O-54 Accreditation Guide

December 2025| Version 2.3

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Document Control

Document Details

Document ID:	O-54
Version:	2.3
Status:	APPROVED
Classification:	Unclassified
File Location:	Intranet
Effective Date:	December 2025
Approved By:	Chief Standards Officer
Next Review Date:	December 2026

Custodian Details

Managed By:	Professional Services - Accreditation
Document Custodian:	Chief Standards Officer
Responsible Officer:	Director Accreditation and Standards

Version Control History

Version	Release Date	Remarks	Revision Class (Major/Minor/No Change)	Author
1.0	Apr 2021	Inaugural	New	K Spencer
1.1	Oct 2021	Updates incl. further clarification of the process for initial accreditation and removing New Zealand program accreditation references.	Minor	J Bassell
1.2	May 2022	Updates incl. accreditation terminology	Minor	J Bassell

Version	Release Date	Remarks	Revision Class (Major/Minor/No Change)	Author
		changes and structure of document.		
1.3	Aug 2022	Minor updates.	Minor	J Bassell
2.0	Sep 2023	Removing New Zealand from accreditation standards title, adding pharmacist education programs and other minor updates.	Major	J Bassell
2.1	Dec 2023	Minor updates to pharmacist education program types.	Minor	J Bassell
2.2	January 2024	Amendments to Address	Minor	A Turello
2.3	December 2025	Amendment to provider response to accreditation report. Addition of timeline appendix.	Minor	K Barwick

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Term
AC	Accreditation Committee
ACOP	Aged Care On-site Pharmacist
Ahpra	Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency
APC	Australian Pharmacy Council
ASQA	Australian Skills Quality Authority
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EOI	Expression of Interest
ITP	Intern Training Program
MMR	Medication Management Review
MR	Monitoring Requirement
NoC	Notification of Change
National Scheme	National Registration and Accreditation Scheme
PharmBA	Pharmacy Board of Australia
PO	Performance Outcome
QA	Quality Assurance
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Accreditation Guide

1. Purpose

This guide describes the accreditation processes used by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC).

2. Background

2.1. The role of APC

APC is the national accreditation authority for pharmacy education and training. We accredit pharmacy programs which lead to registration against the *Accreditation Standards for Pharmacy Programs* on behalf of PharmBA under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (National Scheme).

We also accredit:

- international pharmacy degree programs
- pharmacist education programs in speciality areas of practice

2.2. Purpose of accreditation

We accredit programs by reviewing them to confirm that they meet outcome focused, evidence-based standards.

Accreditation standards assure the quality of programs and ensure that program graduates are able to meet defined performance outcomes (POs). We maintain our accreditation standards to ensure they are robust and contemporary.

2.2.1. Programs that lead to registration

To be eligible to become a registered pharmacist, individuals must complete an APC accredited and PharmBA approved degree program of study.

Graduates of programs that qualify them to apply for provisional registration with PharmBA (by training and assessing them against Milestone 1 of the Performance Outcomes) are then required to meet the PharmBA Supervised Practice Arrangements Registration Standard. This includes a period of supervised practice, completing an accredited intern training program (ITP) and undertaking the registration exams.

Pharmacy programs that train and assess graduates against Milestone 2 of the Performance Outcomes may be accredited as a single, 'integrated' program. These programs meet the qualification requirements for graduates to apply for general registration with PharmBA. Graduates of accredited and approved integrated pharmacy programs are required to complete all the PharmBA registration requirements, including examinations.

See the current list of APC accredited programs and PharmBA's list of approved programs that lead to registration.

2.2.2. Graduates of APC accredited international degree programs

APC accreditation of an international degree program does not lead to approval as a registerable pharmacist qualification by PharmBA.

All graduates of APC accredited international degree programs who wish to apply for registration in Australia are required to apply via our existing skills assessment process and PharmBA's registration process.

2.3. Other regulatory requirements

In addition to meeting our accreditation requirements and PharmBA approval requirements (where applicable), education providers delivering accredited programs may also need to meet the regulatory requirements of other statutory bodies. They include:

- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA)

We regard the role of accreditation as an integral part of the higher education quality framework. We expect pharmacy schools to have in place mechanisms for self-review consistent with universities' quality frameworks and TEQSA requirements.

We are mindful of avoiding excessive 'overlap' with other statutory bodies when gathering information as part of the accreditation process. However, we reserve the right to ensure that we are able to conduct our reviews in a manner which allows us to inquire into any aspect of education providers, and to allow us to make independent recommendations and conclusions.

3. Accreditation standards

We accredit a range of programs against specific accreditation standards.

They are each accompanied by a Performance Outcomes Framework and Evidence Guide.

4. Accreditation decision making

4.1. Accreditation Committee (AC)

Our AC makes decisions on program accreditation. For programs that lead to registration, these decisions align with the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law ('National Law').

The AC meets up to 6 times each year and operates in accordance with our Board's *Accreditation Committee By-Law*. The AC's activities include the following:

- accreditation **decisions** for Australian programs
- accreditation **recommendations** to the APC Board for international degree programs for them to make an accreditation **decision**

AC membership includes individuals with relevant expertise across the pharmacy profession, academia, and the community, as outlined in the By-Law. This enables the AC to make robust accreditation decisions and recommendations.

Our staff provide advice to the AC based on evidence and precedence to allow them to make their accreditation decisions. The AC reports to the APC Board through the APC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) when required.

4.1.1. Notification of accreditation decisions

We notify education providers of **accreditation decisions** via an Accreditation Outcome Notification (AON) within 10 business days of the decision.

Conditions and/or monitoring requirements (if applicable) will be provided, including reporting due dates. These will require remediation and/or reporting to the AC.

We publish a list of accredited programs on our website.

4.1.1.1. Australian degree programs

For the purpose of the registration of graduates with PharmBA, an accredited Australian degree program must also be **approved** by the PharmBA.

We provide degree program AONs to the PharmBA for their approval under National Law. Approval of a program by PharmBA cannot take place until after a program has been accredited by us.

For the PharmBA Approved Programs of Study list, please see the Ahpra website.

4.1.1.2. Intern training programs (ITPs)

We provide ITP AONs to PharmBA.

4.2. Accreditation Committee Decision Making Framework

The AC uses our *Accreditation Committee Decision Making Framework* to make accreditation decisions which ensures the consistency of decision making processes.

4.2.1. Accreditation definitions

The AC decides the accreditation status for a program based on the following terms:

Accreditation status	Definition
Accredited	The program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, **meet** an approved accreditation standard for the profession *The program does not have any conditions applied.* *The program may or may not have MRs applied. The provider must report against any MRs.* ***"Meet"*** – The program and provider have provided clear, substantiated evidence of full compliance with all criteria in the accreditation standards as per s.48(1)(a) of the National Law. The program has in place a curriculum, assessments, resourcing, governance and student support to produce

Accreditation status	Definition
	graduates who are aligned with professional competencies and public safety outcomes. The APC's overall risk profile for the provider and program as determined by the APC Accreditation Committee in accordance with the APC Decision Making Framework has been assessed as LOW. Programs that fully meet the APC's Accreditation Standards are listed as 'accredited' here and as approved programs by the PharmBA here. Graduates of programs that ***meet*** the accreditation standards are qualified for registration with Ahpra.
Accredited with conditions*	The program of study, and the education provider that provides the program of study, **substantially meet** an approved accreditation standard for the profession and the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure the program meets the standard within a reasonable time. Education providers can still deliver these programs, and students/interns/learners can complete them with the listed qualification. *The program has at least one condition applied. The provider must report to us as required.* *The program may or may not have MRs applied. The provider must report against any MRs.* ***"Substantially meet"*** – The program and provider have demonstrated incomplete compliance with a number of criteria in the accreditation standards as per s.48(1)(b) of the National Law. The provider has submitted sufficient, substantiated evidence that full compliance with all accreditation criteria will be achieved within a reasonable timeframe. The provider's incomplete compliance with the accreditation criteria is limited, reversible and does not compromise student or public safety. The provider can achieve full compliance by addressing the conditions placed on the program by APC. The APC's overall risk profile for the provider and program as determined by the APC Accreditation Committee in accordance with the APC Decision Making Framework has been assessed as either MEDIUM or HIGH. Programs that substantially meet the Accreditation Standards are listed as 'accredited with conditions' here and as approved programs by the PharmBA here. Graduates of programs that ***substantially meet*** the accreditation standards are qualified for registration with Ahpra.

Accreditation status	Definition
Not accredited	The program is not accredited as it does not meet the accreditation standards. In the instance the AC decides not to re-accredit an existing accredited program, they will refer their recommendation to our Board. ***"Not meet"*** – The program and provider have demonstrated insufficient compliance with the criteria in the accreditation standards. The insufficient compliance against the standards is substantiated, material, poses risks to program quality, student welfare, and/or does not align with professional competencies or optimal public safety outcomes. The APC's overall risk profile for the provider and program as determined by the APC Accreditation Committee in accordance with the APC Decision Making Framework has been assessed as HIGH or EXTREME. Programs that do not meet the Accreditation Standards are not accredited or have had their accreditation revoked. Graduates of programs that do ***not meet*** the accreditation standards are ***not qualified*** for registration with Ahpra.

Table 1 Accreditation definitions

***Please note:** International degree programs with always have conditions applied on their accreditation. This is because they cannot meet two of the accreditation standards criteria.

4.2.2. Maximum accreditation periods

Our *Accreditation Committee Decision Making Framework* outlines the duration of accreditation granted to an individual program based on the risk rating applied to the program.

4.3. Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT)

We undertake accreditation assessments utilising the specific skills and expertise of Accreditation Assessment Teams (AATs). These teams are made up of external members.

The role of an AAT is to assess a program/provider against the relevant accreditation standards and prepare a report for our AC to enable them to make an accreditation decision. AAT's do this by:

- reviewing the application and supporting documentation
- undertaking a site visit or education provider interview
- preparing a report for the AC on their assessment of the program against the relevant accreditation standards criteria (the 'AAT Report').

4.3.1. Assessor Register

We maintain a register of individuals who have the relevant knowledge and skills to be an assessor (either pharmacy academics/educators or practising pharmacists).

Individuals interested in joining our Assessor Register to be considered for future AATs will find information on how to apply on our website.

4.3.2. Accreditation Assessment Team Selection Criteria

Individuals on our Assessor Register are appointed to an AAT in accordance with our *Accreditation Assessment Team Selection Criteria*.

4.3.3. Assessors

The composition of an AAT depends on the type of program and assessment being undertaken.

Team composition		
Degree program	**ITP/ Pharmacist education program**	**Notification of change/ New degree or ITP program**
• 3 external members	• 2 external members	• 2 external members
• senior academic who acts as the AAT Chair • pharmacy academic • practising pharmacist	• pharmacy academic/ educator • practising pharmacist or individual with specialised knowledge	• pharmacy academics

Table 2 Team composition for accreditation assessment types

Each team is supported by an APC representative.

4.3.4. Conflicts of interest

We are mindful of the importance of independence in our accreditation work. We select assessors based on the individual expertise they bring to the AAT and with consideration of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

We work with the education provider to identify and manage any possible conflicts. We provide the names of proposed assessors to the education provider and ask them to comment on any perceived conflicts of interest.

Our *Conflict of Interest Policy* is available on our website.

4.3.5. Confidentiality

We require all assessors to sign a confidentiality agreement before they are granted access to documentation submitted by education providers.

For further information about AATs and site visits, please see our website.

5. Accreditation Marketing Policy and APC Accredited logos

Existing accredited program providers and education providers applying for accreditation of a new program are required to abide by the requirements of our *Accreditation Marketing Policy*.

If a program is granted accreditation, we will send the education provider our 'Accreditation Marketing Policy & Logo Agreement' to sign. By signing the agreement, the education provider is declaring that they have read and understood the *Accreditation Marketing Policy* requirements when promoting their accredited program(s). This helps to ensure education providers market their program(s) professionally and with integrity.

After the education provider has returned their signed agreement to our accreditation team, we will send them an 'APC Accredited' logo which can be displayed in marketing materials for the accredited program(s) in accordance with the policy.

We regularly monitor the marketing of accredited programs to ensure that they continue to meet the requirements of the policy.

6. Program monitoring and reporting

Our *Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy* outlines the quality assurance and monitoring activities undertaken to maintain the ongoing accreditation of a program.

7. Notification of change

We strive to maintain an open and ongoing dialogue with all APC accredited program providers. This in turn allows us to communicate effectively and efficiently regarding any planned program changes.

Education providers must notify us of any planned program changes **prior** to the change taking place. Approval must be granted by the AC prior to the change(s) being implemented.

The AC considers the impact of the planned changes on the ability of the program to meet the relevant accreditation standards and determines if the change is minor or material (major).

See our website for our notification of change (NoC) to an accredited program process.

8. Complaints and appeals

8.1. Appealing an accreditation decision

Our *Accreditation Appeals Policy* outlines the process for an education provider to appeal an accreditation decision made by our AC regarding their program.

8.2. Making a formal complaint about an accredited program or provider

Our *Complaints Policy regarding APC accredited programs* outlines the process to make a complaint about an accredited program or provider's compliance with the accreditation standards.

9. Accreditation fees

We charge accreditation fees to cover the costs of ongoing program accreditation. The fees we charge vary depending on the program type. There are also a number of fees that can apply to different program types.

Fees are available on our website. They are reviewed annually and updated when required. Our Board approves any changes to accreditation fees, and we notify education providers via email prior to any changes being applied.

10. Where to find more information

See our website for a range of resources available to assist education providers with applying for accreditation and remaining accredited including:

- policies including marketing, quality assurance and monitoring, and complaints
- accreditation standards and guidelines
- templates including international expression of interest and Notification of Change forms

For a Word version of any of the accreditation templates, please contact our accreditation team.

11. Accreditation process by program type

Accreditation processes vary depending on the type of program being accredited. Please see the following appendices for the accreditation process applicable to each program type:

- Appendix A: Australian pharmacy degree programs
- Appendix B: International pharmacy degree programs
- Appendix C: Intern training programs (ITPs)
- Appendix D: Pharmacist education programs.

A detailed timeline for the accreditation process is supplied in Appendix E

12. Contact our accreditation team

For further assistance/information, contact our accreditation team at accreditation@pharmacycouncil.org.au.

Appendix A Australian pharmacy degree programs

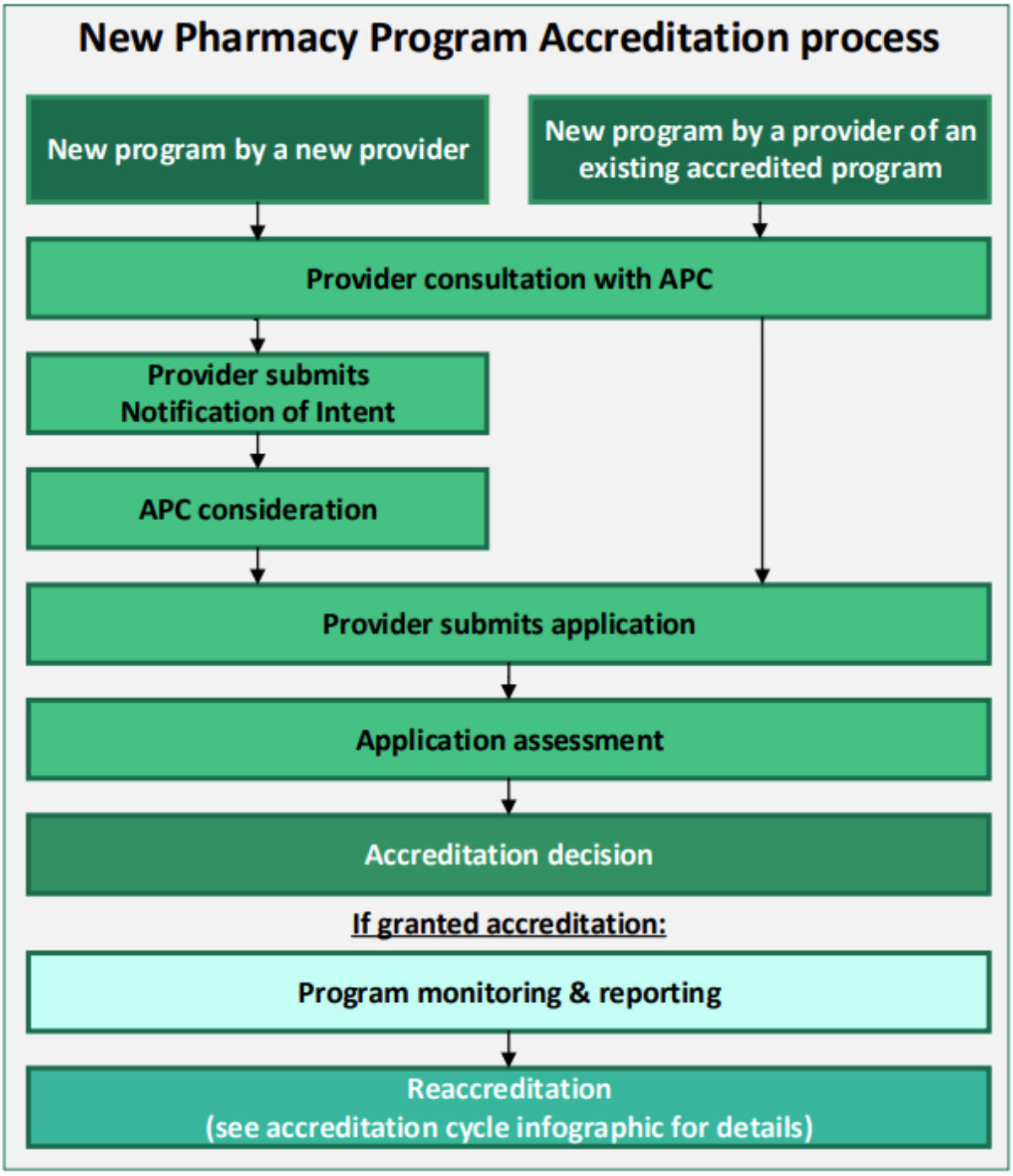

Figure 1 New pharmacy program accreditation process

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

1. Education provider consultation with APC

We recommend that education providers contact us early in the planning phase for a new program so we can provide guidance on processes and timelines. This will help to avoid any delays in the process which may impact on the timing of first enrolments into the accredited program.

When considering program accreditation, refer to our accreditation standards and supporting documentation.

Please note: The APC Accreditation Committee (AC) makes decisions on program accreditation and cannot grant accreditation retrospectively.

2. Education provider submits Notification of Intent (NOI) & APC consideration

This step only applies to the accreditation of **new programs** delivered by **new providers**.

We require the education provider to submit a 'Notification of Intent (NOI) to apply for accreditation of a new pharmacy program form' for our review. We will supply the template for the submission.

Once we have reviewed the submitted NOI, we will email the education provider the appropriate documents and provide access to our secure online submission platform to submit their accreditation application.

3. Education provider submits accreditation application

We provide a template to the education provider to submit their accreditation application and submission details after reviewing their NOI form.

The accreditation application template will require education providers to provide a response to each of the 38 pharmacy program accreditation standards criteria individually.

In addition to the accreditation application, a submission should also include supporting evidence (as appendices) that supports the claims made in the accreditation application e.g. policies, procedures, curriculum outlines and mapping.

When an education provider has completed their accreditation submission, they will submit it via our secure online submission platform and will email us to confirm that the submission is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

4. Application assessment (AAT)

We will appoint an Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) of two suitably qualified and experienced assessors who will assess an education provider's accreditation submission,

undertake an interview with the education provider and prepare a report of their findings for our AC to make an accreditation decision.

During this stage, we may ask the education provider to submit additional information that has been requested by the team.

Please note: We treat any information provided as confidential. All our staff and consultants sign a confidentiality agreement when appointed.

5. Accreditation decision

Our AC will review the AAT Report and make a decision regarding the **accreditation status** of the program and the **accreditation period**.

The AC may apply conditions and/or monitoring requirements (MRs) on the program.

6. Program monitoring and reporting

See our *Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy*.

6.1. Site visit

We conduct additional site visits during delivery to the first cohort of students in a new pharmacy program. This allows the AC to have oversight of program development, student experience and the achievement of performance outcomes. The visits are planned for:

- early in the delivery of the program to the first cohort
- in the final year of the program for the first cohort.

We will contact the education provider directly regarding the date and structure of the visits and to make the necessary arrangements.

These site visits are in addition to the cyclical reaccreditation processes and visits.

7. Reaccreditation

Please see the Pharmacy Program Accreditation Cycle (Figure 2).

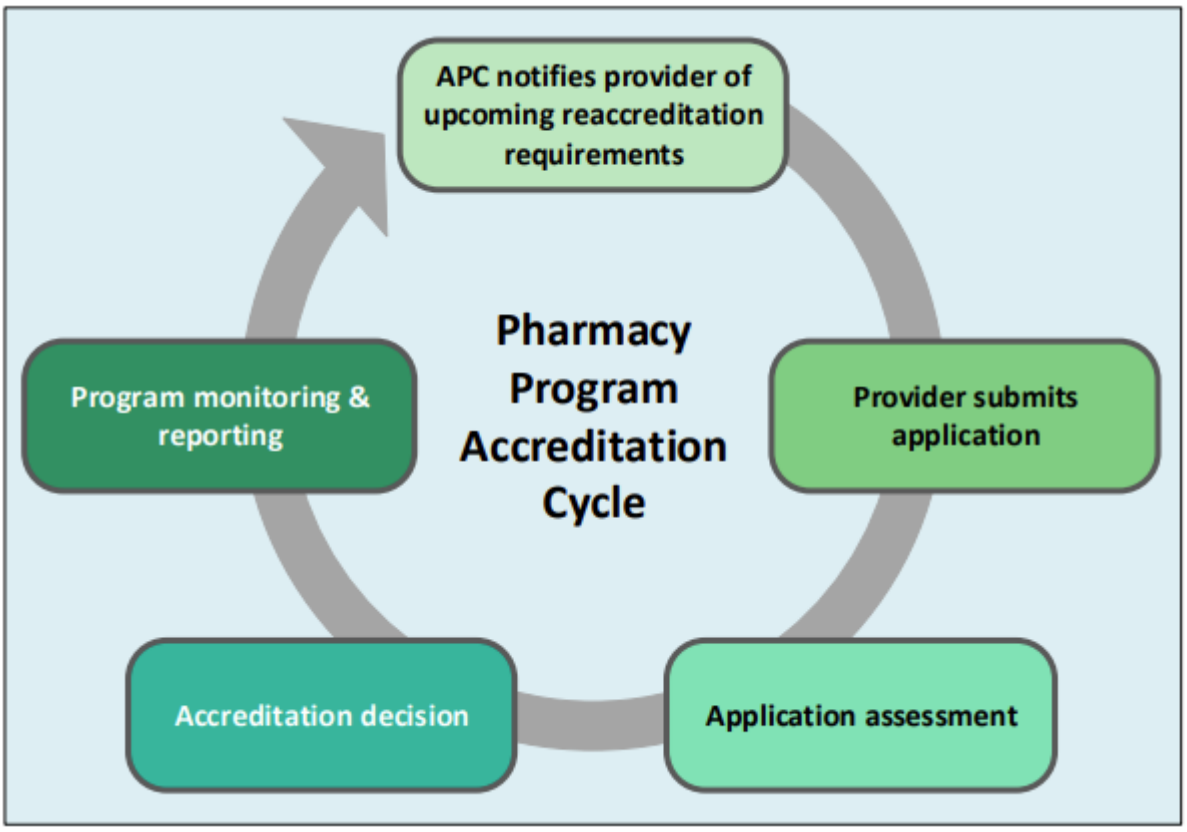

Figure 2 Pharmacy program accreditation cycle

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

7.1. APC notifies education provider of upcoming reaccreditation requirements

Up to 18 months before an accredited program(s) accreditation expiry date, we will contact the education provider to ask them to apply for reaccreditation. We will:

- explain the process, timeline and submission requirements
- provide the accreditation application template
- negotiate mutually suitable dates for the accreditation submission and site visit
- appoint an AAT to undertake the accreditation assessment.

7.2. Education provider submits accreditation application

At least 16 weeks before the site visit, the education provider will submit their completed accreditation application and any supporting evidence to our accreditation team by uploading it directly to our secure online submission platform and emailing us to confirm that it is ready for us to access.

We review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

7.3. Application assessment (AAT)

We provide the accreditation submission to the AAT to conduct their assessment of the program(s).

7.3.1. Site visit

As part of the accreditation process, the AAT will undertake a site visit at the program delivery location(s) at least 3 months before the program(s) accreditation expiry date.

The duration of a site visit is usually 3 days but may differ depending on the program type and number of delivery locations.

Site visits will usually take place face to face. However, if circumstances prevent a site visit from taking place, we may decide that a 'virtual' site visit is suitable. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with our *Accreditation Virtual Site Visit Procedure*.

7.3.1.1. Site visit schedule

Site visits by an AAT will differ depending on the nature of the program/provider. We will consult with relevant education provider staff to arrange the site visit schedule prior to the visit. A final schedule will be available before the site visit commences and will include the names of participants in each interview session, and the start and finish times for each session.

The education provider is responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff, students and external stakeholders:

- know about the site visit
- are available to speak with the AAT at the scheduled time during the site visit.

We encourage all education providers to appoint a contact person/representative who will be available during the visit to assist the AAT and ensure interview attendees are on time for their scheduled interview (whether they are attending either face to face or virtually).

7.3.1.2. Cancelling or rescheduling a site visit

We may need to cancel or reschedule a site visit if we cannot guarantee the safety of our assessors for any reason.

7.3.1.3. Site visit interviews

The site visit involves a series of interviews with key program staff and stakeholders. We begin with a general program focus and then lead into a more detailed investigation.

During the interviews we speak with:

- staff involved in university and program governance
- specific academic and professional staff
- students
- preceptors and other external stakeholders.

The main function of the site visit is for the AAT to verify information included in the accreditation submission to explore:

- any apparent gaps in the application relating to program/provider compliance with the accreditation standards
- how the provider is 'operationalising' the processes described in the application to meet the accreditation standards
- how the unit delivering the program will address any outstanding matters from the previous AAT Report
- how the unit delivering the program will maintain or build on its strengths
- how the unit delivering the program plans to address any challenges
- the future plans of the unit delivering the program.

For further information about AATs and site visits, please see our website.

7.3.1.4. Site visit location(s)

We will advise the education provider about the locations and dates for site visits across multiple degree program locations. This is determined with consideration of our process and the specific structures in place for the provider. The final decision is the responsibility of APC and the AAT Chair (and will be made on a case-by-case basis).

When an education provider delivers a **single program** at more than one site, the team will need to attend all delivery sites which have one or more of the following onsite:

- program leadership (e.g. office of the Head of School)
- program administration (e.g. administrative staff, financial staff, student support staff)
- laboratories
- lecture/tutorial rooms
- program students in attendance at any time during a semester.

If we determine that an education provider will require a visit to **more than one site**, one of the sites will be selected by us as the 'main site' for the purposes of the site visit. This site will likely be the one that hosts program leadership and administrative staff. The duration of the visit is likely to be longer at the main site than for other sites, as more interviews will be held at the main site.

Site visit interviews to be held at a second or subsequent campus may involve site specific program staff, students enrolled at the campus and a tour of the facilities.

7.3.1.5. Initial feedback by the AAT

After the site visit interviews have been completed, the final session during the site visit is a Closing Meeting to be held between the AAT and the program lead. The program lead may choose to invite one additional attendee to the session. During the meeting, the AAT Chair will present some preliminary findings of the team. This will not include the full content of their final report.

The Closing Meeting is not an interactive session and program staff are not able to provide additional information to the AAT.

7.3.2. AAT Report

The AAT prepares a draft report outlining their assessment of the program against the accreditation standards criteria.

The APC works closely with education providers to ensure they have every reasonable chance to meet the relevant accreditation standards.

APC will provide a copy of the AAT report to the provider for its review and comment on:

a) Errors of fact, and
b) Any concerns, corrections or further information regarding any of the APC's findings or recommendations regarding the provider/program.

The provider's comments will then be incorporated into the report for the Accreditation Committee or APC Board's review and consideration prior to the final decision being made.

8. Teaching out an accredited degree program

Our *Accredited Degree Program Teach Out Policy* outlines the process undertaken when an education provider decides to no longer offer an accredited pharmacy degree program. Teach out continues until there are no longer any students enrolled in the program.

Appendix B International pharmacy degree programs

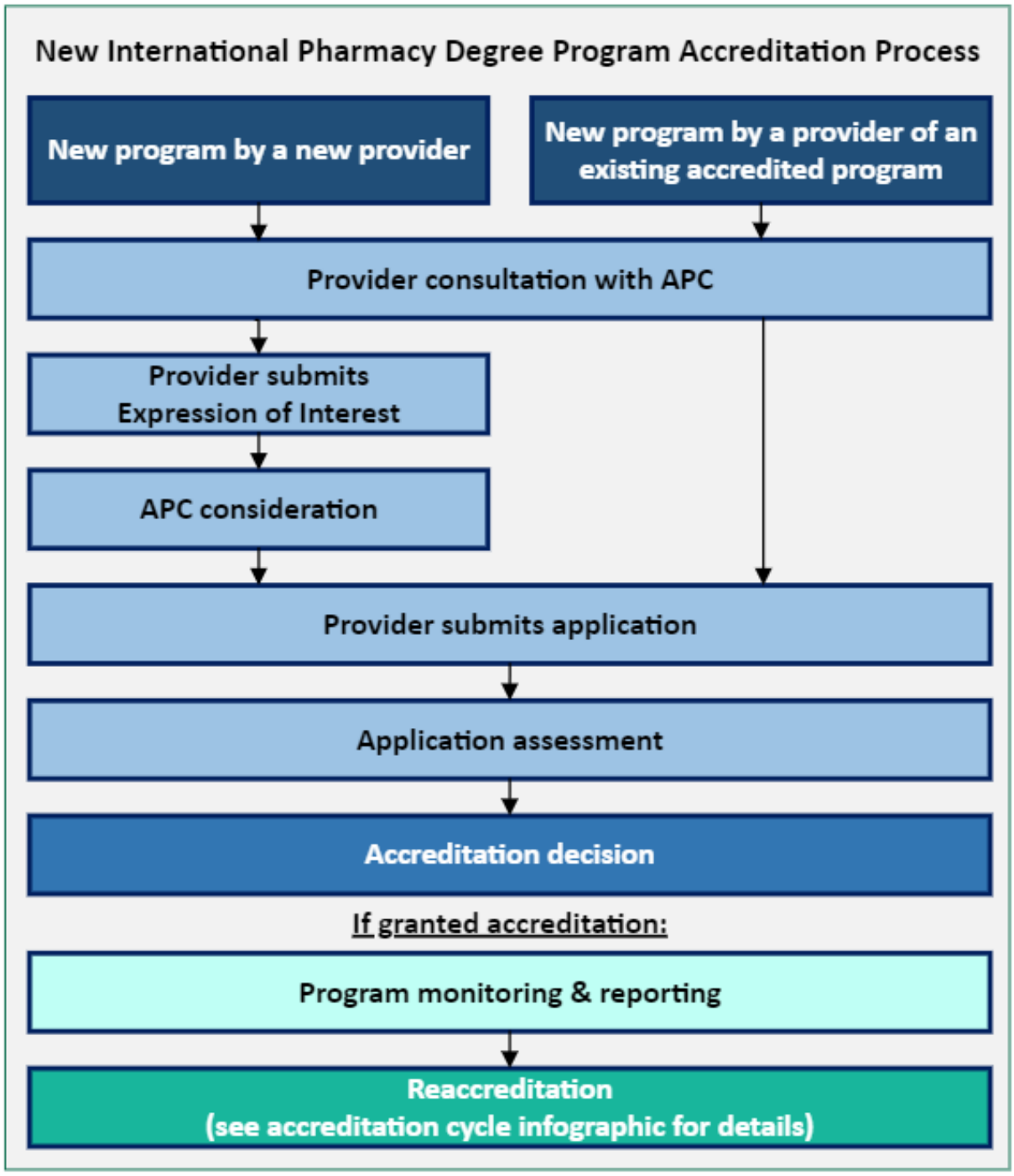

Figure 3 New international pharmacy degree program accreditation process

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

1. Education provider consultation with APC

We recommend education providers contact us early in the planning phase for a new program so we can provide guidance on processes and timelines. This will help to avoid any delays in the process which may impact on the timing of first enrolments into the accredited program.

When considering program accreditation, refer to our accreditation standards and supporting documentation and *International Degree Program Accreditation Policy*.

Please note: The AC makes recommendations to the APC Board who makes decisions on international pharmacy degree program accreditation. Accreditation decisions (including approval of program changes) and cannot be made retrospectively.

2. Education provider submits Expression of Interest & APC consideration

This step only applies to the accreditation of **new programs** delivered by **new providers**.

We will ask the education provider to submit an International Accreditation: Expression of Interest (EOI) form so that we can evaluate the degree program for approval to apply for international program accreditation.

In the EOI form, the education provider will need to show that:

- the program is taught entirely in English, with an English curriculum
- the program leads to a qualification that compares to an Australian accredited 4-year Bachelor of Pharmacy program
- the university ranks in either Section 1 or Section 2 of the Australian Education International (AEI-NOOSR) Country Education Profile (email us if unsure of the relevant section)
- the university is in a country with an Australian Government Smartraveller travel advice of either a 'normal' or 'high degree of caution'.

If we approve the education provider's EOI, we will email them the appropriate documents and provide access to our secure online submission platform to submit their accreditation application.

For further details about international degree program accreditation, please see our *International Degree Accreditation Policy*.

3. Education provider submits accreditation application

We provide a template to the education provider to submit their accreditation application and submission details after reviewing their EOI form.

The accreditation application template will require education providers to provide a response to 36 of the 38 pharmacy program accreditation standards criteria (see 3.1 below for further details).

In addition to the accreditation application, a submission should also include supporting evidence (as appendices) that supports the claims made in the accreditation application e.g. policies, procedures, curriculum outlines and mapping.

When an education provider has completed their accreditation submission, they will submit it via our secure online submission platform and they will email us to confirm that the submission is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

3.1. Criteria unable to be met by international degree programs

Two of the 38 pharmacy program accreditation standards criteria are not able to be met by international degree programs, and conditions relating to these criteria will always apply. They are:

Criterion 2.2

> *Australian provider organisations are registered either with the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) (HEIs) or Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (RTOs).*

International programs are unable to meet the same regulatory requirements of Australian providers.

Criterion 3.4

> *Program design, content, delivery and assessment specifically emphasise and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, cultural safety and improved health outcomes. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should have direct input into curriculum design and content, and where possible should be involved directly in delivery and assessment.*

International programs are not expected to include program content and assessment that relates to, and includes input from, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures.

4. Application assessment (AAT)

We will appoint an Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) of two suitably qualified and experienced assessors who will assess an education provider's accreditation submission, undertake an interview with the education provider and prepare a report of their findings for our AC to make an accreditation decision.

During this stage, we may ask the education provider to submit additional information requested by the team to assist them in preparing their report.

Please note: We treat any information provided as confidential. All our staff and consultants sign a confidentiality agreement when appointed.

5. Accreditation decision

Our AC will review the AAT Report and make a recommendation to the APC Board regarding **accreditation status** of the program and the **accreditation period**.

The AC may also recommend to the APC Board applying conditions and/or monitoring requirements (MRs) to the program if they require the education provider to address any matters of concern.

6. Program monitoring and reporting

See our *Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy*.

6.1. Site visit

We conduct additional site visits during delivery to the first cohort of students in a new pharmacy program. This allows the AC to have oversight of program development, student experience and the achievement of performance outcomes. The visits are planned for:

- early in the delivery of the program to the first cohort
- in the final year of program for the first cohort.

We will contact the education provider directly regarding the date and structure of the visits and to make the necessary arrangements.

These site visits are in addition to the cyclical reaccreditation processes and visits.

7. Reaccreditation

Please see the Pharmacy Program Accreditation Cycle (Figure 4).

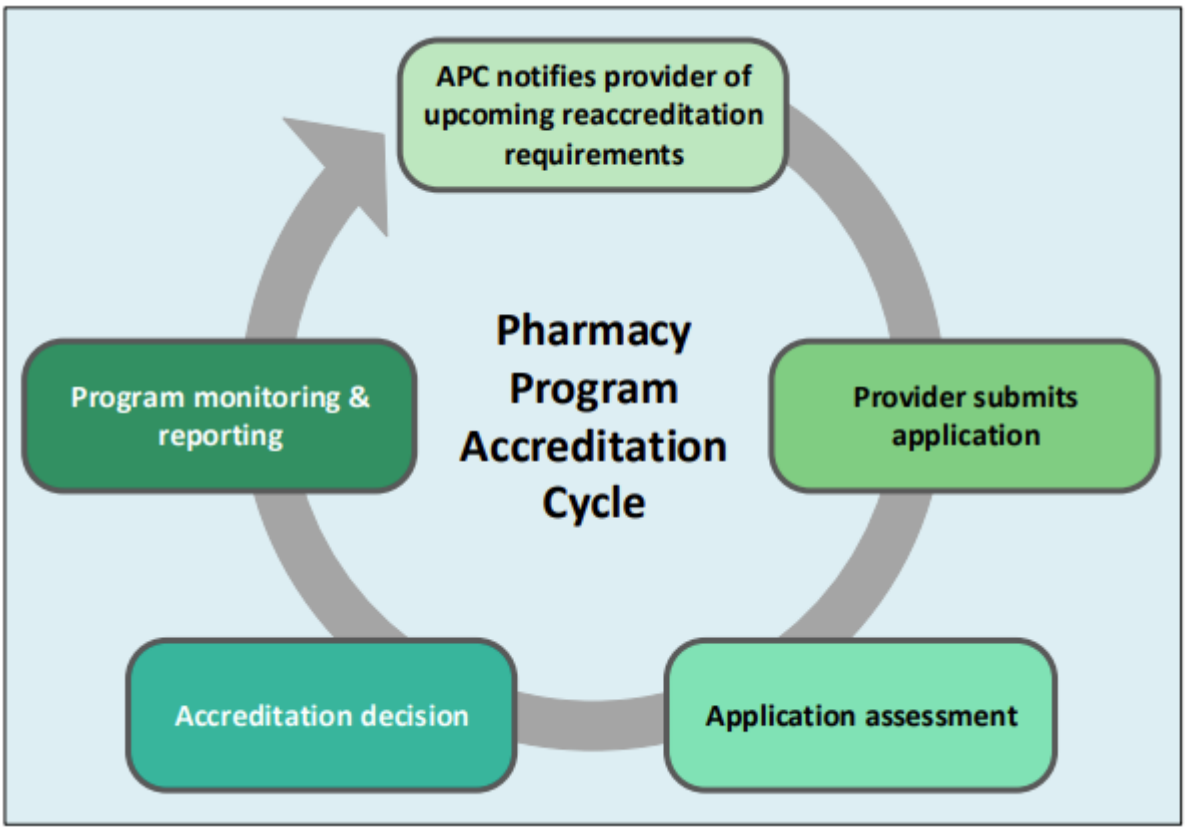

Figure 4 Pharmacy program accreditation cycle

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

7.1. APC notifies education provider of upcoming reaccreditation requirements

Up to 18 months before an accredited program(s) accreditation expiry date, we will contact the education provider to ask them to apply for reaccreditation. We will:

- explain the process, timeline and submission requirements
- provide the accreditation application template
- negotiate mutually suitable dates for the accreditation submission and site visit
- appoint an AAT to undertake the accreditation assessment.

7.2. Education provider submits accreditation application

At least 16 weeks before the site visit, the education provider will submit their completed accreditation application and any supporting evidence to our accreditation team by uploading it via our secure online submission platform and emailing us to confirm that it is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

7.3. Application assessment (AAT)

We provide the accreditation submission to the AAT to conduct their assessment of the program(s).

7.3.1. Site visit

As part of the accreditation process, the AAT will undertake a site visit at the program delivery location(s) at least 3 months before the program(s) accreditation expiry date.

The duration of a site visit is usually 3 days but may differ depending on factors such as the program type and number of delivery locations.

Site visits will usually take place face to face. However, if circumstances prevent a site visit from taking place, we may decide that a 'virtual' site visit is suitable. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with our *Accreditation Virtual Site Visit Procedure*.

7.3.1.1. Site visit schedule

Site visits by an AAT will differ depending on the nature of the program/provider. We will consult with relevant education provider staff to arrange the site visit schedule prior to the visit. A final schedule will be available before the site visit commences and will include the names of participants in each interview session, and the start and finish times for each session.

The education provider is responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff, students and external stakeholders:

- know about the site visit
- are available to speak with the AAT at the scheduled time during the site visit.

We encourage all education providers to appoint a contact person/representative who will be available during the visit to assist the AAT and ensure interview attendees are on time for their scheduled interview (whether they are attending either face to face or virtually).

7.3.1.2. Cancelling or rescheduling a site visit

We may need to cancel or reschedule a site visit if we cannot guarantee the safety of our assessors for any reason. This may also occur if Smartraveller's travel advice for the program location country changes to a higher alert level.

7.3.1.3. Site visit interviews

The site visit involves a series of interviews. We begin with a general program focus and then lead into a more detailed investigation via interviews with key program staff and stakeholders.

During the interviews we speak with:

- staff involved in university and program governance
- specific academic and professional staff
- students
- preceptors and other external stakeholders.

The main function of the site visit is for the AAT to verify information included in the accreditation submission to explore:

- any apparent gaps in the application relating to program/provider compliance with the accreditation standards
- how the provider is 'operationalising' the processes described in the application to meet the accreditation standards
- how the unit delivering the program will address any outstanding matters from the previous AAT Report
- how the unit delivering the program will maintain or build on its strengths
- how the unit delivering the program plans to address any challenges
- the future plans of the unit delivering the program.

For further information about AATs and site visits, please see our website.

7.3.1.4. Site visit location(s)

We will advise the education provider about the locations and dates for site visits across multiple degree program locations. This is determined with consideration of our process and the specific structures in place for the provider. The final decision is the responsibility of APC and the AAT Chair (and will be made on a case-by-case basis).

When an education provider delivers a **single program** at more than one site, the team will need to attend all delivery sites which have one or more of the following onsite:

- program leadership (e.g. office of the Head of School)
- program administration (e.g. administrative staff, financial staff, student support staff)
- laboratories
- lecture/tutorial rooms
- program students in attendance at any time during a semester.

If we determine that an education provider will require a visit to **more than one site**, one of the sites will be selected by us as the 'main site' for the purposes of the site visit. This site will likely be the one that hosts program leadership and administrative staff. The duration of the visit is likely to be longer at the main site than for other sites, as more interviews will be held at the main site.

Site visit interviews to be held at a second or subsequent campus may involve site specific program staff, students enrolled at the campus and a tour of the facilities.

7.3.1.5. Initial feedback by the AAT

After the site visit interviews have been completed, the final session during the site visit is a Closing Meeting to be held between the AAT and the program lead. The program lead may choose to invite one additional attendee to the session. During the meeting, the AAT Chair will present some preliminary findings of the team. This will not include the full content of their final report.

The Closing Meeting is not an interactive session and program staff are not able to provide additional information to the AAT.

7.3.2. AAT Report

The AAT prepares a draft report outlining their assessment of the program against the accreditation standards criteria.

The APC works closely with education providers to ensure they have every reasonable chance to meet the relevant accreditation standards.

APC will provide a copy of the AAT report to the provider for its review and comment on:

a) Errors of fact, and
b) Any concerns, corrections or further information regarding any of the APC's findings or recommendations regarding the provider/program.

The provider's comments will then be incorporated into the report for the Accreditation Committee or APC Board's review and consideration prior to the final decision being made.

8. Teaching out an accredited degree program

Our *Accredited Degree Program Teach Out Policy* outlines the process undertaken when an education provider decides to no longer offer an accredited pharmacy degree program. Teach out continues until there are no longer any students enrolled in the program.

Appendix C Intern training programs (ITPs)

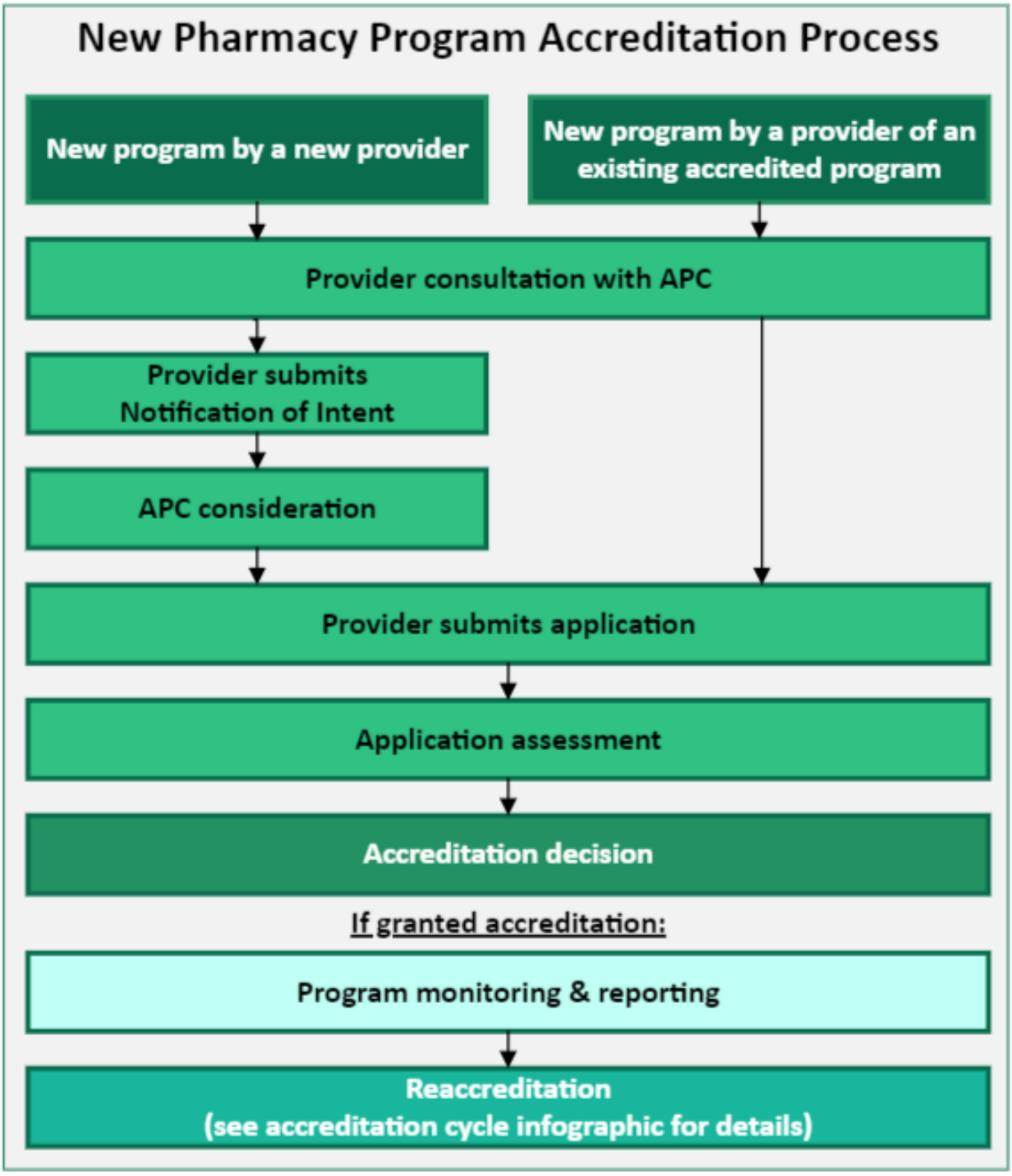

Figure 5 New pharmacy program accreditation process

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

1. Education provider consultation with APC

We recommend that education providers contact us early in the planning phase for a new program so we can provide guidance on processes and timelines. This will help to avoid any delays in the process which may impact on the timing of first enrolments into the accredited program.

When considering program accreditation, refer to our accreditation standards and supporting documentation.

Please note: The APC Accreditation Committee (AC) makes decisions on program accreditation and cannot grant accreditation retrospectively.

2. Education provider submits Notification of Intent (NOI) & APC consideration

This step only applies to the accreditation of **new programs** delivered by **new providers**.

We require the education provider to submit a 'Notification of Intent (NOI) to apply for accreditation of a new pharmacy program form' for our review. We will supply the template for submission.

Once we have reviewed the submitted NOI, we will email the education provider the appropriate documents and provide access to our secure online submission platform to submit their accreditation application.

3. Education provider submits accreditation application

We provide a template to the education provider to submit their accreditation application 'by criterion' and submission details after reviewing their NOI form.

The accreditation application template will require education providers to provide a response to each of the 38 pharmacy program accreditation standards criteria individually.

In addition to the accreditation application, a submission should also include supporting evidence (as appendices) that supports the claims made in the accreditation application e.g. policies, procedures, curriculum outlines and mapping.

When an education provider has completed their accreditation submission, they will submit it via our secure online submission platform and will email us to confirm that the submission is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

4. Application assessment (AAT)

We will appoint an Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) of 2 suitably qualified and experienced assessors who will assess an education provider's accreditation submission,

undertake an interview with the education provider and prepare a report of their findings for our AC to make an accreditation decision.

During this stage, we may ask the education provider to submit additional information requested by the team to assist them in preparing their report.

Please note: We treat any information provided as confidential. All our staff and consultants sign a confidentiality agreement when appointed.

5. Accreditation decision

Our AC will review the AAT Report and make a decision regarding the **accreditation status** of the program and the **accreditation period**.

The AC may apply conditions and/or monitoring requirements (MRs) on the program.

6. Program monitoring and reporting

See our *Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy*.

7. Reaccreditation

Please see the Pharmacy Program Accreditation Cycle (Figure 6).

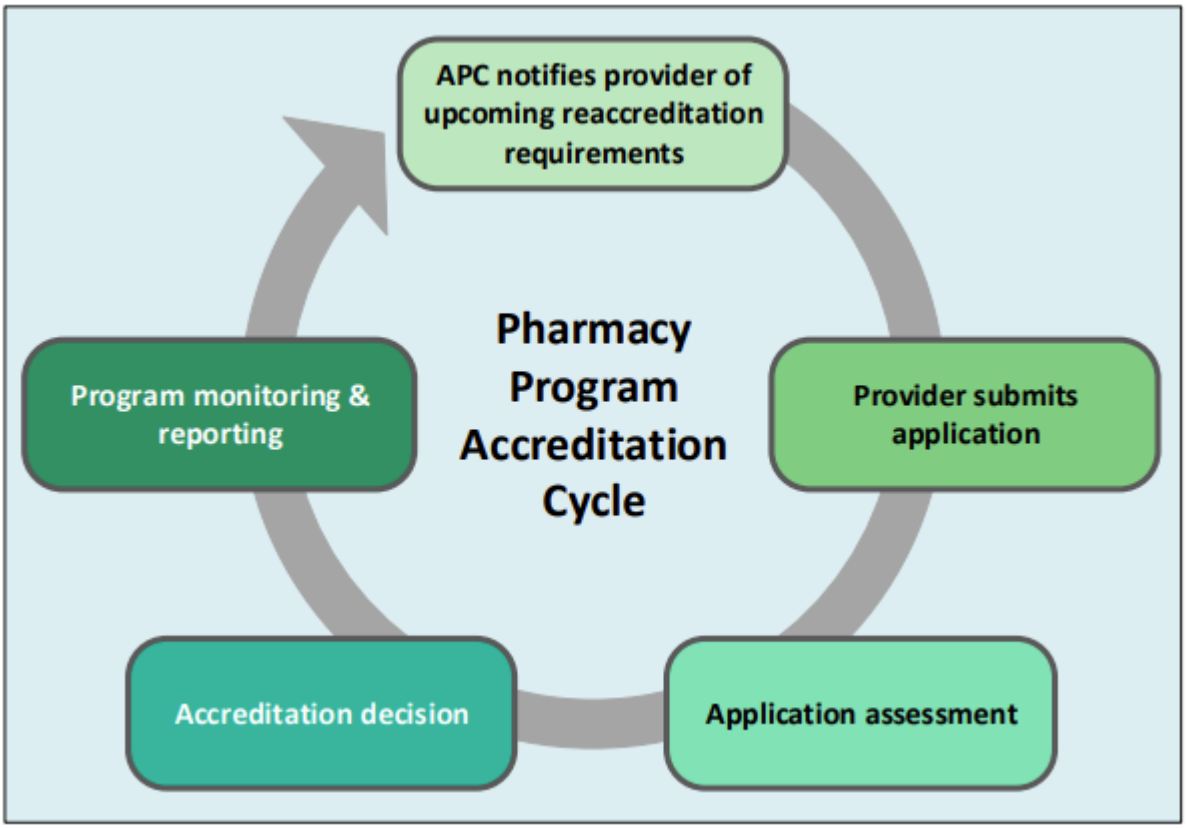

Figure 6 Pharmacy program accreditation cycle

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

7.1. APC notifies education provider of upcoming reaccreditation requirements

Up to 18 months before an accredited program(s) accreditation expiry date, we will contact the education provider to ask them to apply for reaccreditation. We will:

- explain the process, timeline and submission requirements
- provide the accreditation application template
- negotiate mutually suitable dates for the accreditation submission and site visit
- appoint an AAT to undertake the accreditation assessment.

7.2. Education provider submits accreditation application

At least 16 weeks before the site visit, the education provider will submit their completed accreditation application and any supporting evidence to our accreditation team by uploading it directly to our secure online submission platform and emailing us to confirm that it is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

7.3. Application assessment (AAT)

We provide the accreditation submission to the AAT to conduct their assessment of the program(s).

7.3.1. Site visit

As part of the accreditation process, the AAT will undertake a site visit at the program delivery location(s) at least 3 months before the program(s) accreditation expiry date.

The duration of a site visit is usually 2 days but may differ depending on the program features (see further detail below).

Site visits will usually take place face to face. However, if circumstances prevent a site visit from taking place, we may decide that a 'virtual' site visit is suitable. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with *Accreditation Virtual Site Visit Procedure*.

7.3.1.1. Site visit schedule

Site visits by an AAT will differ depending on the nature of the program/provider. We will consult with relevant education provider staff to arrange the site visit schedule prior to the visit. A final schedule will be available before the site visit commences and will include the names of participants in each interview session, and the start and finish times for each session.

The education provider is responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff, interns and external stakeholders:

- know about the site visit
- are available to speak with the AAT at the scheduled time during the site visit.

We encourage all education providers to appoint a contact person/representative who will be available during the visit to assist the AAT and ensure interview attendees are on time for their scheduled interview (whether they are attending either face to face or virtually).

7.3.1.2. Cancelling or rescheduling a site visit

We may need to cancel or reschedule a site visit if we cannot guarantee the safety of our assessors for any reason.

7.3.1.3. Site visit interviews

The site visit involves a series of interviews. We begin with a general program focus and then lead into a more detailed investigation via interviews with key program staff and stakeholders.

During the interviews we speak with:

- staff involved in organisation and program governance
- specific academic and professional staff
- interns
- preceptors and other external stakeholders.

The main function of the site visit is for the AAT to verify information included in the accreditation application and supporting evidence to explore:

- any apparent gaps in the application relating to program/provider compliance with the accreditation standards
- how the provider is 'operationalising' the processes described in the application to meet the accreditation standards
- how the unit delivering the program will address any outstanding matters from the previous AAT Report
- how the unit delivering the program will maintain or build on its strengths
- how the unit delivering the program plans to address any challenges
- the future plans of the unit delivering the program.

For further information about AATs and site visits, please see our website.

7.3.1.4. Site visit location(s)

We advise the education provider about the locations, dates and times for site visits for ITPs. This is determined with consideration of our process and the specific structures in place for the provider. The final decision is the responsibility of APC and the AAT Chair (and will be made on a case-by-case basis).

When identifying if the team needs to undertake multiple site visits to assess the program, we look at several program features. Table 3 describes the features that would determine if the program requires a visit to a single site with local staff present (option A) or with local and other states/territories staff present (option B):

Factors for determining an ITP site visit format		
ITP feature	**Option A** **Single site visit**	**Option B** **Single site visit ('head office') with staff from each administrative site in attendance**
Administrative site	Single	Multiple
Funding source	Single	Single
Delivery location	Single	Multiple
Program manager	Single	Single
Contact point for intern communication	Single	Multiple
Curriculum	Not a factor for selecting site visit location/attendees	

Table 3 Factors we consider for determining an ITP site visit format

7.3.1.5. Initial feedback by the AAT

After the site visit interviews have been completed, the final session during the site visit is a Closing Meeting to be held between the AAT and the program lead. The program lead may choose to invite one additional attendee to the session. During the meeting, the AAT Chair will present some preliminary findings of the team. This will not include the full content of their final report.

The Closing Meeting is not an interactive session and program staff are not able to provide additional information to the AAT.

7.3.2. AAT Report

The AAT prepares a draft report outlining their assessment of the program against the accreditation standards criteria.

The APC works closely with education providers to ensure they have every reasonable chance to meet the relevant accreditation standards.

APC will provide a copy of the AAT report to the provider for its review and comment on:

a) Errors of fact, and
b) Any concerns, corrections or further information regarding any of the APC's findings or recommendations regarding the provider/program.

The provider's comments will then be incorporated into the report for the Accreditation Committee or APC Board's review and consideration prior to the final decision being made.

Appendix D Pharmacist education programs

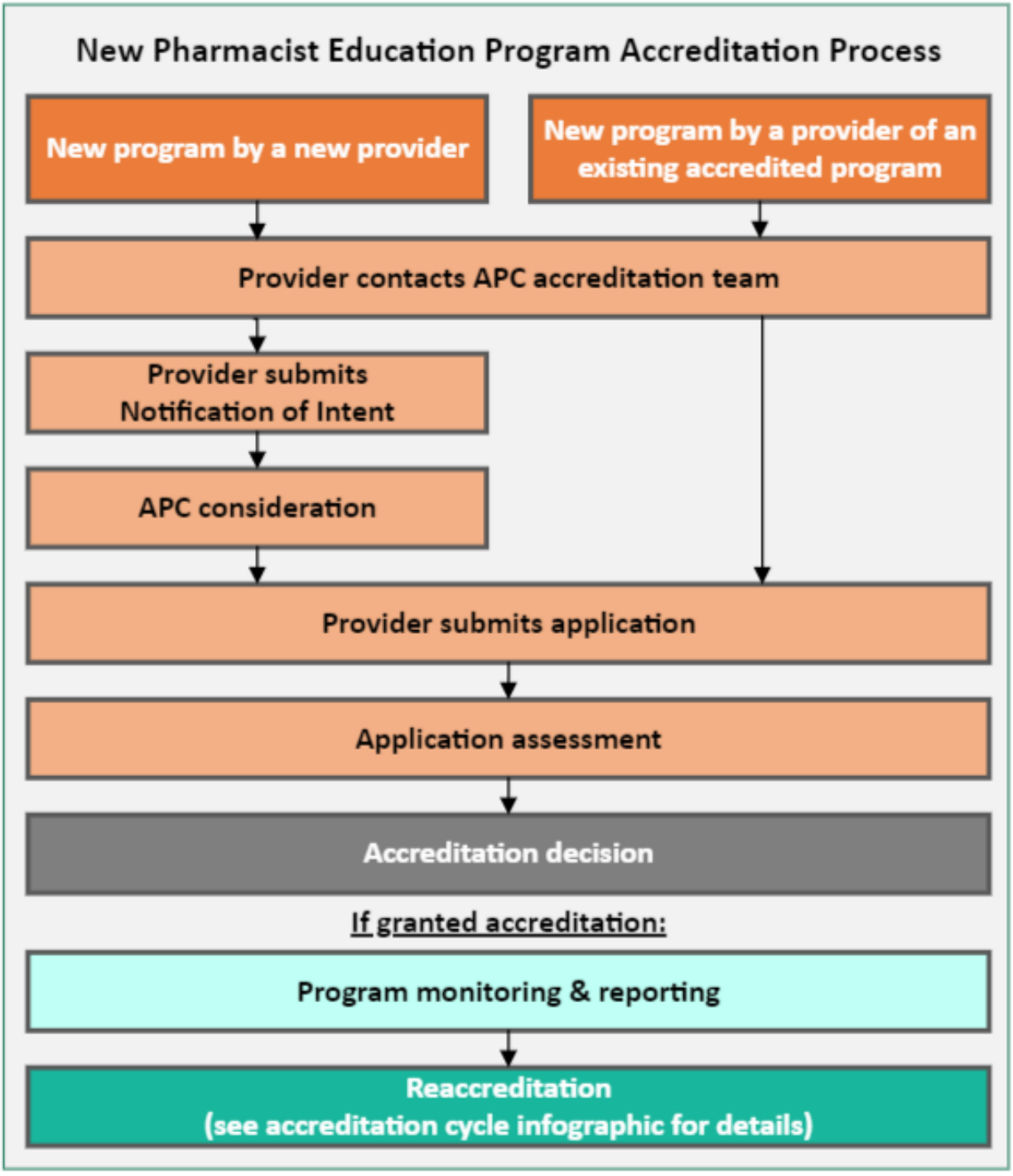

Figure 7 New pharmacist education program accreditation process

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

1. Education provider contacts the APC accreditation team

When considering program accreditation, refer to our accreditation standards and supporting documentation.

We recommend that education providers contact us early in the planning phase for a new program so we can provide guidance on processes and timelines. This will help to avoid any delays in the process which may impact on the timing of first enrolments into the accredited program.

Please note: The APC Accreditation Committee (AC) makes decisions on program accreditation and cannot grant accreditation retrospectively.

2. Education provider submits Notification of Intent (NOI) & APC consideration

This step only applies to the accreditation of **new programs** delivered by **new providers**.

We require the education provider to submit a 'Notification of Intent (NOI)' form to apply for accreditation of a new pharmacist education program for our review. We will supply the relevant template for the submission.

Once we have reviewed the submitted NOI, we will email the education provider the appropriate documents and provide access to our secure online submission platform to submit their accreditation application.

3. Education provider submits accreditation application

We provide a template to the education provider to submit their accreditation application 'by criterion' and submission details after reviewing their NOI form.

The accreditation application template will require education providers to provide a response to each of the relevant pharmacist education program accreditation standards criteria individually.

In addition to the accreditation application, a submission should also include supporting evidence (as appendices) that supports the claims made in the accreditation application e.g. policies, procedures, curriculum outlines and mapping.

When an education provider has completed their accreditation submission, they will submit it via our secure online submission platform and they will email us to confirm that the submission is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

4. Application assessment (AAT)

We will appoint an Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) of two suitably qualified and experienced assessors who will assess an education provider's accreditation submission, undertake an interview with the education provider and prepare a report of their findings for our AC to make an accreditation decision.

During this stage, we may ask the education provider to submit additional information requested by the team to assist them in preparing their report.

Please note: We treat any information provided as confidential. All our staff and consultants sign a confidentiality agreement when appointed.

5. Accreditation decision

Our AC will review the AAT Report and make a decision regarding the **accreditation status** of the program and the **accreditation period**.

The AC may apply conditions and/or monitoring requirements (MRs) on the program.

6. Program monitoring and reporting

See our *Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy*.

7. Reaccreditation

Please see the Pharmacist Education Program Accreditation Cycle (Figure 8).

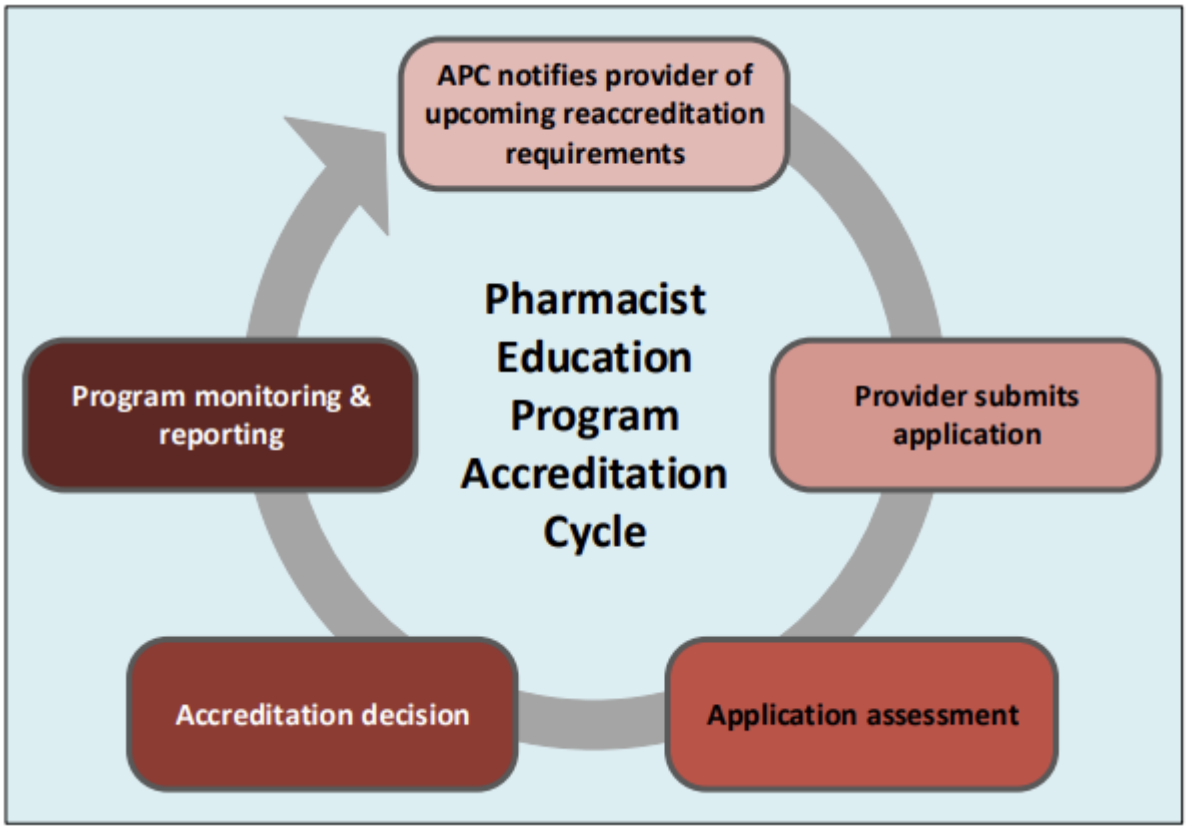

Figure 8 Pharmacist education program accreditation cycle

The following section describes each of the steps in more detail.

7.1. APC notifies education provider of upcoming reaccreditation requirements

Up to 18 months before an accredited program(s) accreditation expiry date, we will contact the education provider to ask them to apply for reaccreditation. We will:

- explain the process, timeline and submission requirements
- provide the accreditation application template
- negotiate mutually suitable dates for the accreditation submission and AAT interview
- appoint an AAT to undertake the accreditation assessment.

7.2. Education provider submits accreditation application

At least 16 weeks before the AAT interview, the education provider will submit their completed accreditation application and any supporting evidence to our accreditation team by uploading it directly to our secure online submission platform and emailing us to confirm that it is ready for us to access.

We will review it for completeness. If the application is not complete, we may return it to the education provider and ask them to re-submit.

7.3. Application assessment (AAT)

We will provide the accreditation submission to the AAT to conduct their assessment of the program(s).

7.3.1. AAT interview

As part of the accreditation process, the AAT will undertake an online interview with the education provider and prepare a report of their findings for our AC to make an accreditation decision.

The main function of the interview is for the AAT to verify information included in the accreditation application and supporting evidence.

For further information about AATs, please see our website.

7.3.2. AAT Report

The AAT prepares a draft report outlining their assessment of the program against the accreditation standards criteria. The final report will be presented to the AC to allow them to make an accreditation decision.

The APC works closely with education providers to ensure they have every reasonable chance to meet the relevant accreditation standards.

APC will provide a copy of the AAT report to the provider for its review and comment on:

a) Errors of fact, and
b) Any concerns, corrections or further information regarding any of the APC's findings or recommendations regarding the provider/program.

The provider's comments will then be incorporated into the report for the Accreditation Committee or APC Board's review and consideration prior to the final decision being made.

APPENDIX E – Accreditation Timelines

12-18 months prior to application

Provider consultation with APC

- Education provider contacts APC regarding plans for proposed accreditation application
- APC emails the Notification of Intent form and details about the accreditation process to education provider (new program by new provider only)

12-18 months prior to application

Provider submits Notification of Intent (NOI) - *New programs by new providers only*

- Education provider submits Notification of Intent (NOI)
- APC reviews submission and notifies APC Board (and Pharmacy Board of Australia on a case by case basis) about NOI submission
- APC provides accreditation application template(s) and submission information to education provider

8-18 months prior to proposed program delivery

Provider submits application

- Education provider submits application
- APC reviews internally for completeness and request any amendments where required e.g. missing links, attachments
- APC invoices education provider the initial accreditation application fee assessment
- APC appoints Accreditation Assessment Team (AAT) of two external assessors

8-10 weeks*

Application assessment

- APC provides accreditation submission to assessors and schedules online meetings (1x AAT only + 1x AAT with education provider)
- AAT undertakes a desktop audit of submission
- AAT meets to discuss application and prepare for online meeting with education provider
- AAT meets with education provider to discuss application
- AAT develops recommendations for the APC representative to draft the AAT Report
- AAT reviews draft AAT Report
- Education provider reviews draft AAT Report to provide APC with any comments
- APC representative finalises AAT Report with the AAT for AC consideration

4-8 weeks*

Accreditation decision

- APC representative prepares Accreditation Committee (AC) papers
- AC review AAT Report and AC papers at an AC meeting
- AC make an accreditation decision
- APC prepares and issues Accreditation Outcome Notification (AON) for education provider after AC meeting

Throughout accreditation period

Ongoing program monitoring & reporting

- APC updates the accredited program list on the APC website with the program details
- APC invoices education provider the annual accreditation fee
- Ongoing monitoring is undertaken in accordance with the Accreditation Quality Assurance and Monitoring Policy

12-18 months before accreditation expiry

Reaccreditation

- APC notifies education provider that it is time to begin reaccreditation process
- See 'accreditation cycle'graphic for further details

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