Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR)
Policy & Procedure 1 - Establishing and Managing the ASAR Course Assessor Pool

1. Preamble

ASAR's objective is 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.

This policy details our practices for establishing and managing the ASAR Course Assessor Pool (the Pool), from which members of the ASAR Course Assessment Committees are chosen. It also details the way the competency requirements of the Pool members are met and maintained.

2. Policy Principles

ASAR is committed to ensuring that all accredited Sonography courses meet the eight Standards for the Accreditation of Sonography Courses (SASC). In order to achieve this, the application procedures must be conducted in accordance with the accreditation principles identified below. It is the responsibility of the members of the Pool when participating in accreditation activities to ensure these principles are adhered to.

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.

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 Assessor Pool Members; and
4. 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 Sonographer 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 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
The ASAR Board 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 Constitution
The ASAR Constitution sets out the rules governing the conduct of the organisation

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 Course Assessor Pool
The ASAR Course Assessor Pool (the Pool) is a cohort of people approved by the Board who have skills and expert knowledge of sonography, specialist disciplines, and/or expertise in education.

ASAR Secretariat
The ASAR Secretariat is the ASAR office management

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.

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 Assessors
Course Assessors are members of the ASAR Course Assessor Pool who have been selected to participate on a Course Assessment Committee.

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.

Higher Education Provider
A Higher Education Provider is a body that is established or recognised by or under the law of the Australian Government, a State, the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory to issue qualifications in the higher education sector.

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 assurance procedure designed to ensure consistency of standards and assessment within and between courses.

Registered Training Organisation
A Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is a provider that is established or recognised by or under the law of the Australian Government or a State or Territory, to issue qualifications in the vocational education and training sector.

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.

Training Organisation
In the context of this policy and procedure a Training Organisation is either an RTO or Higher Education Provider delivering or wishing to deliver accredited Sonography courses.

Vocational Education & Training
Vocational Education and Training (VET) is an education that prepares trainees for jobs at various levels usually based on manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic, related to a specific trade, occupation, or vocation.

6. ASAR Course Assessment Committee

The ASAR Course Assessment Committee is responsible for accrediting sonography courses to ensure the education provided meets the SASC. Members are selected from the ASAR Course Assessor Pool for their skills and knowledge of sonography, specialist disciplines and/or expertise in education in response to changing demands, expectations and needs of the course to be accredited. The Committee is made up of a minimum of three members.

6.1. Lead Course Assessor

The Lead Course Assessor will be the Chair and is to have acted as a Course Assessor on other Course Assessment Committees.

On establishment of the Pool the first three Committees must be chaired by a member of the ASAR Board of Directors, and for 2 years at least one other member must have served on a previous Committee.

6.2. Course Assessors

The ASAR Board of Directors normally selects a minimum of two representatives from the Pool to act with the Lead Course Assessor to serve on the Course Assessment Committee.

7. ASAR Course Assessor Pool

The ASAR Course Assessor Pool (the Pool) is a cohort of people approved by the Board who have skills and expert knowledge of sonography, specialist disciplines, and/or expertise in education.

7.1. Membership of the Pool

The ASAR Board of Directors will invite Expressions of Interest from individuals with the appropriate expertise for a Course Assessor. The Expression of Interest application should include:

a. Expression of Interest Form,
b. Curriculum Vitae,
c. Personal Statement identifying the strengths the applicant could bring to the accreditation procedure (limited to 300 words), and
d. the names of two referees.

Expressions of Interest will be considered by the ASAR Board of Directors which will then select those candidates who best meet the requirements.

8. Attributes of the Course Assessor

Those involved in the accreditation review procedure should be knowledgeable about the professional, competency-based standards of their profession, the education procedures and clinical practice. In addition, knowledge of the accreditation procedures and requirements is essential.

8.1. Personal attributes of Course Assessor

In order to ensure that Panel members are able carry out their role as Course Assessors to an appropriate standard they must be ethical, open minded, diplomatic, observant, perceptive, versatile, tenacious, decisive, and self-reliant.

Desirable attributes may include:

a. the ability to absorb, analyse and interpret disparate and complex information;
b. the ability to make reliable and objective judgements and convey these effectively;
c. the ability to think creatively and thrive in an environment of constant discussion and cross-fertilization of ideas;
d. the ability to present arguments in a fluent and persuasive manner to other committee members;
e. excellent interpersonal skills to maintain the working relationships required;
f. the ability to work effectively as part of a team;

g. knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the importance of promoting equality and valuing diversity;
h. the ability to understand complex organisational structures; and
i. basic computer and internet skills.

8.2. Additional attributes for the Committee Chair

Those who take on the role of Committee Chair should have the following additional attributes:

a. knowledge and understanding of the ASAR Course assessment, procedures and policies;
b. an understanding of the interface between courses and the workplace environment;
c. a knowledge and understanding of quality assurance systems; and
d. a knowledge and understanding of curriculum design and assessment procedures.

9. Probity of Course Assessors

Course Assessors should:

a. be professional in behaviour and appearance;
b. maintain confidentiality about all issues during the assessment procedure, including written and verbal statements;
c. demonstrate maturity, objectivity, diplomacy and dedication;
d. demonstrate a cooperative nature, be flexible and analytical;
e. be aware of the SASC and current issues;
f. take care and exercise objectivity and fairness in their interactions with course owner/provider, and other team members;
g. ask open-ended and focused questions appropriately, avoiding leading questions;
h. concentrate on major rather than minor issues;
i. listen attentively and actively with an open mind;
j. be mindful of the accrediting organisation they represent, and they should not promote their own or the views of another organisation;
k. respect the agenda of all meetings, including Presentation Day, and manage time accordingly;
l. be aware that their actions and reports form the basis of the accreditation outcome for that course owner;
m. support the aims of the ASAR accreditation program;
n. be supportive of change and innovation; and
o. ensure that the accreditation principles are adhered to and that best practice and appropriate legislation is followed.

10. Training of Course Assessors

ASAR will induct Course Assessors involved in the accreditation procedures. The induction will include the provision of the accreditation guide and access to all current accreditation standards and policies and procedures. New Course Assessors will be required to participate in an accreditation process with experienced Course Assessors.

11. Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest, whether actual or perceived, need to be identified.

11.1. Notice of Interest

ASAR requires that Pool members maintain current Notices of Interest at all times. This includes any personal or professional interests which may or might be perceived to influence their capacity to impartially undertake their roles as members of the Committees.

12. Managing the ASAR Course Assessor Pool

12.1. Maintaining the currency of Pool Members details

Pool members are responsible for maintaining the currency of their data, which will be confirmed prior to appointment to a Committee.

12.2. Professional Development

In order to maintain and further develop their expertise, Pool members are required to demonstrate ongoing professional development.

12.3. Moderation

All recommendations on accreditation submitted to the ASAR Board of Directors, by the Course Assessment Committees must be defensible. On an ongoing basis the Chair, who must have participated in previous accreditation procedure, will apply moderation to the current evaluation and all accreditation decisions will be reviewed by the ASAR Board of Directors before being endorsed.

13. Procedure Summary

Trigger	ASAR Action	Responsibility
Pool of Course Assessors required	Call for expressions of interest	ASAR Board of Directors
	Submit documentation required	Potential Pool Member
	Call for Referee Reports	ASAR Board of Directors

	Select suitable Applicants	ASAR Board of Directors
	Inform Potential Pool Members of the Board's decision	ASAR Secretariat
	Create list of Pool Members	ASAR Secretariat
Establish the Pool	Arrange / conduct Course Assessor Induction	ASAR Secretariat
	Participate in Course Assessor Induction	New Pool Members
	Complete Notices of Interest	New Pool Members
Review of Pool	Confirmation of continuing participation and Pool Members details	ASAR Secretariat
	Update Notices of Interest	Existing Pool Members
Professional Development	Participate in Professional Development	Existing Pool Members

14. Tools & Templates

The following tools and templates are to be used when appointing members to the committee.

- 1.1 - ASAR Assessor Pool Member Expression of Interest Form
- 1.2 - ASAR Assessor Pool Member Notice of Interests
- 1.3 - Potential ASAR Assessor Pool Member Evaluation Form

15. Related Policies & Procedures

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

- ASAR P&P 4 - Appointing the ASAR Course Assessment Committee

16. Complaints and Questions

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

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