Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR)
Policy & Procedure 12 – Moderation of Accreditation Decisions

1. Preamble

It is ASAR's objective to promote high standards of medical sonography in Australia which includes setting uniform, minimum standards of sonographer education by assessing and accrediting courses in all disciplines of sonography.

The Accreditation process and recommendations made by the Course Assessment Committees must therefore undergo moderation to ensure that consistency and fairness in maintained.

2. Policy Principles

This policy details the procedures by which the ASAR will conduct regular review of the Accreditation decisions to ensure Course Assessment Committee processes and recommendations are fair and reliable.

3. Accreditation Principles

The accreditation principles underpinning the approach to accreditation are:

Legitimacy
The accreditation procedure must be legitimate and acceptable to stakeholders. Such legitimacy includes impartiality in relation to particular stakeholder groups; and appropriate respect for the academic autonomy of course providers. The accreditation procedure must also be consistent with current legislation and guidelines.

Validity
The accreditation procedure must be valid in that the procedures are appropriate for assessing the determination of criteria. These criteria must be evidence-based and explicitly related to the necessary graduate competency outcomes and other specified purposes of the accreditation procedure. The period and status of accreditation must be appropriate to the nature of the programs and developments in the professional field.

Efficiency
The accreditation procedure must cover what is necessary and sufficient and not be unnecessarily burdensome for course providers, Course Assessment Committee members or other participants.

Accountability & Transparency
The accreditation procedure and its outcomes should also be transparent to stakeholders and the public as long as appropriate confidentiality and protection of privacy is maintained.

Procedural fairness
The accreditation Procedure must meet the principles of procedural fairness.

Quality and improvement
The accreditation procedures and criteria should facilitate the development of programs of the highest academic and professional quality and facilitate the continuous improvement of programs over the period for which they are accredited.

Ongoing cycle of review
The accreditation procedures must undergo an ongoing cycle of review to maintain consistency with these principles and for ongoing improvement.

4. Scope

This policy applies to:

1. ASAR Board of Directors
2. ASAR Secretariat
3. ASAR Course Assessment Committee Members

5. Definitions

Accreditation
For the purpose of this policy accreditation means that an ultrasound course has been assessed by ASAR as complying with all the ASAR Standards for the Accreditation of Sonography Courses (SASC).

Accreditation Framework
The Accreditation Framework establishes the policies, procedures and standards within which sonography courses are granted accreditation for a specified time, having met transparent and defined requirements. The accreditation framework includes:

a. the Course Accreditation Application Pack,
b. supporting policies, procedures, and
c. Standards for the Accreditation of Sonography Courses.

Australian Qualifications Framework
The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian education and training. It incorporates the qualifications from each education and training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.

Australian Sonographers Association
The Australian Sonographers Association (ASA) is the peak body and leading voice for sonographers in Australia. The ASA guides the advancement of the sonography profession to ensure the community has access to quality sonographic services.

Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry
Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR) accredits ultrasound courses offered by various providers and establishes the criteria against which all courses are to be assessed. ASAR also maintains a register of accredited medical and student sonographers, with the continuing professional development (CPD) activities of accredited medical sonographers recorded and monitored.

ASAR Board of Directors of Directors
The ASAR Board of Directors of Directors is the body appointed by the members of the company to take responsibility for achieving ASAR's objects

The number and nature of Directors is defined in section V of the ASAR Constitution.

ASAR Course Assessment Committee
ASAR Course Assessment Committee members will be selected from a pool of people who have skills and expert knowledge of sonography, specialist disciplines, and/or expertise in education. Committees will be established in response to changing demands, expectations and needs of the course seeking accreditation.

ASAR Constitution
The ASAR Constitution sets out the rules governing the conduct of the organisation.

ASAR Secretariat
The ASAR Secretariat is the ASAR office management.

Course Assessors
Members of the ASAR Course assessor pool who have been selected to participate on a Course Assessment Committee.

Course
A course is the full program of study and experiences required to be undertaken before a qualification recognised under the AQF, and approved by a regulatory authority, can be conferred. Some organisations will also use the term 'program' to refer to a course.

Course Owner
The course owner is the legal entity that is the proponent or applicant for the course for the purpose of establishing a nationally recognised course in the Higher Education Sector.

Course Provider
The course provider is the organisation that issues the testamur for a nationally recognised course and is responsible for learning and assessment including those situations where the course provider enters into contracting or auspicing agreements for the course delivery and assessment.

The course owner and provider may be one organisation.

Lead Course Assessor
The Lead Course Assessor is selected from the ASAR Course Assessor Pool and will normally have acted as a Course Assessor on other Course Assessment Committees.

Moderation
Moderation is a quality review and assurance process by which ASAR seeks to ensure that its accreditation procedures and practices are valid and reliable and are aligned with its stated standards and principles. Moderation may involve pre-assessment and post-assessment procedures.

Reaccreditation
For the purpose of this policy reaccreditation is the procedures of renewing accreditation of a course in light of any changes that may have taken place within the industry sector or in available Training Packages. For this reason, an application for reaccreditation requires the same rigor as an application for accreditation.

Continuing Accreditation is granted to a course when it is re-evaluated at specified intervals.

Sonographer
A Sonographer is a highly skilled medical imaging professional who utilises ultrasound imaging systems to undertake diagnostic medical sonographic examinations across a range of contexts.

6. Moderation

The purpose of moderation is to foster the three key objectives for quality in accreditation, namely to:

1. guide and encourage effective approaches to accreditation;
2. validly and reliably measure achievement of expected accreditation outcomes as stated in the SASC; and
3. protect the high standards of medical sonography education in Australia.

These principles provide the basis for pre- and post-assessment moderation for the purposes of enhancing:

1. The comparability of accreditation decisions;
2. The quality of accreditation decisions; and
3. adherence to accreditation framework

6.1. Supporting Policies and Procedures

There are a number of policies and procedures that support the moderation procedure ensuring it adheres to the accreditation principles.

P&P #	ASAR Action
1	Establishing & Managing the ASAR Course Assessor Pool
4	Appointing the ASAR Assessment Committee
5	Assessing an Application for Sonography Course Accreditation
6	Reporting Accreditation Decisions
9	Annual Reporting Requirements for Accredited Sonography Courses

7. Pre-assessment Moderation

The ASAR board has structured the accreditation procedures to ensure that Pre-assessment moderation is embedded in appropriate procedure.

7.1. Training

ASAR will provide induct members of the Course Assessment Pool who are selected to sit on a Course Assessment Committee. The induction will cover the following aspects:

1. Roles and responsibilities of the Course Assessment Committee members,
2. Familiarisation with the SASC,
3. Familiarisation with the accreditation process focusing on course assessment,
4. Using the Evaluation Tool,
5. Provide the Accreditation Guide, and
6. Familiarisation with the decisions register.

7.2. Course Assessment Committee Membership

The ASAR Board will ensure that the selection of the Course Assessment Committee membership for any and all accreditations includes a lead assessor who has been a member of a previous accreditation panel.

7.3. Course Assessment

During the assessment process the lead assessor is to identify any assessment or accreditation procedure issues the Committee determines need moderation. The issues will be documented on form 12.1 Issues for Moderation. The completed form will be submitted to ASAR along with the Course Evaluation Report by the Lead Assessor.

8. Post-assessment Moderation

Post assessment moderation will be used as a quality control and improvement process.

8.1. Issues for Moderation

The ASAR board will consider issues raised for moderation by the Course Assessment Committee at the next ASAR Board meeting.

The ASAR Secretariat will provide all Board members with the necessary documentation and any relevant background information to thoroughly review the issue that is raised.

Issues for moderation may result in a range of responses by the Board that may include but are not limited to:

1. No action,
2. The provision of advice to the Course Assessment Committee raising the issue,
3. The provision of advice to all future Course Assessment Committees,
4. Changes to the induction provided to the Course Assessment Committees,
5. The convening of a formal moderation meeting for course assessors,
6. Changes to accreditation procedure or tools, or
7. Wider consultation and changes to the accreditation framework.

Responses that result in advice or changes will be recorded in a Moderation Decision Register.

8.2. The Decision Register

The moderation decision register is a tool to record Board Decisions and provide clear guidance information to all future Course Assessment Committees. The Decision Register will be maintained by the ASAR Secretariat and provided to the lead assessor of all Course Assessment Committees upon appointment to a committee.

9. Procedure Summary – Review

Trigger	ASAR Action	Responsibility
Receipt of an eligible Course Accreditation Application	Appoint the Course Assessment Committee	ASAR Secretariat
	Provide Committee with training	ASAR Secretariat
Identification of a moderation issue during Course Assessment	Discuss the moderation issue within the Course Assessment Committee	Course Assessment Committee
	Raise an Issues for Moderation Form and provide to the ASAR Board with the Course Evaluation Report	Lead Assessor

Receipt of an Issues for Moderation Form	Provide Board with Feedback Form and any supporting documents or background information	ASAR Secretariat
	Consider issue at the next Board meeting	ASAR Board of Directors
	Determine required response to the issue	ASAR Board of Directors
	Complete the Decisions register	ASAR Secretariat
	Inform relevant people of decision.	ASAR Secretariat

10. Tools & Templates

The following tools and templates are to be used when moderating Course Assessment decisions:

- 12.1 – Issues for Moderation Form
- 12.2 – Decision Register

11. Supporting Documentation

Organisations seeking accreditation or re-accreditation are advised that the application pack must be read in conjunction with:

- The Standards for the Accreditation of Sonography Courses available from the ASAR website; and
- The ASA Competency Standards for the Entry Level Sonographer available from the ASA website.

12. Related Policies and Procedures

The other ASAR Policies and Procedures which relate to this document are:

- 1 - Establishing & Managing the ASAR Course Assessor Pool
- 4 - Appointing the ASAR Assessment Committee
- 5 - Assessing an Application for Sonography Course Accreditation
- 6 - Reporting Accreditation Decisions
- 9 - Annual Reporting Requirements for Accredited Sonography Courses

13. Complaints

Any complaints regarding this policy should go through the ASAR complaints procedure.

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V2-01	Michelle Pedretti, Chair, ASAR Board	03/12/2012	03/12/2012
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