Australian Sonographer Accreditation Registry (ASAR)
Policy & Procedure 6 - Reporting Accreditation Decisions

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 the procedures by which the ASAR reports on the outcomes of the assessment of a sonographers course submitted for accreditation against the eight Standards for the Accreditation of Sonographer Courses (SACS).

2. Policy Principles

ASAR is committed to ensuring that all accredited Sonographer courses meet the eight Standards for the Accreditation of Sonographer 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 ASAR Course Assessor Pool when participating in accreditation activities to ensure these principles are adhered to.

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;
4. Course Providers wishing to apply for ASAR course accreditation; and
5. Course Providers wishing to apply for ASAR course reaccreditation.

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 Accredited Programs
ASAR Accredited Programs are Sonography programs that have met all the Standards for the Accreditation of Sonographer Courses.

ASAR Accredited Qualifications
ASAR Accredited Qualifications are sonography qualifications that are awarded following successful completion of courses that have met all the Standards for the Accreditation of Sonographer Courses.

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 Assessor Pool
The ASAR Course Assessor Pool (the Pool) is a cohort of people approved by the ASAR Board of Directors 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Standards for the Accreditation of Sonographer Courses
The Standards for the Accreditation of Sonographer Courses provide specific criteria for measuring whether a course fulfils the defined requirements. The standards are used to assess every application for accreditation.

To be successful an application is required to satisfactorily address all criteria for all eight standards.

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.

Withhold Accreditation
Withhold Accreditation is an action taken when a course seeking initial accreditation is not in compliance with the SASC.

Withdrawal of Accreditation
Withdrawal of Accreditation is an action taken when a course is no longer in compliance with the SASC.

6. Notifying Course Provider of Accreditation Outcomes

The applicant is to be informed in writing of the ASAR Board of Directors decision.

6.1. Timeframe
The applicant must be advised of the outcome within 3 months of the presentation day, or from the receipt of further evidence if it was required.

6.2. SASC Evaluation Report
A copy of the SASC Evaluation Report and the accreditation decision are conveyed to the course provider, but this is held confidential by ASAR. The final report can be made public by the course provider at their own discretion.

6.3. Unsuccessful Applications
Where course accreditation is withheld or withdrawn, current students will be allowed to continue and finish the course.

7. Roles & Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities of those involved in the reporting the accreditation decisions are:

7.1. ASAR Board of Directors

The ASAR Board of Directors is the only body with the authority to take decision regarding accreditation of sonography courses. Their decisions will be informed by ASAR Course Assessment Committee recommendation. At the Board meeting the ASAR Board of Directors will:

a. review the SASC Evaluation Report submitted by the ASAR Course Assessment Committee and moderate the recommendation;
b. determine if the ASAR Course Assessment Committee recommendation regarding accreditation is to be upheld and award full, conditional or withdraw or withhold accreditation to the course;
c. formally approve full ASAR accreditation, for the appropriate period of accreditation, for those courses which have fulfilled all the SASC; and
d. endorse the ASAR Course Assessment Committee recommendations for improvement and recommendations regarding any ongoing monitoring of the provider

7.2. ASAR Secretariat

ASAR Secretariat is to:

a. Formally record the ASAR Board of Directors' decision in regard to accreditation of the course under evaluation in the minutes of the meeting.
b. Formally notify the applicant of ASAR Board of Directors decision, within one week of the date of the Board meeting.
c. Forward a copy of the SASC Evaluation Report to applicant.
d. For unsuccessful applications provide details of the appeals procedures.
e. Register and file all documentation related to the accreditation evaluation.
f. For accredited courses, add the details of accredited course to the ASAR Register of Accredited Qualifications / Programs

8. Publicising Accreditation Outcomes

8.1. ASAR Register of Accredited Sonography Courses

The ASAR Secretariat maintains the ASAR Register of Accredited Sonography Courses.

8.2. Disclosure of Accreditation Status

ASAR disclose only the accreditation status of the program and qualification to the public.

Details of accredited programs and qualifications are recorded on the ASAR Website.

9. Procedures Summary

Trigger	ASAR Action	Responsibility
ASAR Board of Directors meeting	Formally approve / withhold / withdraw accreditation	ASAR Board of Directors
	Formally record the Board's decision	ASAR Secretariat
	Formally notify the applicant of Board's decision	ASAR Secretariat
Unsuccessful Applications	For unsuccessful applications provide details of the appeals procedures	ASAR Secretariat
Records management / Documentation Control	Register and file all documentation	ASAR Secretariat
	Add the details of accredited course to the ASAR Register	ASAR Secretariat

10. Tools & Templates

The following tools and Templates are to be used when advising applicants of the Accreditation Committees decision as to whether or not the course submitted has been accredited.

10.1. Tools

The following tools are available for use by the ASAR Secretariat:

- ASAR Register of Accredited Courses
- ASAR Website

10.2. Templates

The following templates are available for use by the ASAR Secretariat:

- 6.1 – Letter Notifying Applicant of the Accreditation / Reaccreditation Decision – Accreditation / Reaccreditation approved / approved with conditions
- 6.2 - Letter Notifying Applicant of the Accreditation Decision – Accreditation / Reaccreditation withheld / withdrawn

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

12. Related Policies & Procedures

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

- ASAR P&P 3 - Applying 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 7 - Appeals Against an Accreditation Decision

13. Complaints

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

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