



SET University Visit Guide For Universities

Accreditation and Assessment of Postgraduate
Mental Health Nursing Programs

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Acknowledgements

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This SET University Visit Guide is provided for the information of University staff responsible for co-ordination of the Site Evaluation Team (SET) visit as part of the accreditation process.

The Guide will be updated as required as required to reflect policy and/or procedural changes with regards to SET site visit arrangements



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Accreditation Process and Assessment

Purpose and Aims of Accreditation

1) Accreditation as a quality assurance mechanism

Firstly, accreditation is an external process of evaluation to make sure that the educational standards of any one Postgraduate mental health nursing program meet accepted standards.

Secondly, it is a quality assurance process to ensure that postgraduate programs:

- Are responsive to the needs of industry, the profession and communities, with consistent and acceptable educational standards;
- Are aligned to meet the professional standards; and
- Prepare graduates who are competent to practice safely and effectively.

2) The aims of program accreditation

In summary, these assessment and accreditation processes aim to:

1. Recognise Postgraduate Mental Health Nursing education programs that produce graduates competent to practise safely and effectively as specialists in the mental health environment.
2. Provide external independent assurance of the quality of higher education Postgraduate Mental Health Nursing education programs, based on explicit educational standards.
3. Encourage internal self-evaluation and quality assurance in teaching and learning.
4. Respect the academic autonomy of each education provider and encourage diversity in education programs.
5. Facilitate a system of evaluation and quality improvement towards achieving excellent outcomes for Postgraduate Mental Health Nursing education programs in response to community need and professional practice.
6. Provide a qualified mental health nurse whose work practices protect the consumer of the service (members of the public).
7. Maintain and further partnerships and collaboration between employers and higher education providers.

Guiding Principles of the Assessment and Accreditation Process

The following principles are applied in the process of review. The process of accreditation should:

1. Be based on the principle of equity and justice in that the profession, health service and the community should be assured that the standards will be interpreted fairly and without bias;
2. Be confidential with no information disclosed without the consent of both the educational institution involved and the accreditation body;
3. Encourage self-assessment and internal quality assurance processes;
4. Respect the academic autonomy of each education provider;
5. Be efficient and effective and lead to quality improvement;
6. Espouse standards that are realistic and relevant to the context of providers;
7. Align with higher education review processes such as *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency* (TEQSA);
8. Provide independent quality assurance.

Site Evaluation Team Visit

The Site Evaluation Team (SET) will be authorised by the Chair of the Accreditation Committee (AC) on behalf of the ACMHN to visit the higher education provider for the purpose of activities in connection with program accreditation. The SET will consist of suitably qualified people with experience in the organisation and structure of mental health related Postgraduate education programs and / or accreditation processes along with an understanding of the current professional requirements for practice in the specialty of mental health nursing.

Generally the SET will comprise participants drawn from the following:

- A member of the accreditation administrative team;
- An ACMHN member who has senior clinical administration experience; and
- A member who has experience of university program accreditation and/or related quality assurance.

SET members are also required to:

- Disclose any conflicts of interest;
- Sign a confidentiality agreement; and
- Abide by the ACMHN Code of Conduct applicable to Evaluation Team Members.

Team Member Roles

The ACMHN Accreditation Committee will appoint one member of the SET to act as Chair who will be the team leader through the visit. Professional members will use their expertise and experience in education (learning and teaching), accreditation and professional practice to evaluate the information provided in the University application and presented during the visit.

1) SET Chair

- Is SET Leader of team throughout review.
- Is aware of the aims/objectives of each session.
- Introduces each session and the SET members.
- Determines need for extra documentation or examination of issues.
- Closes each session.
- At end of SET visit provide overall feedback to HOS and program members.

2) Professional Members

- Are aware of the aims/objectives of each session.
- Actively participate in the interview process particularly when:
 - Assessing / reviewing program governance, funding and resources;
 - Assessing / reviewing external relationships with the sector;
 - Assessing / reviewing curriculum against the education standards;
 - Assessing / reviewing mental health nursing practice elements of curriculum; and
 - Assessing / reviewing professional placements processes.

3) Accreditation Manager

- Arranges all SET visit with University co-ordinator.
- Confirms program/agenda.
- Participates in the interview process as required by the SET Chair.
- Ensures consistency in the accreditation process.
- Manages SET logistics during visit.
- Co-ordinates 'SET Accreditation Report' completion in conjunction with SET Chair and Members.
- Co-ordinates ongoing contact/communication with University.
- May participate as a 'Professional Member' when appointed by SET Chair.

Developing the Site Visit Program

The visit schedule should be organised in cooperation between with the University's nominated representative and the Accreditation Manager covering the following elements. The Accreditation Manager is generally available to resolve any issues with the program in consultation with the University's SET visit co-ordinator.

1) Interviews

During the visit, the SET will normally meet with the following individuals/groups and ask them questions about the program/s and how they meet the Accreditation standards. Before the visit, the SET members will have received the documents relating to the program/s. This information forms the basis of the discussions that will be held with these individuals/ groups.

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It is the University's responsibility to make sure that the appropriate individuals are available to meet the SET. The following table is provided as a guide for use in the program development.

Interviews	Area of Focus	Example Interviewee Position
Executive / Senior Management	This meeting is designed to establish the position of the program in School's strategic / business plan and to explore governance and how the program is managed/delivered overall including issues of funding, staffing and providing resources. This meeting involves those people responsible for strategic areas of the program.	Dean/Head of Faculty Associate Dean Head of School Head of Department Program/Course Co-ordinator
Consumers and Students	The purpose of these meetings/interviews is to get consumers and students' views of their experiences of the program/s provided and of the University as the provider. For an existing program/s, this will include consumers and students from a range of years and should include past students who are now employed graduates if possible. These meetings will not involve members of the program team.	Consumer representatives Student Representatives of each year of the program
Program Team	This is the team responsible for delivering the program/s and will include the program leader/co-coordinator in a separate meeting. ----- Tutors, lecturers and sessional staff and consumers where available in a separate meeting. The discussion will focus mainly on program development, delivering the program, students' experiences, curriculum content and assessment and support for placements, graduate abilities mapping to learning outcomes / assessment. This meeting does not include the Program Co-ordinator.	Program/Course Co-ordinator ----- Year Co-ordinators Academic Staff and other team members
Professional Placement Personnel Providers Placement Educators/Supervisors	Meeting the co-ordinators of units requiring professional placement and providers: Discussions will focus mainly on issues such as assessment, monitoring, health and safety, student support and placement support.	Professional Placement / Practical Experience Co-ordinator ----- Coordinators / Supervisors
Learning & Teaching, Research	This meeting is with the person responsible for learning and teaching program research activities. The discussion will focus on the research agenda, capability, types of research, linkages to teaching & learning.	Learning & Teaching, Research representatives
Administrative Support	This meeting is with the staff responsible for providing administrative support to the program. The discussion will focus on support provided to the program and confirming that they are sufficient to meet the program delivery needs.	Program Administrative Staff

2) Facilities / Resources

The SET will also require to be shown the key program support facilities and resources that are available to students and the program team to effectively deliver the program/s provided.

Facilities	Area of Focus	Example Interviewee Position
Library Laboratories Simulation Lecture/Teaching	During the tour the SET will expect to see the facilities used to support teaching and learning. The SET will also expect to see the subject-specific teaching and specific clinical skills suites where relevant.	Library Staff/Laboratory Staff/IT Staff

3) SET Private Discussion

As the SET is evaluating the mental health nursing program/s for accreditation by the ACMHN, the SET will also hold private discussions throughout the visit to decide on the areas of the program/s that may need to further exploration while on site.

The site visit schedule should allow for free time for SET discussion and deliberation incorporated into the lunch and morning/afternoon tea breaks.

4) Program Timing

Timeframes for interviews will vary however in general they should be based on the following:

- Half an hour with individual's (one-on-one)
- Half to three quarters of an hour for more than one person together at an interview
- One hour for 6-8 students

5) Requests for Additional Information

Requests from SET members for further information and/or requests to interview additional staff or re-interview staff are directed through the Accreditation Manager who consults with the site visit convenor, to facilitate such requests.

University staff/students can make a presentation when agreed to by the SET as part of the agreed program.

The purpose of the visit is to validate information and data already available to the SET. Where agreed to, by the SET Chair, any additional information required can be provided for review as part of the scheduled activities.

ALL information, written and oral relating to accreditation is **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Provider and Program Elements

During the site visit the SET will also consider the following general provider and program elements derived from the CAA Accreditation Guidelines section 3. These generic provider and program elements will be used as general considerations by the SET to assist in the development of the final 'SET Accreditation Report'.

- 1. School Mission / Vision / Strategic Intent**
(3.1.1)
- 2. Governance / University Structure / Organisational and External Relationships**
(3.1.1+3.1.4+3.1.5+3.1.6+3.1.11+3.4.6)
- 3. Resources and Facilities**
(3.1.3+3.4.7+3.4.9)
- 4. Academic Staff**
(3.1.2+3.1.7+3.1.8+3.1.9+3.1.10+3.4.8)
- 5. Curriculum**
(3.2.1+3.2.2+3.2.3+3.3.1+3.3.2+3.3.4)
- 6. Quality Assurance**
(3.3.5)
- 7. Students**
(3.3.3+3.3.5+3.4.1+3.4.2+3.4.3+3.4.4+5)
- 8. Graduates**
(3.2.2+3.2.3+3.2.4)

General Information

There are a large number of standards against which the SET must evaluate the program, so the SET will need to gather information to support the documents you have already provided. The SET will do this by asking questions of various groups, viewing facilities, and listening to presentations. Any tour, presentations or questions will support your documents, and not replace them.

The SET will accept the provision of extra documents and/or directions on access to internal websites at the visit. In fact, the SET may even ask for extra information. However, you should consider this to be supplementary information only. You are asked not to provide too much, as it is unreasonable to ask the SET to read large amounts of information during the visit and this may result delays in processing the accreditation recommendation.

Professional Placements

It is essential that students have opportunities to participate in a broad range of professional learning experiences. Universities must provide evidence that the program includes experience that provides opportunities to develop the graduate abilities.

- The Site Evaluation Team (SET) will need to be assured that:
- All students have access to professional mental health nursing experience.
- That there is agreement in place for the students that employers will provide opportunities for Work-integrated Learning. Examples of evidence of meeting this requirement may include:
 - An example of a learning contract and appropriate agreement from the workplace.
 - A schedule for simulated practice activities within the program.
 - Written clinical agreements and/or letters of intent from all professional education sites.

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Graduate Outcomes

The ACMHN has provided a set of desirable graduate abilities within the National Framework for Postgraduate Studies in Mental Health Nursing. The Universities must provide evidence through the collection and evaluation of assessment data that graduates of their program/s demonstrate the abilities as defined in the National Framework.

Evidence required to meet this expectation:

- The University is able to show it has undertaken evaluations of student abilities at each stage in the program/s and those of its graduates (in collaboration with their employers).
- The University is able to show it has responded appropriately to the results of these evaluations in order to continually improve and have confidence in the standard of its graduates.

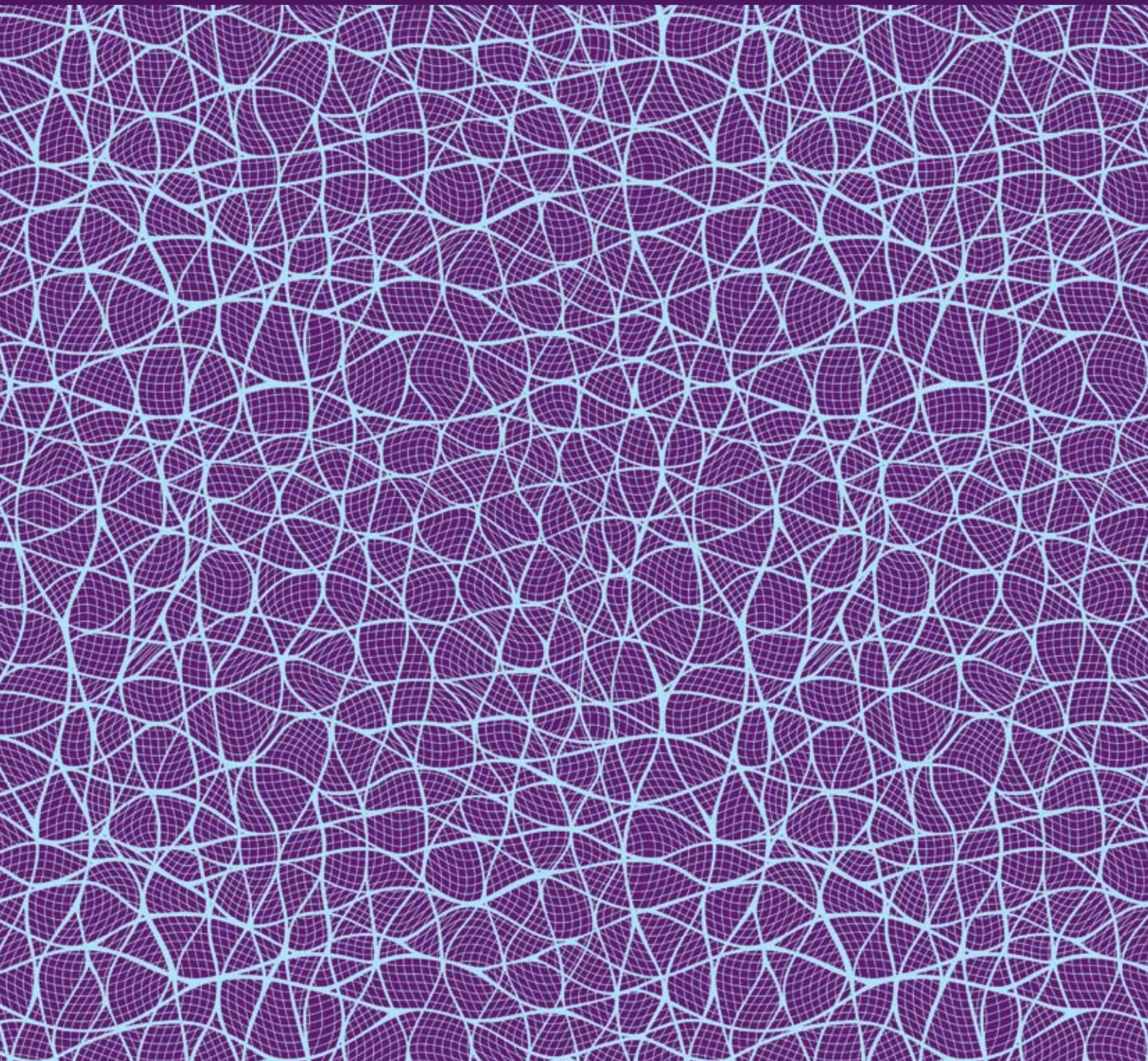
Examples of evidence may include:

- Assessment tasks and results
- Student self-reported attainment of the abilities
- Course experience questionnaires and other surveys
- Annual surveys of graduates and employers
- Data on response rates to surveys in relation to course student ftes
- On-going quality activities
- Comparison data over time and analysis
- Feedback mechanisms
- Plans and action taken to address issues highlighted through the analysis of the data collected
- Other review methods and associated reports

Supporting Information / Evidence Examples

The following list provides examples of the sort of information that may be provided by Universities in support of their application for accreditation as evidence of meeting the education standards for paramedic programs provided in Guideline 3.

- Mission statement
- Strategic plan
- University, Faculty, School and/or Dept. organisation charts.
- Material resources
- Capital equipment list
- Quality Assurance Plan
- Staff/student ratio numbers
- Learning, research and practice objectives
- Policies and procedures – academic matters
- Policies and procedures – recruitment, selection and appointment of academic staff
- Policies and procedures – student admissions and assessment
- Risk management plans – OH&S, disaster, business recovery plans with regards to loss or disruption to infrastructure, IT resources, personnel.
- Profiles of academic staff and other university academic staff teaching in the paramedic program.
- Staff list – course coordinators, year coordinators, etc.
- Subject outlines
- Mapping of assessment to indicative curriculum
- Professional placements information
- Details of student support services
- Learning outcomes statements
- Committee membership lists – indicating representation on relevant committees



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