



Psychotherapy & Counselling  
Federation of Australia

# **Course Accreditation and Application Guidelines 2018**

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# INTRODUCTION

The counselling and psychotherapy profession evolves in anticipation of and response to societal and other changes in Australia and throughout the world. Counsellor and Psychotherapy Education courses prepare students to be effective in a dynamic world and profession. It is therefore imperative that accredited courses explicitly prepare students to be counsellors and/or psychotherapists first and area specialists second.

The PACFA Training Standards are written to ensure that students develop a professional identity and also master the knowledge and skills to practice counselling and psychotherapy effectively. Graduates of PACFA accredited courses use their education and preparation as paths to careers in community mental health and human service agencies, educational institutions, private practice, government, business and industrial settings. However, no professional preparation is ever complete, and advances in knowledge, skills and technology within the profession require life-long continuing education for counsellors and psychotherapists as well as monitoring and review of professional standards.

The role of the Education Program Accreditation Committee (EPAC) is to ensure that courses accredited by PACFA meet the Training Standards and conform to these Guidelines. PACFA policy requires periodic course review, permitting standards revision, including development of new standards or the elimination of obsolete standards. The educational experiences required by these revised standards are based on due notice and consultation with the professional community and represent collective and informed judgment about their relevancy and appropriateness. Hence the period of accreditation for any course is a maximum of seven years. The process of re-accrediting a particular course requires the same rigorous assessment as for initial accreditation. These guidelines outline the process undertaken in either case.

These Guidelines are not intended to discourage creativity on the part of providers. Providers wishing to justify variations from these Guidelines for their course may submit statements of rationale as part of their submission. EPAC will determine whether those variations accomplish the outcomes that the standards are designed to ensure.

## Intentions and Purpose of Accreditation Process

The accreditation process is intended to promote consistent quality and excellence in education and training in psychotherapy and counselling and thus to provide tangible benefits for prospective students, as well as the local, national, and international publics that are consumers of psychotherapy or counselling services (including referring professionals and agencies), and the discipline of psychotherapy and counselling itself.

Accreditation is a voluntary, non-governmental process of self-review and external review intended to evaluate, enhance, and publicly recognise quality counselling and psychotherapy training in institutions and programs of higher education.

Accreditation is intended to protect the interests of students, benefit the public, and improve the quality of teaching, learning, research, and professional practice. PACFA seeks to encourage institutional freedom, ongoing improvement of educational institutions and training programs, sound educational experimentation, and constructive innovation.

Graduates of PACFA accredited courses are eligible to join PACFA as an individual member, with PACFA registration being included as a membership benefit. Alternatively, graduates may join a PACFA Member Association and, with the endorsement of their Member Association, immediately apply for listing on the PACFA Register. Registration through the PACFA Register is a significant marker of professional recognition. The PACFA Register is also part of the Australian Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (ARCAP).

The accreditation process involves judging the degree to which a course has met the PACFA Training Standards and achieved the goals and objectives of its stated training model. That is, an accreditation body should not explicitly prescribe the educational goals of a course or the processes by which they should be reached; rather, it should judge the degree to which a program achieves outcomes and goals that are consistent with its stated training model and with the guiding principles contained in this document and the PACFA Training Standards.

Thus, accreditation in psychotherapy and counselling is intended to:

- Achieve general agreement on the goals of training;
- Encourage experimentation on methods of achieving those goals: and
- Suggest ways of establishing high standards in a setting of flexibility and reasonable freedom.

## **APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION AND REACCREDITATION**

### **Eligibility Requirements**

EPAC defines a course as a structured sequence of educational and clinical experiences for which accreditation is sought.

In the context of these standards, "courses" are offered by an identifiable program team. As an example, an institution might have a program team that teaches both an undergraduate Counselling course and a postgraduate Counselling course.

EPAC recognises that alternative instruction methods (for example, distance learning) are currently used in many counsellor education courses. The following principles apply when evaluating these:

1. Courses that use alternative instruction methods will be evaluated with the same standards for accreditation as courses that employ more traditional methods;
2. Accreditation for courses will be based on their demonstrated compliance with the PACFA training standards
3. Courses that use alternative instruction methods are subject to the same level of review as programs that employ more traditional methods.
4. PACFA accredits courses that are of an appropriate academic weight in terms of the volume of learning to be undertaken. For a post-graduate course the volume of learning should be at Level 8 or 9 as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF); an undergraduate course should be at AQF Level 7. However care should be taken in relying solely on course standard as a measure of the volume of learning. The elapsed time of study should also be

taken into account to allow for adequate maturation of knowledge and skill, given the nature of courses in Counselling and Psychotherapy.

The PACFA Training Standards are the criteria for the preparation of professional counsellors and/or psychotherapists. Applicants seeking accreditation must document how each course meets the PACFA Training Standards.

## Eligibility Requirements Checklist

In filling out the Application Form please provide documentation illustrating that each of the six (6) Eligibility Requirements listed below is met. For each item on the checklist, please reference page numbers where documentation can be found in the submission or attach copies of original documentation to this application. Attachments and the application itself should preferably be forwarded in digital form (pdf preferred) to the PACFA office.

1. Training courses must be for a minimum of two years of study. The PACFA Training Standards further specify the required hours to be specifically devoted to counselling and psychotherapy for both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.
2. Graduates of a PACFA accredited course should normally be eligible for immediate registration with PACFA. Where a post graduate program has provision for special entry for non-graduates the conditions under which this can occur should be clearly documented in the admission policy and should align with the PACFA policy on RPL applications for registration.
3. The program team that oversees the course(s) will have a minimum of two (2) core staff members whose academic appointments are in counsellor or psychotherapist education; one of the team members will be designated as the program team leader. For larger programs further academic appointments would be expected.
4. The educational experiences and demonstrated knowledge required are specified in the PACFA Training Standards ([www.pacfa.org.au/practitioner-resources/training-standards/](http://www.pacfa.org.au/practitioner-resources/training-standards/)).
5. The program team is located in and supported by an educational institution accredited by a national accrediting body recognised in the vocational or higher education sector. Educational institutions that do not have such vocational or higher education accreditation and who wish to accredit counselling or psychotherapy education programs through EPAC PACFA, will need to demonstrate that they have met a similar standard with sufficient systems of quality and academic governance to enable professional level educational programs.
6. The course(s) require(s) supervised experiences, including practical experience for all students, as identified in the PACFA Training Standards: and
7. Courses seeking accreditation must have a comprehensive program rationale and objectives or overall vision of what the course seeks to achieve underpinned by a coherent body of professional knowledge.

The following section will guide Applicants through the information required. Please refer to it as you complete the Application Form.

## **FORM 1 - The Institution**

- A. The institution in which the course team is housed is the one formally accredited by a State or national accrediting body in the vocational or higher education sector. Education and training in counselling and psychotherapy must be undertaken in an AQF (7-9) approved qualification at either the undergraduate or postgraduate level.
- B. The current institutional academic calendar, brochure, handbook, catalogue or bulletin accurately describes the program team and each program offered, including admissions criteria, minimum program requirements, academic policy requirements (for example, assessment and grading policy), and financial information.
- C. The course team is clearly identified as part of the institution's academic offerings and has primary responsibility for the preparation of students in the program. If more than one program team has responsibility for the preparation of students in the program, the respective areas of responsibility and the relationships among and between them must be clearly defined.
- D. Cooperative relationships exist between the course team and other course teams that contribute to the professional preparation of students in the program as well as off-campus professional and community resources.
- E. The institution is committed to providing the course with sufficient support to ensure continuity, quality, and effectiveness in all of the program's learning environments.
- F. The institution provides encouragement and support for course staff to actively participate in professional organisations and activities (for example attendance and participation in professional conferences, registration with PACFA and leadership positions in PACFA or in PACFA Member Associations.)
- G. The institution makes available to students in the course student support services including referral to counselling services where appropriate.

## **FORMS 2 and 2A - Course Objectives and Course Work**

- A. A comprehensive rationale has been developed that brings the course into focus and concisely describes the intent and purpose of the course. The course rationale:
  - 1. describes the types of students it serves, its campus location and the priorities and expectations of the staff;
  - 2. is the basis for the development of program objectives and course work;
  - 3. is published and available to staff and students; and,
  - 4. is reviewed at least once every five (5) years and revised as needed.
- B. The course objectives:
  - 1. reflect current knowledge and positions from lay and professional groups concerning the counselling, psychotherapy and human development needs of a pluralistic society;

2. reflect the present and projected needs of a pluralistic society for which specialised counselling, psychotherapy and human development activities have been developed;
  3. reflect input from all persons involved in the conduct of the course, including course staff, current and former students, and personnel in cooperating agencies;
  4. are directly related to course activities; and,
  5. are written so that they can be assessed.
- C. Courses must be undertaken at an AQF 7-9 level and contain 400 hours of instruction as detailed in the PACFA Training Standards (2018).
- D. Courses must meet the curriculum requirements in the PACFA Training Standards (2018).

## **FORM 2B – Student Selection**

- A. Prospective students must be assessed for fundamental human capacities, such as self-awareness, relational capacity, and ethical behaviour, before acceptance into a counselling course.
- B. Postgraduate students are required to have completed an undergraduate degree or higher in any discipline from an accredited Higher Education Provider. If an institution allows admission under special circumstances to some non-graduates or without an undergraduate degree, the requirements and processes for admission must be clearly documented. They must be consistent with and meet the standards of the PACFA RPL policy for admission to the PACFA Register.
- C. Students actively identify with the counselling and psychotherapy profession by participating in professional associations, for example by joining PACFA as an individual member or by joining a PACFA Member Association, and by participating in seminars, workshops, or other activities that contribute to personal and professional growth.
- D. Consistent with established institutional due process policy and the PACFA Code of Ethics, when evaluations indicate that a student is not appropriate for the program, staff should assist in facilitating the student's transition out of the program and, if possible, into a more appropriate area of study.
- E. Flexibility is provided within the course to accommodate individual differences in student knowledge and competencies.
- F. Syllabi are distributed at the beginning of each educational experience, are available for review by all enrolled or prospective students, and include all of the following:
1. Objectives;
  2. Content areas;
  3. Required text(s) and/or reading(s);
  4. Methods of instruction, including a clear description of how content is delivered (e.g., lecture, seminar, supervised practical application, distance learning); and,
  5. Student performance evaluation criteria and procedures.

- G. Educational experiences and demonstrated knowledge in each of the areas specified in the PACFA Training Standards are required of all students in the program.

### **FORM 3 - Program Staff**

- A. The counsellor or psychotherapy education course team must demonstrate that it has resources of appropriate quality and sufficiency to achieve its objectives, and that it meets the Staffing requirements as outlined in Section 8 of the Training Standards. The course team has identifiable core staff responsible for its leadership who:
1. are sufficient in number for their academic and professional responsibilities;
  2. number at least two (2) individuals whose academic appointments are to the unit in counsellor or psychotherapy education;
  3. have relevant degrees appropriate to counsellor or psychotherapy education, preferably from PACFA accredited programs, or degrees in a closely related field;
  4. have relevant preparation and experience in the assigned area of teaching;
  5. identify with the counselling or psychotherapy profession through memberships and involvement in appropriate professional organisations (i.e. PACFA or a PACFA Member Association); and
  6. give feedback to determine program curricula within the structure of the institution's policy.
- B. The course team has clearly defined administrative and educational leadership that is sufficient for its effective operation.
- C. Core staff should have engaged in activities of PACFA, PACFA Member Associations and/or other professional activities including:
1. development/renewal (e.g., attended appropriate professional meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars);
  2. research and scholarly activity: and,
  3. service (e.g., program presentations, workshops, consultations, speeches, direct service).
- D. Course staff members are assigned to provide educational services only in areas for which they have demonstrated knowledge and skills.

### **FORM 3A – Practical Experience**

Practical experience includes supervised practical experience that has been completed within a student's program of study. Practical experience requirements are considered to be the most critical experience elements in the program. All staff, including clinical instruction staff and supervisors, will be clearly committed to preparing professional counsellors and psychotherapists and promoting the

development of the student's professional identity. The application should provide details of practical experience and placement programs, and quality assurance of supervision at each site.

- A. Each regular or adjunct **program staff member** who provides individual or group practical experience and/or internship supervision must meet the PACFA Training Standards related to Clinical Supervision and have
  - 1. a relevant degree and/or appropriate professional knowledge acquired through a formal training program, preferably from an accredited counsellor or psychotherapy education program;
  - 2. relevant professional experience and demonstrated competence in counselling or psychotherapy; and,
  - 3. relevant training and supervision experience.
- B. A **site supervisor** of a site where the practical experience takes place must have
  - 1. a minimum of a bachelor's degree or equivalent in counselling, psychotherapy or a related profession with equivalent qualifications, including appropriate professional registration;
  - 2. relevant professional experience in the program area in which the student is enrolled; and
  - 3. knowledge of the program's expectations, requirements, and evaluation procedures for students.
- C. The practical experience environment, on or off-campus, is conducive to modelling, demonstration and training and is available and used by the program. The practical experience environment is such that it ensures adequate and appropriate access by the staff and students. The practical experience environment includes the following:
  - 1. settings with observational and/or other interactive supervision capabilities; and,
  - 2. procedures that ensure that the client's confidentiality and legal rights are protected.
  - 3. An ability to negotiate or access technology as required.
- D. Students must complete supervised practicum experiences as detailed in the PACFA Training Standards. Supervision may be conducted in either one-to-one or small group settings.
- E. Students formally evaluate their supervisors and learning experience at the end of their practical experiences.

## **FORM 4 – Libraries and Information Resources**

- A. Access to library and other learning resources is appropriate for scholarly inquiry, study, and research by program staff and students.
- B. The institution provides support to course staff and students to ensure access to information systems and data analysis for teaching and research.

## FORM 5 – Organisation and Administration

- A. Course descriptions and requirements are published and disseminated to all prospective students.
- B. A clear procedure for responding to inquiries of prospective students has been identified and carried out.
- C. Prior to, or at the beginning of the first term of enrolment in the program, the following should occur for all new students:
  - 1. A new student orientation is conducted; and
  - 2. A student handbook is disseminated or material is posted on-line that includes the institution's and/or program's:
    - a. academic appeal policy;
    - b. student retention policy explaining procedures for possible student remediation and/or dismissal from the program;
    - c. information about appropriate professional organisations for example, involvement in PACFA or PACFA Member Associations and related activities appropriate for student participation; and
    - d. program rationale and program objectives.
- D. The program has procedures for disseminating current information to all students enrolled in the program, and associated personnel.
- E. The program has a clear grievance procedure to resolve student complaints.
- F. The recommended ratio of students to staff is 20:1 for program as a whole:
- G. A written policy has been developed to recruit students to represent a multicultural and diverse society has been developed and is implemented by program staff.
- H. The program admissions criteria, as well as selection and retention procedures, are distributed to prospective students. These criteria must meet the minimum requirements of the PACFA Training Standards. These include consideration of:
  - 1. Input from program staff;
  - 2. Potential success in forming effective interpersonal relationships in individual and small-group contexts;
  - 3. Aptitude for study, including technological competence and computer literacy;
  - 4. Career goals and objectives and their relevance to the program; and
  - 5. Openness to self-examination and personal and professional self-development.

- I. An appropriately delegated authority within the institution makes admission decision recommendations.
- J. Students receive appropriate academic advice throughout their enrolment in the program. Students follow a planned program of study. The planned program of study identifies the following:
  - 1. Program prerequisite educational and/or professional experiences;
  - 2. Core educational requirements;
  - 3. Specialised educational experiences;
  - 4. Supervised practical experience: and
  - 5. Appropriate elective educational requirements.

## **FORM 6 - Quality Mechanisms and Program Evaluation**

- A. Course objectives and student learning outcomes are developed and revised when necessary through review on a regular schedule. This evaluation process is based on input from program staff, current and former students, and personnel in cooperating agencies.
- B. The course staff conducts a developmental, systematic assessment of each student's progress throughout the program, including consideration of the student's academic performance, professional development, and personal development.
- C. Staff establishes a comprehensive, integrated plan of program evaluation, indicating how the objectives and student learning outcomes are met. Program evaluations must be ongoing, with formal evaluation occurring as follows:
  - 1. an annual evaluation that documents how, where, and the extent to which program objectives are addressed in course syllabi;
  - 2. a review by course staff of programs, educational offerings, and characteristics of program applicants;
  - 3. at least once every three years, course staff conduct and document findings of formal follow-up studies of program graduates to assess graduate perceptions and evaluations of major aspects of the program;
  - 4. at least once every three years, course staff conduct and document findings of formal follow-up studies of clinical site supervisors and program graduate employers to assess their perceptions and evaluations of major aspects of the program; and
  - 5. at least once every three years, course staff document use of findings from VI. C.1, 2, 3, and 4 above in program modifications.
- D. An official report that documents outcomes of the comprehensive course evaluation shall be prepared and distributed on a systematic basis (at least once every three years) to students

currently in the course, course staff, institutional administrators, and personnel in cooperating agencies (e.g., employers, site supervisors).

- E. Students have regular and systematic opportunities to formally evaluate staff and the students' educational experiences.
- F. Provision of annual results of student course evaluations to staff.
- G. Present written staff evaluation procedures are provided to course staff at the beginning of each evaluation period and whenever changes are made in the procedures.

## **FORM 7 - Campus Information**

The application form will ask you to provide full details of campus locations and facilities available for offering the course.

## **ACCREDITATION PROCESS**

Please refer to the document Process for Reviewing Courses in Psychotherapy and Counselling **reproduced at Appendix 1**. This document outlines the process for appointment of a review panel, site visits and the recommendations that may be to EPAC as a result of the review.

*Acknowledgment: These standards draw on the 2001 Standards of CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counselling and Related Education Programs) which is the equivalent body in the United States of America. Used with permission.*

# APPENDIX 1: Process for reviewing courses in psychotherapy and counselling



Psychotherapy & Counselling  
Federation of Australia

## Education Program Accreditation Committee

### Process for reviewing courses in Psychotherapy and Counselling

#### INTRODUCTION

The Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA) regularly reviews psychotherapy and counselling programs to ensure that they meet the criteria required by the PACFA Training Standards.

Responsibility for reviewing psychotherapy and counselling programs is delegated to the Education Program Accreditation Committee (EPAC).

This document sets out the process to be followed by members of PACFA Accreditation Panels when reviewing a psychotherapy or counselling training programs of behalf of EPAC.

#### 1. APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION AND REACCREDITATION

- 1.1 An application for accreditation or reaccreditation of a course is first received by the PACFA office. Payment should accompany the application.
- 1.2 The PACFA Office forwards the application to the Chair of EPAC for a first assessment.
- 1.3 The application will initially be assessed by the Chair of EPAC prior to appointment of a panel.

The Chair will either:

- Appoint a panel to undertake the accreditation site visit and make a recommendation to EPAC on the submission (see section 3.)

OR

- After consultation with EPAC, inform the Applicant that further development of the application is required before submitting the documentation to a panel.

If further development of the application is required, the Applicant will be invited to submit amendments to the application within twelve months of the date of original submission. These changes will then be further assessed by the Chair and EPAC.

- 1.4 If the application is assessed as being ready for a site visit and panel review, the Chair of EPAC negotiates a suitable date with the Applicant and begins to nominate a panel and seek confirmation from the Applicant that the nominated panel is acceptable.
- 1.5 Applications remain current for a period of twelve months from the date of original submission. After that period the chair will seek endorsement from EPAC to refuse the application. A further fee would be required for any re-submission.
- 1.6 Institutions are asked to lodge their applications as early as possible, particularly if there is an important target date, such as a new academic year, that they wish to meet. The appointment of panel members, negotiating the final visit schedule and confirming the final recommendation from the panel with EPAC can take up to six months to complete.

## **2. PACFA ACCREDITATION PANEL**

- 2.1 A panel, made up of three assessors, including a Panel Chair, will be formed to act as the Accreditation Panel to review the application for accreditation or re-accreditation of a counselling or psychotherapy course.
- 2.2 The EPAC Chair is delegated by the Committee to source and appoint suitable members for the Accreditation Panel, which is responsible for reviewing all applications for accreditation.
- 2.3 Panel members are recruited:
  - Either among Accreditation Panel members who have had previous successful experience as panellists in the past;
  - OR
  - By email request to PACFA Branches and Colleges and PACFA Member Associations to provide nominees for Panel membership. Branches, Colleges and Member Associations approached for nominees will normally have members in the geographical location of the training provider seeking accreditation so that travel costs are kept to a minimum.

Nominations for the PACFA Accreditation Panel should be suitably qualified and experienced practitioners or academics with knowledge and understanding of curriculum design, principles of higher education or adult education, the tertiary education environment, and of the minimum standards for psychotherapy and counselling training. Ideally, nominees will have served on a PACFA Committee or Leadership Group or the Management Committee of a PACFA Member Association and have experience in assessing professional qualifications.

EPAC members can be Panel members.

- 2.4 The Panel will be formed giving consideration to the types of courses under review, the standing of the institution and availability of assessors. Panel members will be appointed in consultation with training providers.
- 2.5 When selecting the Panel, the following will be taken into account:
  - i) Compatibility of the proposed Panel with the training program;
  - ii) Particular knowledge base relevant to any special needs of the training program;

- iii) Travel distance involved to contain costs for the site visit;
- iv) Good standing of the proposed panel members; and
- v) Avoidance of actual or possible conflicts of Interest.

2.6 The Chair of EPAC will delegate the role of Panel Chair to a suitably qualified and experienced individual member of PACFA, a member of a PACFA Member Association or member of EPAC. The Chair of EPAC can be the Panel Chair.

A Panel Chair thus delegated will have had previous significant experience as a member of EPAC accreditation panels.

### **3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 The Applicant is notified in writing of the selected Panel members and has the opportunity to ask that another panellist be appointed if the applicant believes there is a potential conflict of interest. If this occurs, different Panel members will normally be selected. If a dispute arises in this process the matter is referred to EPAC for a decision.
- 3.2 Once their appointments are confirmed, Panel members will be sent the Conflict of Interest Form to be completed and returned to the PACFA Office.

### **4. INDUCTION OF THE PANEL**

- 4.1 Each member of the Panel will be contacted by the Panel Chair prior to the site visit to provide an induction to the role as deemed necessary and to discuss the process and issues that have arisen from the review of documents submitted by the Applicant. When first appointed to a panel, new members will receive further support from the Panel Chair as appropriate.

### **5. ACCOUNTABILITY OF ACCREDITATION PANEL**

- 5.1 Each Panel is accountable to EPAC and its first duty is to ensure that the review of the accreditation application and any site visit is conducted according to these Guidelines.
- 5.2 Any concerns which emerge during the course of the review, which relate to either the review process or PACFA documentation or policy, must be communicated to the EPAC Chair. It is neither appropriate nor acceptable for a member of the Panel to comment publicly upon such issues.

### **6. REVIEW OF APPOINTMENT OF PANEL MEMBERS**

- 6.1 A Panel member can be removed from the PACFA Accreditation Panel at the direction of EPAC, at any time, for any of the following reasons:
  - i) The panel member is no longer an individual member of PACFA or of a PACFA Member Association;
  - ii) The panel member has committed a proven breach of the relevant Code of Ethics;
  - iii) The panel member does not comply with the requirements of the review process (e.g. Reports are below expected standard, time-lines are not complied with, breaches of accountability have occurred);

- iv) The panel member has breached confidentiality;
- v) The panel member voluntarily withdraws; or
- vi) The panel member takes leave of absence.

6.2 Allegations that a Panel member has failed to meet any of the above criteria will be investigated by a sub-committee of EPAC, who will present EPAC with a report for EPAC's decision. The decision-making process will follow the principles of natural justice. The panel member will be entitled to know the nature of the identified problem and to respond to identified concerns.

6.3 Members who are removed from the PACFA Accreditation Panel will be advised by the Chair of EPAC, in writing, of the reasons for their removal.

## 7. SITE VISITS

7.1 Site visits are a part of each Accreditation and Re-Accreditation process. They are arranged by the Chair of the PACFA Panel in consultation with the nominated person in the institution applying for accreditation.

7.2 All of the documentation provided by the Institution applying for accreditation will be provided to the Panel by the PACFA Office in reasonable time before the on-site visit to allow them time to review all documentation in preparation for the visit.

7.3 Panel members may request that further information be provided, either prior to the visit or at the time of the visit.

7.4 On arrival at the institution, the Panel will meet in private to discuss any outstanding issues any Panel member may have. The Chair may also wish to discuss matters of procedure with members of the Panel.

### Example Visit Schedule:

9.30am	to	10.00am	Panel members meet in private
10.00am	to	11.00am	Meet with appropriate senior staff including senior academics
11.00am	to	11.15am	Morning tea break
11.15am	to	12.00pm	Meet with teaching staff involved in the courses
12.00pm	to	12.45pm	Meet with students/graduates (include if appropriate)
12.45pm	to	2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm	to	3.00pm	Visit physical resources including training rooms and library
3.00pm	to	3.30pm	Further discussions with staff (if required)
3.30pm	to	4.00pm	Panel members meet in private
4.00pm	to	4.30pm	Discuss recommendations with senior staff

The Chair of the Panel will negotiate an agreed schedule which will follow the example schedule as closely as practicable. Any variations will be discussed with the institutional representative.

Members of the Panel would normally expect to be able to consult with various key people and groups such as: heads of departments or sections; representative staff members; recent graduates and current students; senior administrative staff; course advisory members and others. The institution is expected to ensure that full coverage of teaching staff and students/graduates are represented at the meetings.

The Panel will also review resources, including libraries and relevant centres. Managers of support units, external to the institution/department/school, may also be requested to meet with the Panel at short notice.

One day will normally be sufficient for an accreditation visit. Courses conducted on multiple sites may require variations from the Standard Visit Schedule.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION OPTIONS**

8.1 The following options are available to Accreditation Panels:

- i) A recommendation for full accreditation for up to seven years for courses accredited with TEQSA or offered by a TEQSA registered Self-Accrediting Authority or full accreditation for five years for other courses, subject to no significant structural changes in the course concerned, or a fall in standards of education and/or resources.
- ii) A recommendation for conditional accreditation with a requirement for certain issues of concern being addressed within a period to be specified. In such circumstances, the period of accreditation may be limited to less than five years. The institution/department/school may also be required to furnish a report to PACFA at prescribed intervals, outlining progress in meeting the conditions.
- iii) A recommendation to refuse accreditation. In such cases an adverse report, plus full documentation, will be referred to EPAC.

## **9. PROCESSES TO BE FOLLOWED AFTER THE REVIEW**

9.1 Accreditation Panel's decision:

- i) At the conclusion of the review, the Panel Chair prepares a report and recommendation for EPAC and following consultation with other Panel members forwards it to the Chair, EPAC.
- ii) Upon receipt, the report from the Panel will be sent to the training provider with a request for comment on matters of fact only within two (2) weeks.
- iii) A training provider may apply for an extension of time beyond two weeks but not exceeding four weeks to the EPAC Chair, providing reasons for the proposed extension of time. The EPAC Chair will normally grant the extension.
- iv) The Panel's report and the training provider's response are presented to EPAC which then makes a decision.
- v) The EPAC Chair, or nominee, writes to the training provider informing them of the outcome of the deliberations of EPAC. A copy of the letter is sent to each member of the Panel.

## **10. REPORTS OF REVIEWS**

10.1 The following guidelines must be used in the preparation of the report:

1. The report must focus upon the degree to which the training provider meets the Training Standards and other relevant criteria. The Panel's judgement should be based on the

information made available by the training provider and other interested parties, and on material collected through discussions and observations of the course;

2. A recommendation of provisional accreditation must be accompanied by clearly stated requirements for change and the criteria by which achievements of the changes will be judged.
3. Differences amongst Panel members should be identified and minority reports used as and when appropriate: and
4. The review is a retrospective process. However, it may be appropriate for the Panel to include appropriate prospective comments.

## **11. CONDITIONS OF ACCREDITATION**

11.1 Accreditations are normally for up to five years from the date of accreditation. Application can be made for up to seven years of accreditation to allow PACFA and TEQSA accreditation periods to align.

11.2 Unless otherwise stated, accreditation applies only to the specified courses.

11.3 Courses are accredited as structured, with the content at the date of accreditation and on the basis of the information provided by the institution, which must be current at the date of accreditation. Any conditions to accreditation are outlined in the Panel's report and letter of accreditation. While PACFA expects, and accepts some variation over time (as the course develops), details of significant structural changes must be notified to PACFA immediately. PACFA will then consider the impact of the changes on the accreditation.

## **12. SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURAL CHANGE**

A significant change can be a change in the duration and structure of a course, a change in objectives, or delivery mode, a substantial change in philosophy, emphasis or institutional placement of a course, or significant changes forced by reduced resources, particularly in staffing levels. The institution should consider it a significant change where other regulations require formal approval of changes. The normal evolution of courses, in response to initiatives and content review, would not be considered as a major change.

## **13. APPEALS AGAINST THE DECISION**

Should an institution disagree with the accreditation decision, an appeal setting out the basis for the disagreement may be sent to the PACFA CEO within one month after PACFA has advised the institution of the recommendations of the Panel as confirmed by EPAC. The appeal will be forwarded to the PACFA Board for action. The appeal will be reviewed and final determination of the accreditation decision will be made.