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# Processes for the Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs

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To be reviewed: 2029

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## About us

Dietitians Australia is the peak industry body for dietetic and nutrition professionals, representing more than 9000 members in Australia and overseas.

As the leading voice in nutrition and dietetics, our mission is to champion the professional nutrition and dietetic workforce and to build healthier communities. This is achieved through several key initiatives, including ensuring that University graduates and Accredited Practising Dietitians meet and maintain high professional standards.

Accredited Practising Dietitians are expected to embody the core values of Dietitians Australia in their professional practice, reflecting association's commitment to lead with purpose, be bold, commitment to excellence, act with integrity, collaborate for impact in their actions and decisions.

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## Glossary of terms and abbreviations

**Accreditation:** the system through which an Accreditation body determines that a Program is meeting the Accreditation Standards.

**Accreditation Appeal Panel (AAP):** the team appointed by the Dietitian and Nutritionist Regulatory Council (DNRC) to review an appeal of an Accreditation decision.

**Accreditation Application:** the application submitted by a University to Dietitians Australia to have a Dietetics education Program accredited.

**Accreditation Review:** the process outlined in this document to determine if a Program does or does not meet the Accreditation Standards.

**Accreditation Review Report:** the report prepared by the Accreditation Review Team (ART) for the DNRC which details the ART's investigation and recommendations on a University's Accreditation Application.

**Accreditation Review Team (ART):** the team appointed by the DNRC consistent with the Reviewer Terms of Reference. The ART is responsible for conducting the review of a University's compliance with the requirements of the Accreditation Status for which the University has applied, and for making recommendations to DNRC regarding the Accreditation outcome.

**Accreditation Standards or Standards:** the standards as outlined in the 'Accreditation Standards for Dietetics Education Program'.

**Accreditation Status:** refers to the classifications 'Accredited (with conditions)' or 'Accredited' (as applicable).

**Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD):** a credential awarded to dietitians by Dietitians Australia through its Accredited Practising Dietitian Program (APD Program).

**Agreement:** the Accreditation Agreement between Dietitians Australia and the University.

**AHPRA:** Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency.

**Board:** means the Board of Directors of Dietitians Australia.

**Business Day:** means a day on which trading banks are open for ordinary business in the Australian Capital Territory.

**Claims:** any claim, allegation, debt, cause of action, liability, proceeding, suit or demand of any nature and whether present or future, actual or contingent, fixed or unascertained and arising at law, in equity, under statute or otherwise.

**Conditions:** requirements against the Accreditation Standards that a university must meet to maintain an Accreditation Status.

**Dietitians Australia RSU:** Dietitians Australia Regulatory Services Unit.

**Desktop Review:** a 'desktop review' consists of analysis of the written evidence supplied in the Accreditation Application and whether this evidence demonstrates adherence to the Accreditation Standards.

**Dietitians Australia:** Dietitians Association of Australia trading as Dietitians Australia (ACN 008 521 480) and the peak body for nutrition and dietetics in Australia.

**Dietetics:** the profession that contributes to the promotion of health and the treatment of illness by optimising the nutrition of communities and individuals. It utilises scientific principles and methods in the study of nutrition and applies these to influence the wider environment affecting food intakes and eating behaviours.

**Dietitian:** a scientist who applies nutrition knowledge to the promotion of health and the primary prevention and the treatment of disease in accordance with stated scientific principles.

**Dietitian and Nutritionist Regulatory Council (DNRC):** the governance structure responsible

for overseeing the profession's regulatory functions. DNRC determines whether or not a Dietetics education Program offered by a University satisfies the requirements of a particular Accreditation Status.

**NASRHP:** National Alliance of Self Regulating Health Professions.

**NCS:** National Competency Standards for Dietitians in Australia.

**Processes:** Processes for Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs (this document).

**Program:** a Dietetics education Program or course credentialing dietitians.

**Recommendations:** suggestions that a University is required to report on as part of their next Accreditation Application.

**Site Visit:** means the attendance by the ART at a University's campus/es and/or virtually, as the ART may in its discretion decide (which 'virtual visit' may encompass remote interviews, remote tours or delivery of information to the ART by any electronic means, as the ART may reasonably request), where the Dietetics education Program/s (the subject of an Accreditation Application) would be (or are being) provided, as part of the ART's process of reviewing the Accreditation Application.

**University:** means a higher education provider that intends to offer, or currently offers, a Dietetics education Program which seeks an Accreditation Status.

# Section 1: Introduction to Accreditation

# 1. Introduction to Accreditation

## 1.1 Background

Dietitians Australia is the peak body of dietetic and nutrition professionals in Australia that oversees regulation of dietitians via its council, the Dietitian and Nutritionist Regulatory Council (**DNRC**). The DNRC is responsible for overseeing the profession's regulatory functions, accreditation, skills recognition, credentialing and complaints with the aim of protecting the public by ensuring practitioners are safe and effective in their practice and uphold our professional standards.

In relation to Accreditation of Dietetics education Programs, DNRC ensures that Dietetics education Programs meet the Accreditation Standards and that graduates have demonstrated competence as described in the National Competency Standards for Dietitians in Australia (**NCS**). Graduates of a Program with an Accreditation Status are eligible for Dietitians Australia membership and to join the APD Program.

## 1.2 Accreditation purpose

The purpose of Accreditation is for the DNRC to assess a Program's compliance with the Accreditation Standards. Accreditation is not only about quality assurance, but also to support Universities in continuous quality improvement of their Program.

## 1.3 Accreditation documents and usage

There are 3 companion documents relating to Accreditation that are used to inform and support each Accreditation Review:

### 1. Accreditation Standards for Dietetics Education Programs

The Dietitians Australia Accreditation Standards for Dietetics Education Programs document (also known as '**Accreditation Standards**' or '**Standards**') details the minimum requirements that Universities must meet to gain an Accreditation Status for their Dietetics education Programs and that Universities must continue to meet to maintain their Accreditation Status.

### 2. Processes for the Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs (this document)

The Dietitians Australia Processes for the Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs document provides an overview of the Accreditation process and a comprehensive guide to each step and requirement of the process. The Accreditation process is designed to produce safe and competent graduates and reflects the respective commitments of both Dietitians Australia and the Universities to that outcome.

### 3. Evidence Guide for Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs

The Evidence Guide for Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs is designed to provide support for Universities to demonstrate evidence of meeting the Accreditation Standards in the process of Accreditation. Universities may use their discretion to select alternative or additional pieces of evidence for submission as part of the Accreditation process.

#### 1.4 Accreditation classifications

The table below (Table 1) describes the classifications across the different Accreditation types.

**Table 1 Classifications across the different Accreditation types**

Classification	Description
<b>Pre-Accreditation</b>	This status is used to describe new Programs seeking Accreditation for the first time (New Programs). These Programs do not have students enrolled and must achieve Accreditation (with conditions) prior to students commencing the Program.
<b>Accredited (with conditions)</b>	These Programs have the imposition of conditions on their Accreditation status which must be achieved within a reasonably defined time.
<b>Accredited</b>	This status is awarded when the Program and the University that provides the Program meet the approved Accreditation Standards.
<b>Not Accredited</b>	This status is awarded when the Program and the University that provides the Program do not meet the approved Accreditation Standards.

#### 1.5 Accreditation Review Team

An Accreditation Review Team (**ART**) is appointed to conduct the Program Accreditation in line with the Accreditation Standards and Processes.

The composition of an ART is determined by the Dietitians Australia Regulatory Services Unit (**Dietitians Australia RSU**) and DNRC and will be in line with the Reviewer Terms of Reference, which outlines the roles, responsibilities and requirements of ART members (see Appendix 1). An ART will usually consist of four (4) members, one (1) chair and three (3) review team members. The team will be made up of senior academic and practitioner dietitians and one (1) external member with expertise in either Accreditation or education or a health consumer representative.

The University will have the opportunity to request a review of one (1) or more team members should they identify an actual or potential (professional or personal) conflict. The request will be reviewed by a DNRC member and if a conflict is identified, an alternative member will be suggested.

The ART are supported by a Dietitians Australia RSU staff member.

## 1.6 Evidence and requests for information

Dietitians Australia (through the Dietitians Australia RSU, ART or DNRC) may request additional information of the University at any time throughout the process. The University agrees to respond to all reasonable requests for information promptly.

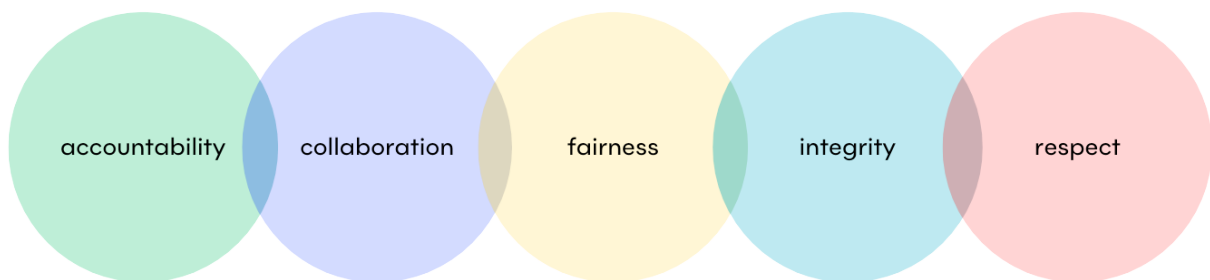
The University understands that the Accreditation process may be delayed where the University has failed to respond promptly to a request for information by Dietitians Australia.

The University understands that it bears the responsibility for demonstrating that its Program meets or exceeds the relevant requirements for the Accreditation Application, including that the information it provides to Dietitians Australia is clear and unequivocal.

If there is any uncertainty as to the meaning or interpretation of the information or evidence supplied by the University, Dietitians Australia will err on the side of caution and give priority to maintaining the Accreditation Standards and the public's confidence in the Accreditation Standards.

## 1.7 Accreditation values

In proceeding with an Accreditation Application, Dietitians Australia and each University agree that a respectful approach should be taken to the Processes and in accordance with the following values:



## 1.8 Confidentiality

The Accreditation process is confidential to all participants. To undertake their Accreditation role, DNRC requires detailed information from the Universities. This typically includes sensitive or commercial in confidence information. Members of DNRC, ART and Dietitians Australia staff are required to keep confidential all material provided by the Universities for the purpose of Accreditation of their Programs. Information collected is used only for the purposes for which it is obtained.

## 1.9 Transition to 2025 Accreditation processes

A transitional plan has been established for Universities to move across to the new Processes under this document. Each affected University will be notified directly of the transitional plan.

The transitional plan entails the following:

<b>Qualified</b>	<p>Universities with a ‘program qualification’ qualifying (PQ) status under the previous ‘Process for Qualification of New Dietetics Education Programs 2019’ will be required to follow the steps to move to a ‘pre-accreditation’ status under these Processes within a period of three (3) months from the commencement of this document.</p> <p>For programs with PQ status that have commenced their first program, those Universities will be required to apply earlier for Accreditation (and must achieve Accredited with Conditions) Status. These applications will need to be commenced within twelve (12) months from the commencement of this document.</p>
<b>Provisional</b>	<p>Universities with a ‘Provisional Accreditation’ status under the previous Processes for the Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs 2020 will move across to an ‘Accredited with Conditions’ status when this document takes effect. Dietitians Australia will notify those Universities in writing of the changes taking place and outline the conditions and key dates moving forward for the Accreditation.</p>
<b>Full Accreditation</b>	<p>Universities with a ‘Full Accreditation’ status with or without conditions, under the previous Processes for the Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs 2020 will continue in their current Accreditation cycle as is. Dietitians Australia will notify those Universities in writing of the changes taking place and outline the conditions and key dates moving forward for any reaccreditation.</p>

# Section 2: New Programs

## 2. New Programs

### 2.1 Notification of Intention of a New Program

**For all New Programs, the University must have completed the Accreditation process and received an 'Accredited (with conditions)' Status prior to enrolling students in the Program.**

At least **eighteen (18) months** before the commencement of their Program, the University must notify Dietitians Australia of their intention to commence a new Program by submitting the 'Notification of New Programs' form. This form can be accessed from the Dietitians Australia website (and found at Appendix B).

The University is required to provide confirmation of approval of university academic board or equivalent academic quality leadership authority prior to the commencement of accreditation.

Upon receipt of the completed 'Notification of New Programs' form the Dietitians Australia RSU will:

- notify DNRC of this submission.
- provide guidance on the Accreditation process and timelines. A meeting can be arranged with the University and a DNRC delegate to discuss the planned Program.
- send the Agreement (see section 2.2.1), and an invoice for Accreditation fees.
- provide the University with access to an Accreditation application pack and suite of templates.

This 'Notification of New Programs' form is also required for Universities who already have Dietetics Programs and may be commencing a new Program.

At this point the proposed new Program's status is described as 'pre-accreditation'.

### 2.2 Accreditation for new Programs

#### 2.2.1 Accreditation Agreement

Before commencing the Accreditation process the University must enter into an Accreditation Agreement with Dietitians Australia (the **Agreement**). The Agreement sets out the terms that both Dietitians Australia and the University must agree to engage in the Accreditation process. The Agreement will incorporate an acceptance by the University of the Standards and the Processes.

Upon receipt of the signed Agreement and payment of Accreditation fees the Dietitians Australia RSU will notify the University of the proposed Accreditation Review Team (**ART**). The University will have an opportunity to provide feedback if they identify an actual or potential conflict with one (1) or more ART members (as per section 1.5).

#### 2.2.2 Application preparation and submission

The application for Accreditation must then be submitted at least **twelve (12) months prior to the proposed commencement date of the Program enrolling students or as advised by the Dietitians**

**Australia RSU.** Dietitians Australia will reach out to Universities with ‘pre-accreditation’ status annually to check when the Program may be commencing.

The Accreditation Application Templates should be used by the University to compile their evidence to clearly demonstrate evidence against the Standards. The University must ensure that the information and evidence provided to the ART is done so in a clear manner such that an accurate assessment can be made by the ART to assess whether the Standards have been met.

The University is encouraged to use the Evidence Guide for Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs which is designed to assist applicants to clarify the nature of the documentary evidence required, to demonstrate how the Program meets the Standards.

The Dietitians Australia RSU will undertake an administrative review of the documentation received and may contact the University if there are any issues accessing the documentation submitted.

### **2.2.3 Desktop Review**

Dietitians Australia RSU will notify the ART to commence the Accreditation process after the administrative review of documentation and confirmation of the signed Agreement and payment of fees. The ART must conduct a Desktop Review of the Accreditation Application within forty-five (45) Business Days of receiving this notification.

Within ten (10) Business Days of the Desktop Review, the ART will write to the University regarding any areas for clarification or requests for further information and/or modifications to the Accreditation Application. If necessary, the ART Chair may offer the University a meeting to discuss the request of additional information or evidence.

Within fifteen (15) Business Days of delivery of the ART’s correspondence, the University must provide a written response (with supporting evidence if requested) to the ART.

During the Desktop Review the ART team will also confirm a tentative date for the Site Visit and whether they wish to conduct this on site or virtually.

### **2.2.4 Site Visit**

The Site Visit will occur at the location of the University seeking Accreditation. However there maybe the instance where some of this Site Visit maybe conducted virtually, this will be discussed with the University at the time. The Dietitians Australia RSU will arrange all the links required for any virtual meetings.

Prior to the Site Visit, the Dietitians Australia RSU will provide the University with a draft agenda for review. Should the University wish to meet with a representative of the ART to discuss the Site Visit and any questions related to it, this can be arranged by contacting the Dietitians Australia RSU.

The University is required to organise attendance of the requested personnel to the Site Visit as per the draft agenda supplied by the Dietitians Australia RSU and provide the final completed agenda (populated with room locations, attendees etc) to the Dietitians Australia RSU at least ten (10) Business Days prior to the Site Visit.

During the Site Visit the ART may take the opportunity to:

- clarify issues raised in the Accreditation Application review, including requesting further evidence where deemed necessary
- engage with senior Dietetics education staff, senior management at the University and key personnel to discuss Accreditation issues

- confirm capacity and physical resources of the Program/s
- assess how well the Program/s meets its stated goals and objectives
- verify that the Program/s have equipped graduates to meet the NCS
- verify that the University meets the Accreditation Standards
- confirm that the Program has established and demonstrates quality management processes.

If required, the ART will seek further information, evidence or clarification after the Site Visit.

### 2.2.5 Final Accreditation Report

The ART will develop a draft Accreditation report outlining an Accreditation recommendation outcome based on all available evidence provided throughout the Accreditation process and outlining each Accreditation Standard as met or not met, with conditions and/or recommendations as applicable, within fifteen (15) Business Days of the Site Visit.

This report will then be presented to a DNRC member for review within fifteen (15) Business Days. Following this the report will be provided to the University. The University will be provided five (5) Business Days (calculated from receipt of the draft Accreditation report) to review the factual accuracy of the information within the report.

Should any errors of fact be identified, this will be reviewed and amended by the ART. If the ART disagrees with the feedback of the University and the ART does not amend the Accreditation report, the University's objection will be noted.

The ART reserves the right to amend the draft Accreditation report further after receipt of the feedback from the University, without further reference to the University.

The final version of the report will then be provided by the ART to DNRC at their next meeting. The DNRC will then review the report (either in a meeting or as a flying minute) and make a formal recommendation to the Dietitians Australia Board.

## 2.3 Accreditation outcome

The DNRC recommendation must be confirmed by the Board of Dietitians Australia at their next meeting following receipt of the board paper from the DNRC.

If it is decided that the Program **meets the requirements** for Accreditation, then DNRC will formally accredit the Program as 'Accredited (with conditions)'. New Programs will have conditions as some Standards cannot be met and/or outcomes cannot be demonstrated until students have completed the Program. If it is decided that the Program **does not meet** the requirements for Accreditation, then Accreditation will not be granted and the DNRC reserves the right to withdraw the 'pre-Accreditation' Status.

The University will be notified within five (5) Business Days of the Board's confirmation regarding the Accreditation outcome. The University will be given the opportunity to attend a short meeting with the ART chair or member, the DNRC chair/representative (if applicable) and a Dietitians Australia RSU staff member to discuss the final Accreditation outcome/report, conditions (if applicable), reporting requirements, provide feedback on the process and/or ask any questions about the Accreditation outcome/report.

If a Program receives an Accreditation Status of 'Not Accredited' or 'Accredited (with conditions)', the University may be eligible to follow the Appeals process (see Section 7).

## 2.4 Evaluation

Evaluation of the Accreditation process is sought at the completion of an Accreditation via a survey. The feedback collected is used by the Dietitians Australia and DNRC as a quality improvement opportunity. The University may be contacted approximately six (6) months after the completion of the Accreditation Review to provide further feedback on the Accreditation process.

The University can provide feedback on the Accreditation process at any time to the Dietitians Australia RSU or as part of the annual reporting process.

# Section 3:

# Reaccreditation of existing Programs

## 3. Reaccreditation of existing Programs

### 3.1 Reaccreditation process

The Dietitians Australia RSU will notify the University at least **twelve (12) months** prior to the Program/s accreditation expiry to advise them of the required reaccreditation process including the due date for submission of the application. The submission date will be at least **nine (9) months** before the Program's Accreditation expiration date or as advised by the Dietitians Australia RSU.

The University will be provided with access to an Accreditation Application pack and a suite of templates at this time.

#### 3.1.1 Application preparation

The Accreditation Application templates may be used by the University to compile their evidence to clearly demonstrate evidence against the Standards (Appendix 3). The University must ensure that the information and evidence provided to the ART is done so in a clear manner such that an accurate assessment can be made by the ART to assess whether the Standards have been met.

The University is encouraged to use the Evidence Guide for Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs, which is designed to assist applicants to clarify the nature of the documentary evidence required, to demonstrate how the Program meets the Standards.

#### 3.1.2 Accreditation Agreement and fees

The Dietitians Australia RSU will contact the University approximately eight (8) weeks prior to the agreed application submission date to notify the University of the following:

- invoice for payment of Accreditation fees
- Agreement to review and sign
- the proposed ART.

The University will have an opportunity to provide feedback if they identify an actual or potential conflict with one (1) or more ART members. The University must enter into an Accreditation Agreement with Dietitians Australia. The Agreement sets out the terms that both Dietitians Australia and the University must agree to engage in the Accreditation process. The Agreement will incorporate an acceptance by the University of the Standards and the Processes. The Agreement must be in place to commence the Accreditation Review.

Upon receipt of the reaccreditation application, signed Agreement and provided that the relevant Accreditation fee has been paid by the University to Dietitians Australia, the Dietitians Australia RSU will contact the University in writing within five (5) Business Days (of the last of these conditions being met) to notify the University of the following:

- Dietitians Australia has received the reaccreditation application, signed Agreement and the Accreditation fees have been paid and the reaccreditation process will now commence.
- Dietitians Australia RSU will undertake an administrative review of the documentation received.
- The ART is confirmed.
- The tentative Site Visit dates.

### 3.1.3 Desktop Review

Dietitians Australia RSU will notify the ART to commence the Accreditation process after the administrative review of documentation and confirmation of signed Agreement and payment of fees. The ART must conduct a Desktop Review of the Accreditation Application within forty-five (45) Business Days of receiving this notification.

Within ten (10) Business Days of the Desktop Review, the ART will write to the University regarding any areas for clarification or further information and/or modifications to the Accreditation Application. If necessary, the ART Chair may offer the University a meeting to discuss the request of additional information or evidence.

Within fifteen (15) Business Days of delivery of the ART's correspondence, the University must provide a written response (with supporting evidence if requested) to the ART.

If the University's response is satisfactory to the ART, the Accreditation process will proceed to Site Visit.

### 3.1.4 Site Visit

A Site Visit may be conducted as a virtual day then an onsite day, or two (2) virtual days. For virtual Site Visits Dietitians Australia RSU will arrange all the links that are required for the meeting.

Prior to the Site Visit, the Dietitians Australia RSU will provide the University with a draft agenda for review.

The University is required to organise attendance of the requested stakeholders to the Site Visit as per the draft agenda supplied by the Dietitians Australia RSU and provide the final completed agenda (populated with room locations, attendees, emails etc) to the DA RSU at ten (10) Business Days prior to the Site Visit.

During the Site Visit the ART may take the opportunity to:

- clarify issues raised in the Accreditation Application review, including requesting further evidence where deemed necessary
- engage with senior Dietetics education staff, students, senior management at the University and key stakeholders to discuss Accreditation issues
- confirm capacity and physical resources of the Program/s
- assess how well the Program/s meets its stated goals and objectives
- verify that the Program/s have equipped graduates to meet the NCS
- verify that the University meets the Accreditation Standards
- confirm that the Program has established and demonstrates quality management processes.

If required, the ART will seek further information, evidence or clarification after the Site Visit.

### 3.1.5 Final Accreditation Report

The ART will develop a draft Accreditation report outlining an Accreditation recommendation outcome based on all available evidence provided throughout the Accreditation process and outlining each Accreditation Standard as met or not met, with conditions and/or recommendations as applicable, within fifteen (15) Business Days of the Site Visit.

This report will then be presented to a DNRC member for review within fifteen (15) Business Days. Following this the report will be provided to the University. The University will be provided five (5) Business Days (calculated from receipt of the draft Accreditation report) to review the factual accuracy of the information within the report.

Should any errors of fact be identified, this will be reviewed and amended by the ART. If the ART disagrees with the feedback of the University and the ART does not amend the Accreditation report, the University's objection will be noted.

The ART reserves the right to amend the draft Accreditation report further after receipt of the feedback from the University, without further reference to the University.

The final version of the report will then be provided by the ART to DNRC at their next meeting. The DNRC will then review the report (either in a meeting or as a flying minute) and make a formal recommendation to the Dietitians Australia Board.

### 3.2 Accreditation outcome

The DNRC recommendation must then be confirmed by the Dietitians Australia Board at their next meeting.

If it is decided that the Program **meets the requirements** for Accreditation, then DNRC will formally accredit the Program as 'Accredited' or 'Accredited (with conditions)'. These Accreditation Statuses will only be granted if all the steps are completed in the review process to DNRC's satisfaction. If it is decided that the Program **does not meet** the requirements for Accreditation, then Accreditation will not be granted and the DNRC reserves the right to suspend the current Accreditation Status.

The University will be notified within five (5) Business Days of the Board's confirmation regarding the Accreditation outcome. The University will be given the opportunity to attend a short meeting with the ART chair or member, the DNRC chair/representative (if applicable) and a Dietitians Australia RSU staff member to discuss the final Accreditation outcome/report, conditions (if applicable), reporting requirements, provide feedback on the process and/or ask any questions about the Accreditation outcome/report.

If a Program receives an Accreditation status of 'Not Accredited' or 'Accredited (with conditions)', the University may be eligible to follow the Appeals process (see Section 7).

### 3.3 Evaluation

Evaluation of the Accreditation process is sought at the completion of an Accreditation via a survey. The feedback collected is used by Dietitians Australia and DNRC as a quality improvement opportunity. The University may be contacted approximately six (6) months after the completion of the Accreditation Review to provide further feedback on the Accreditation process.

The University will also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the Accreditation process at any time to the Dietitians Australia RSU or as part of the annual reporting process.

# Section 4: After Accreditation

## 4. After Accreditation

### 4.1 Period of Accreditation

The maximum period that a University's Program can be accredited is up to five (5) years, provided that adherence to the Accreditation Standards is maintained.

Shorter periods of Accreditation may be granted subject to specific conditions being met by the University.

#### 4.1.1 Extension to an Accreditation term

The DNRC may consider an extension to the period of Accreditation on an individual basis. A request must be made in writing to the DNRC via the Dietitians Australia RSU. The DNRC have the right to refuse the extension request in their absolute discretion.

### 4.2 Acknowledgement and publication of Accreditation Status

Accredited Programs will be included on the Dietitians Australia website, detailing the Program name, code and Accreditation status.

It is the responsibility of the University to keep current and/or potential students informed of:

- each Program's Accreditation Status
- the progress (or lack thereof) of an application for Accreditation Status
- the effect of any absence of progress of an application, including where that results from suspension, withdrawal or termination of any process under the Standards and Processes
- the effect of the above outcomes on each student's eligibility to join Dietitians Australia and the APD Program.

Universities seeking an Accreditation Status who wish to make statements regarding the status of their Program/s that are the subject of an Accreditation Application, may do so, however:

- they do so at their own risk and the University indemnifies the Dietitians Australia against all Claims made against Dietitians Australia arising from any statements or representations made by the University.
- they must do so without making any representations on behalf of Dietitians Australia and without referring to Dietitians Australia's position in respect of the credentialing of graduates, the Accreditation Status or the Accreditation process generally
- they must consider that timelines outlined in the Processes rely on Accreditation Applications being complete and compliant with Dietitians Australia's expectations, delivering information in a form that readily conveys the information in a manner that not only meets the requirements of the Standards and Processes but is readily comprehended by anyone required to review the application
- they must acknowledge that an application may be stalled, interrupted, delayed, suspended or terminated due to a range of reasons contemplated by the Standards and Processes and otherwise due to the normal considerations and contingencies due to assessments of evidence-based applications.

## 4.3 Wording on University websites

Universities are required to use the following standard wording on webpages or on Program materials to ensure consistency and reflect an accurate understanding of the Accreditation Application process.

### 4.3.1 For programs that are ‘Accredited’ or ‘Accredited (with conditions)’

This program is currently accredited by Dietitians Australia. A graduate of this program within the current Accreditation period is eligible to join the APD Program.

### 4.3.2 For programs seeking Accreditation that do not currently hold an Accreditation Status and have submitted their Accreditation Application

The University has commenced the Accreditation process with Dietitians Australia. The University’s aim is to achieve Accreditation with conditions prior to commencing the program. A graduate of an accredited Program is eligible to join the APD Program.

All enquiries regarding the progress of the Program’s Accreditation review should be directed to the University’s Dietetics Program.

### 4.3.3 General commentary on credentialing and registration requirements of dietitians

A number of Australian Government departments use wording supplied by Dietitians Australia regarding credentialing or registration requirements for the profession of dietitians. Applicant Universities should use the following wording wherever relevant for uniformity:

A graduate of a program accredited by Dietitians Australia is eligible to become a Dietitians Australia member with dietetics qualifications, and to join the Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) Program. APDs are required to undertake prescribed levels of professional development each year and comply with the Code of Conduct for Dietitians & Nutritionists. Eligibility for APD status, or current APD status is a prerequisite of many dietetic positions in Australia. APD status is required for a practice in some sectors.

DNRC reserves the right to review the University’s webpages and Program materials to ensure compliance.

If an Accreditation Status is suspended, withdrawn or terminated:

- Dietitians Australia will update its website to note the suspension, withdrawal or termination (as the case may be)
- the University must (at Dietitians Australia’s request) update its webpages or Program materials to note the suspension, withdrawal or termination in a form of words reasonably satisfactory to Dietitians Australia.

By including any statements on Dietitians Australia’s webpages regarding a University’s Accreditation Status, Dietitians Australia makes no representation that the University will maintain or achieve the University’s applicable Accreditation Status or otherwise that Dietitians Australia holds any responsibility to ensure that the University will meet the ongoing compliance requirements of Accreditation.

#### 4.4 Certificates

A certificate of Accreditation will be awarded to a Program that has completed the Accreditation process, successfully met all requirements for Accreditation, and been formally 'Accredited' without conditions. A hard copy certificate will be sent to the University unless the University advises the Dietitians Australia RSU that they:

- do not wish to receive a hard copy of the certificate
- would like to receive an electronic copy of the certificate.

An electronic certificate may be provided for a Program that has remaining conditions and can be done so at the request of the University.

#### 4.5 Use of the profession's logos

A University delivering a Program that holds an Accreditation Status of 'pre-accreditation', 'Accredited (with conditions)' or 'Accredited' may wish to use the Dietitians Australia or APD logos on their website to indicate its status of Accreditation with Dietitians Australia.

The University is required to contact the Dietitians Australia RSU to request logo use, including details of the intended use on the webpage/s and/or Program material so that Dietitians Australia can review and approve the material it will be displayed on (and any conditions of use).

The Dietitians Australia logo and APD logo remains the intellectual property of Dietitians Australia and may not be used except under licence and in accordance with the permissions of Dietitians Australia.



Logo 1 - Dietitians Australia



Logo 2 - APD

#### 4.6 Responsibilities and liabilities of Dietitians Australia and the University

The University agrees that it is their responsibility to:

- demonstrate that its Program meets all relevant requirements to achieve or maintain the relevant Accreditation Status in accordance with the Processes and Standards:
  - for new Programs, this must be prior to commencing the Program and enrolling students
  - for currently accredited Programs, this must be prior to the expiration of the current Accreditation period.

The University agrees:

- that it will provide clear and accurate information and evidence to support its application and provide any additional evidence as requested by the Dietitians Australia RSU

- that it indemnifies Dietitians Australia (including the DNRC and ART) from and against all Claims that they may suffer, incur or be liable for either directly or indirectly arising from:
  - the University's breach of the Accreditation Agreement
  - the University's breach of the Accreditation Processes or Accreditation Standards
  - a failure by the University to obtain an Accreditation Status for its Program.

Dietitians Australia does not accept liability for, or responsibility for, any Claims arising as a result of:

- the DNRC or the ART not understanding or seeking clarification of information tendered in support of an Accreditation Application, a Notification of Change or an Annual Report or any other report
- a University failing to obtain an Accreditation Status, whether at all or within the anticipated or expected timeline
- students of a University not being eligible to:
  - graduate from an accredited Dietetics education Program with the applicant University
  - become a member of Dietitians Australia with recognised Dietetics qualifications
  - join the APD Program (administered by the DNRC) which is only open to students who have graduated from an accredited Dietetics education Program.

# Section 5: Ongoing Accreditation requirements

## 5. Ongoing Accreditation requirements

### 5.1 Accreditation fees

Accreditation fees are based on a cost-recovery model and any fees for a Program's Accreditation or annual review are used for Accreditation related activities and services only.

There are two (2) fees relating to Accreditation:

1. an annual Program fee
2. an Accreditation fee.

An Accreditation Review will not commence until payment of the applicable fee has been received. An invoice will be issued by the Dietitians Australia RSU. Should a University require a purchase order number, they must advise the Dietitians Australia RSU of this in advance.

The fee schedule for Accreditation of Programs is available on the [Dietitians Australia website](https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au/working-dietetics/university-courses/accreditation-university-courses/accreditation-fees-and-charges). (<https://dietitiansaustralia.org.au/working-dietetics/university-courses/accreditation-university-courses/accreditation-fees-and-charges>)

Accreditation fees are determined by the Dietitians Australia RSU and are subject to change. Universities should budget for increases in line with consumer price index (weighted average of eight capital cities) for 'education group' (**CPI education**). All Accreditation fees are non-refundable and accrue to Dietitians Australia on application.

### 5.2 Condition report requirements

For a Program that is 'Accredited (with conditions)', the University may be required to submit the following:

- a report with further evidence to finalise the relevant stage of the Accreditation Review process
- an interim report detailing progression toward meeting the conditions
- a final report to provide evidence of meeting all conditions applied to the program.

The Accreditation report will include details of the reporting requirements and timelines.

### 5.3 Annual Reporting

For Programs that are 'Accredited (with conditions)' or 'Accredited', the University must submit an Annual Report to the DNRC via the method as advised by the Dietitians Australia RSU. The University will be notified of the annual reporting requirements at least three (3) months prior to the report being due. For Programs undergoing or soon to undergo Accreditation a modified annual report may be appropriate as advised by Dietitians Australia RSU.

The University will have the opportunity to provide minor updates in the Annual Report (see 5.4 Notification of changes to a program). The content of the Annual Report may be amended by DNRC as required.

The Annual Report serves as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure all Programs with these types of Accreditation continue to meet the Accreditation Standards during their period of Accreditation and for DNRC to provide feedback.

In the event the DNRC considers that the Annual Report identifies a risk of the Program not continuing to meet the Standards, the University will be notified with details of the reason for this failure and Dietitians Australia (through the DNRC).

## 5.4 Notification of changes to a Program

A University must notify the DNRC (via the Dietitians Australia RSU) of changes to a Program as outlined below. This includes a Program that is the subject of:

- an Accreditation Status
- an application for an Accreditation Status.

A University must notify the DNRC in writing of any changes, including but not limited to:

- any changes to the Program that may impact on the University's Accreditation or competence of graduates, such as, but not limited to staffing, enrolments, curriculum, placements and assessment
- any plans to discontinue the Program
- any required updates relating to the University's Program details displayed on the Dietitians Australia website.

The below table (Table 2) is a guide on what and when changes should be reported. If the University is unsure whether a change is 'major' or 'minor', they should contact the Dietitians Australia RSU to discuss, or else err on the side of caution and treat it as a 'major' change.

**Table 2 Major and minor changes and when to report**

Major change	Minor change
<p><b><u>When to notify DNRC</u></b></p> <p><b>Any Program that is the subject of an Accreditation Status and/or the application for an Accreditation Status must notify us in writing of any changes to the Program. This must be done prior to implementing the relevant change.</b></p> <p><b><u>How to notify DNRC</u></b></p> <p><b>Please provide written documentation to DNRC via the Dietitians Australia RSU. This should outline the change and impacts to meeting the Accreditation standards.</b></p>	<p><b><u>When and how to notify DNRC</u></b></p> <p>There is an opportunity to provide minor updates (including a response to previous Accreditation recommendations) in the Annual Report.</p>
<p><b>A major change in a Program includes any significant change to the existing Program or its delivery that may affect adherence to the Accreditation Standards or competence of graduates, such as, but not limited to staffing,</b></p>	<p>A minor change in a Program includes any foreseeable changes to a Program that do not impact the Program's Accreditation or competence of graduates due to factors such as staffing, enrolments, curriculum, placements and assessment.</p>

Major change	Minor change
<p><b>enrolments, curriculum, placements and assessment.</b></p> <p><b>A major change may include (but is not limited to) any one (1) or more of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>change in Program length</b></li> <li>• <b>change in award title</b></li> <li>• <b>significant changes in curriculum content (addition or removal of subjects) and/or structure of curriculum</b></li> <li>• <b>significant change in teaching methods and/or assessment</b></li> <li>• <b>significant increase in student numbers</b></li> <li>• <b>change in Discipline Lead</b></li> <li>• <b>significant change in resources (human and/or financial) for the delivery of the Program</b></li> <li>• <b>change in institutional setting including the addition of a geographical location at which the program is offered</b></li> <li>• <b>addition of an international placement setting.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>To determine if a change is deemed as a ‘major change’, DNRC may request further information. If there are one (1) or more major changes determined by DNRC, it may warrant a re-assessment of Accreditation Status.</b></p>	<p>A minor change may include (but is not limited to) any one (1) or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• change in degree name ONLY (without any changes to curriculum content)</li> <li>• change in teaching staff where there is minimal impact on ability to deliver the Program as it was accredited</li> <li>• change in placement sites/offering</li> <li>• change in student enrolments/numbers</li> <li>• changes in curriculum as part of ongoing quality improvement and assurance processes.</li> </ul>

#### 5.4.1 Assessment of a major change

Once the written documentation is submitted by the University regarding a ‘major change’, it is reviewed and assessed by the DNRC. An outcome will be determined and the University will be notified, including any additional reporting requirements.

### 5.5 Review of revision of an Accreditation Status

The DNRC may consider a review or revision of a Program’s Accreditation Status during its Accreditation period if:

- the University notifies the DNRC of one (1) or more major changes that will impact the Program’s delivery in line with the Accreditation Standards
- there are any changes outlined in the University’s Annual Report that will impact the Program’s delivery in line with the Accreditation Standards

- the University is unable to meet the conditions imposed within the allocated timeframe
- the University is unable to uphold the Accreditation requirements within their accreditation period.

A University will be notified in writing if any of the above circumstances occur. This will include details of the Accreditation requirements not being met and will provide the University the opportunity to meet the requirements within a specified timeframe.

If the DNRC deems that the requirements are not satisfactorily met within the specified timeframe, the Program's Accreditation Status may be suspended.

# Section 6: Changes to Accreditation and Accreditation Status

## 6. Changes to Accreditation and Accreditation Status

### 6.1 Events of default

For the purposes of section 6.2, it will be an 'event of default' if the University:

1. breaches its obligations under the Agreement
2. breaches its obligations under the Standards and/or Processes documents
3. fails to ensure that its Program/s adhere to the NCS and/or the Standards and/or the ongoing requirements for maintaining Accreditation
4. fails to ensure that students meet the NCS prior to graduation
5. supplies information which is, at the time of supply, misleading or which (if not correct) represents compliance where there is non-compliance
6. fails to provide information, reports or evidence requested by DNRC or ART within the period of time specified
7. fails to provide an Annual Report (on time or at all)
8. fails to adhere to the recommendations of the DNRC after notification of a major change
9. provides an Annual Report which identifies to the DNRC that any of the events in points 2 to 4 above has occurred or is occurring.

### 6.2 Consequences of default

If there is an 'event of default', the DNRC may take any one (1) of the following actions and must inform the University of its decision to do so:

1. suspend or terminate the process of Accreditation for the Program
2. (where the Program currently has an Accreditation Status):
  - a. suspend or withdraw that Accreditation Status
  - b. impose conditions on that Accreditation Status.

If the DNRC suspends the process of Accreditation, then written notice must be given to the University detailing:

1. the requirements which must be met for DNRC to consider reinstating the process of Accreditation
2. the timeframe in which the requirements must be satisfied
3. the additional fees (if any) which the University will incur for the additional processes which DNRC will have to undertake.

If the DNRC suspends the University's Accreditation Status the University can then meet with the Chair of the DNRC to discuss the suspension and draft a plan for re accreditation which would be brought back to DNRC for approval.

If the DNRC withdraws the University's Accreditation Status the University can re-apply for Accreditation at any time, should it wish to re-gain an Accreditation Status.

If the DNRC imposes conditions on the University's Accreditation Status the University can appeal the decision. If the conditions are not met within the time required, the DNRC may withdraw the Accreditation Status but the University may re-apply for Accreditation at any time, should it wish to re-gain an Accreditation Status.

# Section 7: Appeals process

## 7. Appeals process

### 7.1 Purpose

Given the significance of an Accreditation decision, the purpose of the appeal process is to ensure that Universities have a clear path to have the Accreditation decision reviewed and there is a time limit on the period in which such a review can be sought.

### 7.2 Grounds for appeal against an Accreditation decision

The appeal process is only applicable to new Programs given the Accreditation Status of either 'Not accredited' or for Programs seeking re-accreditation 'Not accredited' or 'Accredited (with conditions)'.

The grounds for an application to appeal an Accreditation decision are:

- the Accreditation Processes outlined in this document have not been followed
- information or evidence relevant to the Accreditation Application that was submitted by the University during the Accreditation Application that shows the University's Program meets or exceeds the applicable Standard(s) was not considered in the ART Accreditation report and/or the DNRC's recommendation or the Board's accreditation decision
- the ART Accreditation report and/or the DNRC's recommendation or the Board's Accreditation decision considered information which was irrelevant to whether the University's Program meets or exceeds the applicable Standard(s).

An appeal will not be considered based on:

- the University's dispute of the Accreditation Standards
- the University's dispute of any alteration to the Accreditation process and associated timelines based on the University's failure to meet required dates.

### 7.3 Process

#### 7.3.1 Prior to submitting an application for appeal

The University will have the opportunity to speak with the ART Chair or member, DNRC Chair/representative (if applicable) and a Dietitians Australia RSU member to discuss the final accreditation outcome/report, conditions, reporting requirements and/or ask any questions about the accreditation outcome/report. It is recommended that any concerns be discussed at this meeting prior to applying for an appeal.

The University acknowledges that:

- the purpose of this meeting is to facilitate open communication between the DNRC and the University to discuss the outcome of the Accreditation process, each party's position on the Accreditation decision and to ascertain whether there are any matters in dispute and whether that can be resolved
- the DNRC cannot change the Accreditation decision through the meeting process
- whilst the DNRC believes it is beneficial to participate in such a meeting, there is no obligation on the University to attend the meeting.

### 7.3.2 Submitting an application for appeal

- An application for appeal must be received in writing by the Dietitians Australia RSU within thirty (30) Business Days of the University being notified of the Board's Accreditation decision. This must include the grounds for appeal, written submissions as to why the University's Program met the Standards for Accreditation and any supporting evidence. The University may submit additional evidence (not previously made available to the Dietitians Australia RSU in the accreditation process) provided it is directly relevant to the Accreditation Application.
- Receipt of the University's appeal will be acknowledged by the Dietitians Australia RSU within five (5) Business Days.
- Within ten (10) Business Days of receipt of the appeal application, an administrative review will be undertaken of the grounds of appeal and supporting evidence by the Dietitians Australia RSU or a delegate.
  - If the University's appeal falls within one of the grounds for appeal, the review will proceed as outlined below under the heading 'Appeal Review'.
  - If the University's appeal does not fall within one of the grounds for appeal, the application will be rejected and the University will be notified, including reasons for rejecting the appeal application.

### 7.3.3 Appeal review

Within ten (10) Business Days of the administrative review (referred to in the paragraph immediately above), the DNRC will appoint three (3) individuals to sit on the Accreditation Appeal Panel (AAP) and notify the University of the appointment. This will consist of:

- three (3) eligible reviewer pool members (at least one (1) being a DNRC member, where feasible) who have not been involved in the Accreditation review process
- one (1) Dietitians Australia RSU member (who holds a secretariat function only, with no decision-making power).

The University has five (5) Business Days (after notification of the AAP members) to request a review of one (1) or more of the AAP members should the University identify an actual or potential (professional or personal) conflict. The request will be reviewed by a DNRC member and if a conflict is identified, an alternative AAP member appointed.

After five (5) Business Days of notification of the AAP members to the University, the Dietitians Australia RSU will send the AAP all relevant materials to review, including but not limited to, the original application and appendices, any relevant additional information provided by the University throughout the Accreditation process, the final accreditation report and the University's application for appeal and supporting evidence.

The AAP will convene and consider the information provided. The AAP may request additional information at any point of the appeal process.

#### 7.3.4 Appeal outcome

The AAP will determine whether:

- the original Accreditation decision will be upheld (and the appeal dismissed)
- the original Accreditation decision should be overturned, in which case it will also determine which Accreditation Status should be given to the University.

The AAP must make this decision within sixty (60) Business Days of receiving the materials from the Dietitians Australia RSU (see 7.3.3 Process 'Appeal review').

The Dietitians Australia RSU will inform the University of the decision within ten (10) Business Days of the AAP's decision.

# Appendices

## Appendix A – Reviewer Terms of Reference

### Accreditation reviewers

#### Purpose

Reviewers are responsible for the assessment of Accreditation Applications as detailed in the Accreditation Processes for Dietetics Education Programs.

ARTs review and assess evidence against the Accreditation Standards for Dietetics Education Programs and provide recommendations to the DNRC on a Program's compliance to the relevant Accreditation Standards.

#### Role of reviewers

Reviewers appointed to an ART are required to:

- prepare for and actively participate in a Desktop Review
- participate in regular ART videoconferences
- assist with preparing and reviewing requests for further information/clarification
- assess available evidence against the relevant Accreditation Standards
- attend and contribute to a two (2)-day site visit, where necessary
- contribute to the final ART report and recommendations
- assist with assessment of documentation submitted post review (including condition reports), if required
- participate in the Accreditation Appeal Panel (AAP) when required.

To be appointed to an ART, reviewers must first be appointed by the DNRC to the reviewer group via application against the selection criteria set out below.

#### Selection criteria

##### Essential

1. Currently of full APD status for at least five (5) years and extensive experience in the profession.
2. An in-depth understanding of the preparation of dietitians for practice and the evidence from which dietetics education is based upon.
3. Strong analytical skills, with the ability to assess complex information, identify underlying issues.
4. Proven ability to effectively collaborate with diverse teams, fostering an environment of mutual respect, open communication, and shared decision-making.

##### Desirable

1. Advanced APD
2. Experience in Accreditation assessment processes

3. Post-graduate qualifications in higher education or health professional education.

### **Term**

Reviewers are appointed for a three (3)-year period with the option to extend for a further two (2) years.

### **Responsibility and reporting**

Reviewers appointed may be selected to participate in a minimum of two (2) reviews in a twelve (12)-month period.

Reviewers appointed to an ART are responsible to the DNRC via the Dietitians Australia RSU.

All ARTs are considered current until all necessary reporting requirements have been completed to the DNRC's satisfaction.

### **Accreditation Review Team (ART)**

#### **Composition**

A minimum of three (3) Reviewers and one (1) optional non-APD expert will be appointed by the DNRC to an Accreditation Review Team.

**Chairperson:** The ART Chair is responsible for the leadership of the ART and for ensuring key tasks are completed to an acceptable professional standard within the required time frame.

#### **plus**

#### **Members:**

- One (1) dietetics DNRC member or one member from the reviewer group
- One (1) reviewer pool member
- An optional non-APD expert.

## Appendix B – Notification of Intention for a New Program

### Notification of Intention for a New Program

This information must be submitted at least eighteen (18) months prior to the intended commencement date of the program, as per the Processes for the Accreditation of Dietetics Education Programs.

#### University details

<b>University</b>	
<b>Mailing address</b>	
<b>Name and title of Program leader/Program developer (this person should be the main point of contact)</b>	
<b>Contact number</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	

#### Program details

<b>Name of the new Program to be accredited</b>	
<b>Type of degree</b>	Undergraduate/Postgraduate
<b>Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) level</b>	
<b>Number of years of Program</b>	
<b>Campuses where the Program will be delivered (please include physical address)</b> <b>Please add additional sites as required</b>	1. 2.
<b>Anticipated date to commence new program</b>	

Please email this to Dietitians Australia, Regulatory Services at [regulation@dietitiansaustralia.org.au](mailto:regulation@dietitiansaustralia.org.au).

## Appendix C – Application template

Please refer to the Dietitians Australia website to access the Application template.

This will also be provided by the Dietitians Australia RSU at the time of Accreditation.