

HPAC Forum Terms of Reference (2026)

1. Purpose

1.1 The HPAC Forum provides strategic leadership, system-wide coordination and shared services across the accreditation functions of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (NRAS).

1.2 The Forum works to:

- Promote excellence, quality and safety, including cultural safety, in accreditation standards, processes and outcomes
- Promote alignment in accreditation practices where appropriate, while recognising and safeguarding profession-specific approaches arising from distinct scopes of practice, risk profiles and regulatory requirements
- Support collaborative approaches to policy development and service delivery that reduce duplication and contribute to workforce growth and education system improvement
- Strengthen relationships and shared advocacy with the Independently Chaired Accreditation Committee, National Boards, Ahpra, education providers, governments, and other key stakeholders
- Facilitate joint initiatives, shared resources, and collective positions that enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of accreditation processes and outcomes.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 The HPAC Forum is guided by the following principles:

- Inclusivity, respect, and equity in participation, representation, and decision-making
- Commitment to cultural safety, including meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Responsiveness to the strategic direction of NRAS, with a focus on reducing duplication and strengthening efficiency in accreditation
- Transparency, accountability and responsible stewardship of shared information and data
- Collaborative and future-focused approaches that support innovation and continuous improvement in accreditation
- Respect for the autonomy of member organisations, while working collectively towards shared goals and system-wide impact.

3. Membership

3.1 Membership comprises accreditation authorities appointed under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law.

3.2 The HPAC Forum may establish Associate Membership or Observer status for organisations by agreement of Members.

- Each member authority may nominate up to two Members to attend meetings; additional attendees may be accommodated for specific agenda items or to support Member transition (subject to the approval of the Chair or Deputy Chair).

3.3 A Member may be represented at a meeting by another representative of the member accreditation authority.

3.4 Processes for membership applications, changes, or cessation will be managed by the Secretariat and approved by the HPAC Forum.

3.5 Member accreditation authorities contribute financially in accordance with an agreed and periodically reviewed funding formula.

4. Office Bearers

- The HPAC Forum will elect a Chair and Deputy Chair for a two-year term, renewable once. Elections may be held simultaneously or staggered to facilitate continuity and efficient transition of leadership.
- The Chair is appointed as an Independent Chair to manage the risk of perceived conflicts of interest and to ensure the role holder can act in the best interests of the Forum as a whole. The Chair's accreditation authority may nominate an alternative representative to the Forum for the duration of the term. Office bearers may continue in their role regardless of employment changes, subject to Forum approval.

4.1 Roles include strategic leadership, external representation, dispute resolution, and oversight of Executive Officer and secretariat performance.

5. Executive Officer, Secretariat and Communications

5.1 The HPAC Forum is supported by an Executive Officer who provides strategic and representation support, and secretariat services and operational coordination to enable the effective functioning of the Forum.

5.2 Secretariat responsibilities include governance, administrative and project support, including meeting coordination, communications, record-keeping, website and digital platform management, budget coordination and stewardship of information and data.

- Certain operational services supporting the Forum are provided under an auspicing arrangement with a member of the Forum. This arrangement, established collaboratively by Forum Members, enables the effective operation of the Forum and is delivered in accordance with an agreement between the auspicing organisation and member accreditation authorities.

5.3 Digital platforms are used to support collaboration, document management and communication.

5.4 All official communications relating to Forum business are coordinated through, or copied to, the Secretariat to ensure transparency, consistency and appropriate record-keeping.

6. Meetings

6.1 The Forum will meet five times a year with additional meetings as needed.

6.2 A quorum is met when at least 50 per cent of member authorities are represented.

6.3 Meeting papers should be circulated at least five business days in advance.

6.4 Meeting hosting responsibilities (venue or virtual facilitation) will be shared among members.

7. Decision Making

7.1 The Forum will seek consensus; if consensus is not possible, decisions may be made by a simple majority of member authorities.

- Decisions may be made at meetings or via written resolution (email or digital platform).

7.3 Decisions required between meetings may be made on behalf of the Forum, in accordance with a separate *Delegation of Authority and Decision-Making Framework* approved by the Forum

8. Declaration of Interest

8.1 Members must declare all actual, potential, or perceived conflicts annually and at each meeting.

8.2 The Forum will apply transparent management processes, including potential recusal from discussion or decision.

8.3 The Secretariat maintains the *Declaration of Interests* register.

9. Position Papers and Joint Statements

9.1 Position Papers may be developed by the Forum or member authorities and endorsed by agreement.

9.2 Projects requiring resources will be approved with clear scopes, responsibilities, and funding allocation.

9.3 Position Papers will be published on the Forum website unless otherwise agreed.

10. Stakeholder Engagement

10.1 The Chair, Deputy Chair or nominated representatives may engage externally on behalf of the Forum.

10.2 Stakeholder meetings may be integrated into Forum agendas.

10.3 Representatives must report back to the Forum in a timely manner.

11. External Representation

- 11.1 Appointments to external bodies require Forum approval.
- 11.2 Representatives must reflect endorsed Forum positions and provide updates to Members.

12. Review

- 12.1 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years or earlier if required.
- 12.2 Amendments require approval by the Forum.

Version	Date	Changes	Author	Approved by
1.0	23/05/2008	Issue	Forum Secretariat	HPAC Forum
2.0	15/12/2019	Update	Forum Secretariat	HPAC Forum
2.1	18/01/2020	Update	Forum Secretariat	HPAC Forum
2.2	31/03/2026	Update	Forum Executive Officer, Chair and Deputy Chair	HPAC Forum