5: Clinical Education Model	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 6: Clinical Education Placements	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
<b>REQUIREMENT 4: RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS</b>						
Element 1: Academic and Research Leadership	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 2: Academic Staffing	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 3: Clinical Educators	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 4: General Staffing	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 5: Physical Resources	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 6: Funding	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 7: Organisational Structure	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 8: Policies	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓
Element 9: Procedures	≅	✓	✓±	✓±	✓±	✓

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## 7.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Academic staff** refers to all teaching and research staff in a program and includes tenured, contract and sessional teaching staff.

**Accreditation** is the formal endorsement of a program by the Australian Physiotherapy Council and indicates that the program and the university that offers it have satisfied the Accreditation Requirements.

**Affirmations** in the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report refer to specific aspects of the university/program/application which the Program Specific Accreditation Panel has identified as requiring improvement and which the university has already identified. A university must include evidence that demonstrates to the Program Specific Accreditation Panel how the need for improvement was identified.

**Clinical competence** and clinical proficiency are terms that have been used interchangeably in the literature. In this document clinical competence means the integration of knowledge, skills and attributes required to provide safe and effective physiotherapy in the clinical setting. It encompasses self-awareness, reasoning and other cognitive elements overlaid upon foundation knowledge and skills that translate an individual from performance in the learning environment to practice in the clinical setting.

**Clinical educators** are physiotherapy clinicians designated by the university in that role.

**Clinical placements** are periods of time when students gain experience in the workplace. They may also be referred to as professional placements or fieldwork.

**Commendations** in the Program Specific Accreditation Panel report relate to specific aspects of the university/program/application identified by the Program Specific Accreditation Panel as commendable practice or as deserving of positive recognition.

**Comprehensive clinical education experience** is gained by completion of a range and depth of learning opportunities in the key areas of physiotherapy, across all ages and from acute to community contexts.

**Key areas of physiotherapy** refer to musculoskeletal physiotherapy, neurological physiotherapy, cardiorespiratory physiotherapy and electrophysical agents across all ages and from acute to community contexts.

**Electives** refers to units that are optional and while students are not required to take any specific elective, they may be required to take a certain number of electives chosen from a greater number in order to complete their program.

**Physiotherapy Academic Unit** refers to a school, or other separately identifiable academic entity within the university organisational structure. In each university offering accredited physiotherapy programs, there must be a discrete Physiotherapy Academic Unit. The Physiotherapy Academic Unit must contain the name 'Physiotherapy' in its title.

**Program** refers to the entire course of study, successful completion of which results in a degree such as a four year program that leads to a physiotherapy degree at Bachelors level.

**Recommendations** in a Program Specific Accreditation Panel report relate to specific aspects of the university/program/application that have been identified by the Program Specific Accreditation Panel as requiring improvement or specific attention.

**Substantive change** to an accredited program refers to changes in aspects including but not limited to the following:

- the underpinning philosophy or emphasis of the program;
- the length of the program;
- the structure of the program such as substitution of the first year of the physiotherapy program with a common health sciences year;
- the program curriculum such as substitution of supervised practice in a clinical setting with clinical education in a simulated patient setting;
- the human, physical and financial resources such as a substitution of full time staff by sessional staff;
- the university organisational structures such as subsuming the physiotherapy discipline into a common health sciences entity;
- the governance of the program such as a change in the level of leadership of the physiotherapy program;
- the level of award of the program;
- the nomenclature of the award; or
- any factor that has the potential to impact upon the achievement of the program outcomes.

**Unit** refers to a subject or separate and identifiable component of a program, usually with its own assessment components and with a member of the academic staff responsible for coordination. The use of the term unit in this context must not be confused with the use of the term in the phrase *Physiotherapy Academic Unit*.

**Year** in the context of program descriptions, for example “a four year program” refers to full time study and is taken to involve two semesters or three terms/trimesters each year, or equivalent. Thus a four year program will involve eight semesters of full-time study.

## Appendix 1: Resources and stakeholders consulted in the review

### 1. Organisations

#### To be added

### 2. Articles

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### **3. Other documents**

#### **More to be added**

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### **4. Individuals**

#### **To be added**