

Factsheet

Specialist medical college accreditation of training settings– September 2026

Accreditation standards and procedures used by specialist medical colleges to accredit training settings are changing

All colleges are implementing model accreditation standards, which are the same across the 16 AMC-accredited specialist medical colleges. These model standards have been endorsed by Australian Health Ministers and approved by the Medical Council of New Zealand.

All colleges are implementing changes to their accreditation procedures to include agreed requirements for:

- observing procedural fairness
- using common terminology for accreditation decisions
- using a risk framework for making accreditation decisions.

Why are accreditation standards changing?

In 2023, the Australian National Health Practitioner Ombudsman (NHPO) released a [report](#) on the accreditation of training settings by specialist medical colleges. The NHPO made 22 recommendations to improve college accreditation processes.

In 2023, Australian Health Ministers issued a [Policy Direction 2023-01](#) under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law. The Policy Direction requires the Medical Board of Australia and the AMC to work with colleges to implement the recommendations of the NHPO report and standardise accreditation processes.

Given that most of the 16 AMC-accredited specialist medical colleges are bi-national and a number of the issues raised in the NHPO report have also been raised by Aotearoa New Zealand health service stakeholders, the AMC has been working with the Medical Council of New Zealand and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora to ensure the smooth implementation of project outcomes across bi-national training programs.

The AMC has been leading a collaborative [project](#) in conjunction with specialist medical colleges, Australian health departments, the Medical Council of New Zealand and Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora to implement the NHPO's recommendations and comply with the Australian Ministerial Policy Direction.

What are the outcomes of the project?

The AMC has worked with colleges to develop:

- new [model standards](#) for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings
- new [model procedures](#) for specialist medical college accreditation of training settings.

Implementing the model standards

Australian Health Ministers have endorsed the model standards, and all 16 AMC-accredited specialist medical colleges have agreed to adopt them. The Medical Council of New Zealand has also approved the model standards for use by bi-national colleges to accredit training settings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The first colleges went live with the new model standards in 2026 with all other colleges working towards adoption of the new standards by February 2028.

Implementing the model procedures

All 16 AMC-accredited specialist medical colleges have also agreed to adopt specific aspects of the model procedures, including:

- observing procedural fairness
- using common terminology for accreditation decisions
- using a risk framework for making accreditation decisions.

About the model standards

The model standards are **outcomes-based**, rather than process-based. They require college accreditation teams to assess whether a training setting meets certain outcomes related to training, rather than whether the setting follows specific processes. To assist colleges and training settings, the AMC has published guidance on how colleges can assess certain criteria in the model standards, these include:

- [Guidance on assessing structured learning](#)
- [Guidance on assessing supervision](#)
- [Guidance on assessing standards relating to cultural safety and delivery of culturally safe care.](#)

The AMC has provided a range of additional resources to support colleges and accreditation teams in Australia in implementing the model accreditation approach on its [Resource Hub](#).

What does this mean for college accreditation of training settings?

All college accreditation teams must use the model standards in place of previous college accreditation standards when accrediting training settings. This must occur from the implementation date agreed by each college. If you are not aware of a college's implementation date, please check with the relevant college. In addition,

- all college accreditation teams must now comply with rules of **procedural fairness** when making accreditation decisions
- all accreditation teams must use the agreed **common terminology** for accreditation decisions
- all college accreditation teams must use the **risk framework** to guide their accreditation decisions
- all colleges and training settings in Australia must comply with the [Communication Protocol](#) agreed between colleges and Australian Health Departments in respect of the accreditation of public health settings in Australia. A Communication Protocol for use in Aotearoa New Zealand is being finalised.

What do I need to know?

All college accreditation teams and training settings should become familiar with the changes. Each college is publishing the model standards. Some colleges have college-specific requirements (CSRs), which have been approved by the AMC for use in Australia and included in that college's publication of the model standards. Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora is liaising with colleges directly about the use of these CSRs in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Many colleges are also publishing supporting materials to assist accreditation teams and training settings to understand the application of the model standards to their specialties. These documents should be accessible on each college's website, or you can enquire directly with the relevant college.

Colleges are updating their accreditation procedures documents to incorporate the requirements regarding procedural fairness, common accreditation terminology and the use of the risk framework.

Where do I go for more information?

For a copy of the model standards, model procedures and supporting documentation published by the AMC, go to the [Model Accreditation Approach - Resource Hub](#).

For a copy of each college's model standards document, accreditation procedures document and any supporting resources, visit the relevant college's website or enquire directly with the college.