Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR)
Policy & Procedure 3 - Applying for Accreditation of Sonography Courses

1. Preamble

As the aim of ASAR is to promote the best and most relevant sonography education its primary role in course accreditation is to ensure these objectives are adequately met. This policy details how a Course Provider is to apply for accreditation and how that application is processed by ASAR.

This policy document is one part of an accreditation framework, which reflects a commitment to a consistent approach to accreditation. It is within this framework that courses are granted accreditation for a specified time, having met all of the defined requirements.

2. Policy Principles

These policy and procedures have been developed to assist Course Providers seeking course accreditation or reaccreditation with ASAR against the Standards for the Accreditation of Sonography Courses (SASC) and to assist staff within ASAR to ensure the application procedures are conducted in accordance with the accreditation principles identified below.

2.1. Eligibility

Only applications which have been deemed eligible for accreditation, in accordance with the Policy & Procedures for Determining Eligibility for Accreditation of Courses, will be considered.

2.2. Applicants

The applicant must be the course provider.

2.3. Standards for the Accreditation of Sonography Courses

To be accredited courses must be assessed as successfully meeting all criteria for all eight SASC.

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. Course Providers wishing to apply for ASAR course accreditation
2. Course Providers wishing to apply for ASAR course reaccreditation
3. ASAR Secretariat

The application procedures are applicable for new courses, as well as those being reaccredited.

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 Sonographer 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 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 Secretariat
The Secretariat is the ASAR office management.

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 qualification for a nationally recognised course and is responsible for learning and assessment including those situations where the course provider enters into contracting or any other 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.

Presentation Date
The presentation date is the date the contents of the formal application are presented to the ASAR Course Assessment Committee.

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 re-accreditation requires the same rigor as an application for accreditation.

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

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 a RTO or Higher Education Provider delivering or wishing to deliver accredited Sonography courses.

6. Timelines for Applications

ASAR recognises the enormous amount of work that goes into writing up a course accreditation or reaccreditation application. ASAR also recognises that it has a responsibility to expedite the procedures, but equally, that the procedures needs to be rigorous and as a consequence, an application can take some time to be assessed. The application procedures will take a minimum of 7 months from the submission of a completed application pack.

Applications for course accreditation must be received **at least** 12 months prior to the proposed starting date of the new course. This lead time is required in order to provide sufficient time for ASAR to fully consider the application and to complete the accreditation procedures.

Course providers who have courses coming up for reaccreditation will be notified by the ASAR Secretariat at least 12 months prior to reaccreditation date.

7. Fees

An application fee, as determined by the Registry, will be charged via invoice, sent upon receipt of application (payable within 7 days).

8. Documentation

ASAR is seeking evidence of an applicant's compliance with the eight SASC. Guidance on what is to be submitted is in the Evidence Guide found in the Course Accreditation Application Pack.

8.1. Evidence Guide

Part One provides the applicant with an opportunity to provide an overview of the course.

Part Two provides the applicant with the opportunity to provide evidence against each of the Standards. The applicant must address all standards and criteria in their application.

Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

8.2. Retention

Materials submitted to ASAR will not be returned. A copy of the documentation will be retained by ASAR for future reference. Electronic copies will be kept and backed up per ASAR's Records Management Procedures.

8.3. Course Materials

Applicants must ideally provide all the course materials for the proposed course. If the applicant does not provide 100% of the course materials with the application, the maximum accreditation period will be for the period covered by the supplied materials.

A minimum of 50% of the course materials must be supplied for an application to be considered. Please see Appendix 4 of the Course Accreditation Application Pack for more information.

The remainder of the materials must be provided to ASAR 4 months before the commencement of the delivery.

9. Presentation Day

Presentation day will be within 4 months of receipt of the completed Application Pack. The meeting will be a two hour appointment, and will include:

1. a formal 10 – 20 minute presentation provided by the applicant in order to showcase the course, and
2. questions or discussion that the ASAR Course Assessment Committee may have.

The formal presentation is to be an overview of the submission and is to be given by the representative of the course provider; academic or other support personnel may accompany them.

9.1. Timing

The presentation date will be within 4 months of receipt of the completed Application Pack.

9.2. Location

Presentations will usually be in Sydney. The applicant will be required to meet his or her own travel, accommodation and sundry expenses. Audio-visual and Internet access facilities will be provided for the presentation day.

9.3. Change of date for the presentation

Should a change of presentation date be requested, the applicant must apply in writing. ASAR will permit one change of up to a maximum of 3 months deferment.

10. Preparing the application

When preparing the application the applicant must:

1. complete one application pack for each course that is being submitted for accreditation / reaccreditation.
2. complete all parts of the application form and submit it along with the attachments in electronic format.
3. use the following templates in the Course Accreditation Application Pack when submitting an application to ASAR:
    a. Appendix 2 - Self Study Report
    b. Appendix 3 - Course Outline
    c. Appendix 4 - Subject Outline
    d. Appendix 5 - Professional Profile – Nominated Workplace Assessor
    e. Appendix 6 - Staff Qualification Matrix
    f. Appendix 7 - Declaration
    g. Appendix 8 - Applicant's Evidence Attachments Checklist
4. reference all attachments to the relevant part, section and standard.
5. where additional attachments are included in the application, or if an attachment is relevant to more than one requirement, these are to be referenced in the body of the application and in the attachment checklist at the end of the application.

11. Questions

If an applicant has questions for the ASAR Course Assessment Committee during the accreditation procedures, please forward them to the ASAR Secretariat in writing. The ASAR Secretariat will provide the applicant with the Committee's response.

12. Course Accreditation

12.1. Date

The period of accreditation differs for new and continuing courses. The following guidelines will be applied by ASAR.

Course Type	Maximum Accreditation Period
New Course	The nominal minimum duration of the course plus one year
Continuing Course	Five years

The official course accreditation date will be the date on the letter informing the applicant that accreditation has been approved. This date will be strictly adhered to by ASAR. Only students enrolled on or after the course accreditation date will be eligible for ASAR accreditation.

12.2. Conditions of Registration

ASAR is also able to place a condition on an accreditation, such as the requirement for further monitoring of the course. The applicant will be advised in writing of any conditions on the accreditation.

12.3. Withdrawal of Course Accreditation

ASAR reserves the right to withhold or withdraw course accreditation if a course provider fails to meet the SASC, including a failure to adhere to the reaccreditation timeline detailed above.

Courses unsuccessful in gaining reaccreditation will no longer be accredited after their accreditation expiry date and the ASAR website will be altered accordingly.

The ASAR appeals procedures are available for applicants who feel aggrieved by any decision.

12.4. Significant Changes to the Course Structure

The applicant must inform ASAR in the annual Self Study Report of any significant changes made to the course structure, content, or delivery during the period of accreditation. A review of course material resulting from these changes may be

requested. ASAR appreciates that course changes may need to occur during the accreditation period.

When determining what represents a "significant change", course providers should reflect on how the change relates to elements detailed in the SASC, and any ASAR recommendations specific to that course's accreditation.

13. Notification of The ASAR Course Assessment Committee's decision

The applicant will be advised in writing of The ASAR Course Assessment Committee's decision within 3 months of the presentation day, or if required, from the receipt of further evidence.

14. Appeals Procedures

The procedures for appealing ASAR Course Assessment Committee's decisions are detailed in the ASAR Policy & Procedures for Appeals Against Accreditation Decisions, is governed by the rules out in Section 12 of the ASAR Constitution.

15. Procedures Summary

The procedures to be followed by both the applicant and ASAR are detailed below.

Action By Applicant	ASAR Action	Responsibility within ASAR
Application pack completed and submitted to ASAR with accompanying evidence	Acknowledge the receipt of the application in writing.	ASAR Secretariat
	Convene the ASAR Course Assessment Committee. In accordance with 4 - P&P Appointing the Assessment Committee	ASAR Secretariat
	ASAR Course Assessment Committee to review the application.	ASAR Course Assessment Committee
	Schedule the presentation day.	ASAR Secretariat

Provide a 10 - 20 minute presentation showcasing the course	Seek clarifications about the application and evidence that has been submitted.	The ASAR Course Assessment Committee
	Provide an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions.	The ASAR Course Assessment Committee
	Request any further evidence needed to make a decision on the application.	The ASAR Course Assessment Committee
Provide any further evidence requested by The ASAR Course Assessment Committee.		
	Advise the applicant in writing of the ASAR Course Assessment Committee's decision.	ASAR Secretariat

16. Tools & Templates

The following tools and templates are to be used when applying for accreditation of a course:

- ASAR Course Accreditation Application Pack
- 2.1 - Letter Acknowledging intention to submit application for course accreditation
- 3.2 - Letter acknowledging receipt of application
- 3.3 - Letter Reminder of Reaccreditation

17. 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.

18. Related Policies & Procedures

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

- ASAR P&P 2 - Determining Eligibility for Accreditation of Courses
- ASAR P&P 4 - Appointing The ASAR Course Assessment Committee
- ASAR P&P 5 - Assessing an Application for Accreditation
- ASAR P&P 6 - Reporting Accreditation Decisions
- ASAR P&P 7 – Lodging an Appeal Against an Accreditation Decision
- ASAR P&P 12 - Records Management

19. Complaints and Questions

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

If you have any questions about this policy and procedure you may contact:

The ASAR Secretariat
Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry Ltd
PO Box 331, Goodwood SA 5034
Ph: 1300 151 522
Email: courseaccreditation@asar.com.au
Website: www.asar.com.au

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