



OHS Education Accreditation Overview

Accrediting authority

The accrediting authority is the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board (the Accreditation Board) auspiced by the Safety Institute of Australia. The Board has a broad membership with representation by OHS professionals, OHS academics, OHS professional bodies together with industry representation by employers, ACTU and OHS regulators. The Board membership also includes an education academic who provides educational advice relevant to the Board activities.

The Board's structure as created under the By-Laws of the SIA clearly sets out the independence of the Accreditation Board in setting standards, accreditation processes and in decision-making regarding accreditation and related matters. (See *Introduction to OHS Education Accreditation Board* for more detail.)

Principles underpinning accreditation

The Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board is cognizant of and supports the Joint Statement of Principles for Professional Accreditation agreed in 2016 by Professions Australia and Universities Australia. The agreed principles are embodied in the principles underpinning the OHS education accreditation process as detailed below.

1. The accreditation process acknowledges that the academic quality and program standards are the responsibility of institutions through their internal procedures for quality assurance and thus requires evidence of the operation of such mechanisms for validating program outcomes and maintaining quality improvement.
2. The accreditation process recognises that each institution and each program is unique and this is to be valued. Thus the criteria for accreditation are outcome-based allowing institutions the maximum flexibility in achieving the required standards.
3. The accreditation process is intended to be constructive and to respect the expertise and academic autonomy of institutions providing OHS professional education. As a corollary the institutions are expected to be open and transparent in providing all appropriate information to the accreditation process on request.
4. The accreditation process will, as far as is possible, be aligned with institution and other externally required quality assurance processes with minimal complexity in the application process.
5. The accreditation process will be open to external scrutiny; conducted in a consultative and consensus-building collegiate fashion, transparent and fair, and balance academic priorities with those of the OHS profession.
6. The accreditation process is based on self- and peer-assessment for the purpose of publicly and openly assuring adequate standards of education and training of OHS professionals and the constant improvement of quality in OHS professional education.
7. Only full programs are accredited. The accreditation does not apply to individual courses or part programs
8. Completion of an accredited OHS program is deemed as providing satisfactory evidence of having completed the knowledge component of the requirements for entry-level OHS professional certification.

Accreditation criteria

It is the practice of the Australian OHS Education Accreditation Board to structure the criteria for accreditation of OHS professional education to align with the domains of the Higher Education Threshold Standards. The accreditation standards applicable from January 2017 are derived from the outcomes of the accreditation Board review and the content of the new Higher Education Standards effective from the 1st January 2017. The OHS

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program accreditation criteria and processes do not revisit evidence and processes likely to be addressed in a TEQSA review, but rather address the specific case of OHS programs.

Eligible programs

An OHS professional education program is defined as one that demonstrates the following:

- An accredited sequence of study provided at the AQF Level 7 or above (excluding graduate certificate)
- OHS as defined in the OHS Body of Knowledge constitutes at least 50% of the credit points and a minimum of one year equivalent fulltime study
- Objectives and learning experiences in the program are directed to the achievement of student learning outcomes derived from the OHS Body of Knowledge and demonstrated through academic assessment processes.
- A process for ongoing consultation with industry-based personnel.

Accreditation process

The assessment for accreditation is conducted by a three person team comprising at least one OHS academic, one OHS professional and a member of the Accreditation Board. The panel benefit from the advice of the education advisor to the Board and the registrar of the Board.

The evaluation process involves a desk audit of documentation, in-depth review of materials on the program-specific learning management system, telephone interviews of current students, recent graduates, sessional staff, teaching staff, program/discipline leader and Head of School. The outcomes may be: accreditation awarded; accreditation pending further information; accreditation requires significant additional work; accreditation refused at this time. Where accreditation is awarded it may be for the full 5 years or may be conditional on meeting critical requirements. During the period of accreditation an annual report is required on each accredited program. The Accreditation Board reserves the right to visit at any time during the period of accreditation on the provision of suitable notice.

**For further detail on the accreditation refer to [Information for universities applying for accreditation of programs for education of generalist OHS professionals \(2017\)](#).
<http://www.ohseducationaccreditation.org.au/providers/>**

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