OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY COUNCIL (Australia & New Zealand) LTD



Accreditation Standards for Entry-Level Occupational Therapy Education Programs

PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION NOVEMBER 2012

Occupational Therapy Council (Australia & New Zealand) Ltd PO Box 959 South Perth WA 6951 ACN 159 509 387

Phone: <u>+61-8-9368 2655</u> Fax: <u>+61-8-9368 2677</u>

E-mail: admin@cotrb.com.au

About the Occupational Therapy Council (Australia and New Zealand) Ltd

The Occupational Therapy Council (Australia and New Zealand) Ltd (OTC) is the body appointed by the Occupational Therapy Board of Australia (OTBA) as the accrediting authority under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009* (National Law). The OTC is an independent organisation established to assess and accredit occupational therapy education programs leading to eligibility for registration as an occupational therapist in Australia and New Zealand, and to assess the suitability of overseas-trained occupational therapists to practise in Australia and New Zealand.

The OTC's objectives that are particularly relevant to program accreditation include:

- To develop, review and maintain accreditation standards to assess occupational therapy programs for approval by the OTBA.
- To assess programs of study, and the education providers that provide the programs of study leading to eligibility for registration as an occupational therapist, to determine whether the programs meet approved accreditation standards.
- To assess for the purpose of granting accreditation to, programs leading to eligibility for registration as an occupational therapist.
- To advise and make recommendations to the OTBA and the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand (OTBNZ) (or either of them) relating to the accredited status to be granted to an occupational therapy program.
- To provide information and advice to the OTBA or Governmental agency relating to law and policy concerning accreditation and competency requirements for the registration of occupational therapists.

The OTC is supported in its accreditation activities in Australia by the professional association Occupational Therapy Australia Ltd (OTAL. OTAL currently accredits programs for recognition by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (WFOT). OTAL's accreditation process also informs the accreditation decisions of the OTC. OTAL will continue to provide the accreditation service for the OTC, to enable the OTC to provide the program accreditation function under the National Law. A Deed of Agreement between OTC and OTAL has been created to support this arrangement.

Information about this consultation

At the request of the OTBA, the OTC is seeking feedback on the Occupational Therapy Accreditation Standards (the Standards) for the occupational therapy profession in Australia. The National Law requires the Standards to undergo public review prior to their approval by the OTBA. The Standards must reflect requirements under the National Law, and be informed by developments in policy, workforce, occupational therapy practice and by wideranging consultation.

The Standards in this document were developed by OTAL with input from the OTC and other stakeholders earlier in 2012. They are the Standards currently used by OTAL to review programs of study for accreditation. They incorporate and build on the minimum standards for occupational therapy education outlined in the World Federation of Occupational Therapists (2002) *Revised minimum standards for the education of occupational therapists*. Forrestfield, WA: WFOT.

The Purpose of Program Accreditation

The program accreditation process seeks to achieve the following for all entry-level occupational therapy education programs:

- Graduates are eligible to be registered to practise in Australia.
- Graduates meet the Australian Minimum Competency Standards for New Graduate Occupational Therapists (Occupational Therapy Australia, 2010).
- The program content meets the World Federation of Occupational Therapist (2002) Minimum Standards for the Education of Occupational Therapists.
- There is evidence of continuous improvement within programs.
- Program content is in line with contemporary occupational therapy practice.
- Methods of instruction and assessment are in line with contemporary educational practice.
- Education providers engage in benchmarking and external review to ensure standards and ongoing improvement of occupational therapy training.
- There is whole-of-staff reflection about the structure and content of the entire program.

In line with the National Law, accreditation may be granted by the OTC if it is reasonably satisfied a program of study in occupational therapy, and the education provider that provides this program, meets the approved Standards. The OTC may also grant accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied the program of study and the education provider substantially meet an approved Standard, and the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure the program meets the Standard within a reasonable time. New and continuing programs in occupational therapy are reviewed against the same Standards.

The OTC reports its accreditation decision to the OTBA. The OTBA makes the decision on the approval of the program of study for registration purposes.

The Accreditation Standards (the Standards)

The Standards outline what is expected of entry-level occupational therapy education programs in Australia for the purpose of program accreditation.

The Standards currently required of occupational therapy entry-level education programs in Australia are outlined below, along with guidance on the evidence that can be used to demonstrate the Standards have been met. Separate 'Guidelines for Occupational Therapy Program Accreditation' will be available to provide further information about using these standards and preparing applications for program accreditation.

The Standards encompass the following areas:

- Program overview, philosophy and purpose.
- Curriculum content and sequence.
- Educational methods.
- Practice education/fieldwork.
- Local context of professional practice.
- Educators.
- Resources.
- Quality improvement processes.

Occupational Therapy Accreditation Standards

| | Section 1: Program overview, philosophy and purpose | | |
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| | Standard | Evidence | |
| 1.1 | The program is delivered from an institution that is an Australian university. | Name the institution. Name other existing occupational therapy entry-level programs within the institution. Provide the address of the program. | |
| 1.2 | The program of study leading to the award is a minimum of four years (96 teaching weeks) and is at least at the level of a Bachelor entry-level degree. | Name the level of award and abbreviation of program e.g. Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (B OT), Master of Occupational Therapy Practice (M OT Prac). Indicate the length of intended program in years, semesters and weeks. Detail the pre-requisites for entry and how these are assessed when previous studies are included to meet this four-year requirement. If the program is new and will replace an existing program, indicate which program it will replace and outline the process and proposed date for phasing out the existing program. | |
| 1.3 | The program is delivered from a distinct occupational therapy entity (e.g. occupational therapy school or department) and the status of this entity in the university is equivalent to comparable entry-level professional programs. | State the mission of the university and outline the way this mission influences the occupational therapy program. Indicate where the program fits within the organisation using an organisational chart. Comment on any specific university focus that influences the delivery of the occupational therapy program(s) in this institution e.g. a specific research agenda, a shift to graduate entry professional programs, a focus on regional/rural remote issues, a focus on primary care. | |
| 1.4 | The program has an explicitly articulated philosophy which includes an occupational view of people (relevant to individuals, groups, communities and populations), the challenges they face and how to enable health and wellbeing through occupation. | Outline the occupational philosophy and purpose of the program. Provide a rationale for the philosophy and purpose by referring to key references. | |

1.5 The elements of the program philosophy are congruent, and provide a comprehensive basis for the program. 1.6 The philosophy and purpose of the program reflect concepts of occupation and occupational therapy shared by international community of occupational Provide program documents that outline the philosophy, therapists. purpose, and graduate outcomes of the program. Include key references. 1.7 The philosophy and purpose of the program reflect current and predicted health and welfare needs, occupations, systems and priorities of Australia and the geographical region in which the program is located. 1.8 There are aims and objectives for the program which identify expected graduate outcomes.

| Section | Section 2: Curriculum content and sequence | | |
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| | Standard | Evidence | |
| 2.1 | The curriculum content and process is clearly articulated, planned, systematically scheduled and managed effectively. | Provide: an overview of the curriculum content and sequence for each semester of the program; individual subject/course outlines as provided to the students, including an abstract; objectives /learning outcomes; content overview; prescribed textbooks; details of assessment; teaching and learning strategies; copies of current timetables, or outlines of teaching activities in each subject, for all years of the program, in a format that indicates the time and study demands for students. Identify significant changes made to the curriculum since the previous accreditation with some rationale for the changes, and future plans for changes to the program. | |
| 2.2 | The curriculum content and sequence is congruent with the occupational therapy philosophy of the program. | Indicate how the philosophy of the program informs or shapes the curriculum content, the sequence and delivery of the program. | |
| 2.3 | The curriculum is designed and developed by occupational therapists with relevant clinical and educational curriculum design expertise. | Provide the name, title, qualifications and contact details of person/s developing, updating or modifying the program. If there are aspects of the program that were not designed and developed by occupational therapists (e.g. foundation subjects such as anatomy; psychology, sociology) explain how these aspects of the program are integrated into an occupational therapy framework in the curriculum. | |
| 2.4 | The curriculum content and process addresses all of the knowledge, skills and attitudes specified in the Australian Competency Standards for New Graduate Occupational Therapists (Occupational Therapy Australia, 2010). | Provide a detailed curriculum map to indicate where the units and elements of the Australian Competency Standards for New Graduate Occupational Therapists (2010) are addressed in the curriculum. Indicate how the knowledge, skills and attitudes embedded within the units of competence are developed for students across all years of the curriculum. | |
| 2.5 | In line with WFOT requirements, the program is structured to meet WFOT standards including: • 60 per cent is focused on occupation and | Indicate how the program meets these WFOT guidelines e.g. by referring to specific subjects or components of the curriculum where relevant material is addressed. | |

| | occupational therapy (including fieldwork to integrate knowledge); 10 to 30 per cent is focused on knowledge supporting an understanding of body structure and function and biomedicine (including fieldwork to integrate knowledge), and 10 to 30 per cent is focused on knowledge supporting an understanding of the human and social environment, and social perspectives of health (including fieldwork to integrate knowledge). | If the pre-requisite knowledge acquired prior to commencement in the occupational therapy program is being counted in this calculation (e.g. where knowledge of body structure and function is required for admission to a Masters entry program) provide full details of these studies. |
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| 2.6 | The program content includes individual, group, and population approaches to health and occupational enablement/wellbeing or occupational enablement leading to health and wellbeing. | Provide detail of how these approaches are addressed in the curriculum. |
| 2.7 | The curriculum content reflects current and future emerging practice areas of Australian occupational therapists | Outline how the program prepares graduates in accordance with the expectations of practitioners' key practice areas e.g. mental health, occupational rehabilitation, community health. Provide evidence that the program content is responsive to international, national and state/territory specific practice standards that have been developed by the profession, and indicate how these inform the curriculum. |
| 2.8 | Contemporary national and international theories, research findings, occupational therapy practice and expectations of professional practice inform the curriculum. | Provide evidence that the program meets the standard e.g. outline the theories and research used, collaborative relationships with other occupational therapy programs, peer review processes, faculty exchange and involvement of international educators in program review. |

| Section | Section 3: Educational methods | | |
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| | Standard | Evidence | |
| 3.1 | A contemporary educational philosophy underpins teaching and learning in the program. | Outline the rationale for this educational philosophy and include key references. | |
| 3.2 | National and international educational theories and research inform the educational methods used within the program. | Provide evidence and examples of national and international educational methods and research informing the educational methods used in the program. Include key references. | |
| 3.3 | The range of educational methods used supports the development of graduate knowledge, reasoning, practice skills and attitudes. | Describe the range of educational/teaching and learning strategies used within the program including the underlying premise for their inclusion (refer to individual subject outlines to illustrate this). Outline | |
| 3.4 | The educational methods used support the development of life-long learning behaviour. | the evidence which supports the choice of teaching/learning approaches used, including key references. | |
| 3.5 | Assessment methods are contemporary and congruent with the educational approach of the program. | Describe the range of assessment strategies used, and indicate how assessment items ensure students meet the subject and the program learning objectives. | |
| 3.6 | The range of assessment methods used supports the development of graduate knowledge, reasoning, practice skills and attitudes developed by the program. | Outline the research evidence for the assessment processes used including key references. Indicate the strategies used to assure the quality of the assessment process (e.g. committee review of exam questions, documentation of expected answers, moderation between markers). Provide examples of assessed work that demonstrates a range of standards i.e. good, poor and average to the assessors during the site visit. Outline strategies used to manage poorly performing and failing students. Describe the processes and methods used to evaluate a student's performance on fieldwork/practice placements e.g. SPEF-R, learning contracts, reflective assignments. | |
| 3.7 | The assessment strategies used are appropriate for developing competent and safe graduates who are able to practise at completion of the program. | Comment on the cumulative assessment process or specific items of assessment used for this purpose. | |

| Secti | on 4: Practice education/Fieldwork | T | |
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| | Standard | Evidence | |
| 4.1 | Students experience a range of different practice education opportunities that require them to integrate knowledge, skills and attitudes to practise with a range of people who have different needs, and in differing circumstances. | Provide detail of the range of fieldwork opportunities available for students (fieldwork is the time where students implement an occupational therapy process or an aspect of this process, with or for a real living person). | |
| | The range of experiences always includes: people of different age groups; people who have recently acquired long-standing health needs; interventions that focus on the person, the occupation, and the environment. | Outline the systems used and the administrative processes in place to manage and monitor student fieldwork. Comment on areas of strength/difficulty in obtaining adequate range of placements and/or supervision, and the strategies used to obtain the required number of | |
| | Fieldwork experiences will normally also encompass at least three of the following parameters: | placements. | |
| | a range of personal factors such as gender, ethnicity that is reflective of the population that will be recipients of occupational therapy; individual, community/group and population approaches; health conditions that affect different aspects of body structure and function that cause different kinds of activity limitations; different delivery systems such as hospital and community, public and private, health and educational, urban and rural, and local and international. | | |
| 4.2 | Fieldwork/practice education experiences are of sufficient duration to allow integration of theory to practise. In line with WFOT requirements a minimum of 1,000 hours is required, including at least one fieldwork placement of eight weeks' duration. | Provide detail of all activities contributing to student fieldwork experiences. Outline the nature and extent of consultation with local occupational therapy practitioners and others in relation to gaining and sustaining placements. | |
| 4.3 | There are sufficient numbers of quality fieldwork/practice education placements available for students. | Outline the strategies being used to ensure a minimum of 1000 hours of fieldwork/practice education will be completed by students in the program, and indicate where students experience fieldwork placements of at least eight weeks' duration. | |
| | | Provide evidence of agreements that ensure students have access to an appropriate range of fieldwork/practice education experiences. | |

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| 4.4 | Fieldwork/practice education is provided by a registered occupational therapist (role model) with at least 12 months' experience, or an occupational therapy educator. | Outline the process to ensure all supervisors of practice education/fieldwork are occupational therapy practitioners with at least one year's experience, or an experienced occupational therapy academic. |
| 4.5 | Administrative arrangements for fieldwork meet legal statutory obligations. | Outline the legal agreements in place, and include examples of contracts, memoranda of understanding. Provide evidence that indicates affiliation /placement agreements are in place for all placement locations. Provide evidence that agreements indicate arrangements for public protection and student protection (e.g. Working with Children checks, police checks, immunisation, Safe Food Handling, First Aid, public liability insurance/indemnity for practice education/fieldwork experiences, OH & S). |
| 4.6 | Fieldwork is distributed throughout every year of the curriculum. | Describe the distribution of hours of practice education/fieldwork through the curriculum, and provide a rationale for this distribution. Include, as an attachment, the documentation used to log the required hours of experience. |
| 4.7 | Learning agreements are used to guide and facilitate learning during practice education/fieldwork, supervised and assessed by an occupational therapist with at least 12 months' experience. | Include, as an attachment, examples of student learning agreements. |
| 4.8 | Practice education/fieldwork supervisors are prepared for student placements, and there is ongoing support and development of supervisors. | Indicate how the quality of supervision is assured, and comment on: the strategies used to supervise students across the range of placements offered; strategies used to respond to student feedback about their supervision; strategies used to ensure supervisors of practice education placements are adequately trained, supported and mentored. Indicate procedures used to promote supervision which is graded from close support to independence, depending on the student's needs and year of the program. Outline guidelines or policy to promote a situation in which the number of students placed at a fieldwork site will be in proportion to the number of available clients. |

4.9 The program adequately prepares students for Outline the strategies used to ensure the roles and their placements. responsibilities of students on placement are made known to them, and made clear, explicit and relevant to the particular context. Outline how the roles and responsibilities of practice education/fieldwork supervisors and educators are made known to students, and made clear, explicit and relevant to the particular context. 4.10 Indicate how the evidence base on fieldwork/practice Practice education/fieldwork draws on the literature and relevant research to support the education informs, and is applied to the development, program's approach to the establishment, implementation and evaluation of the fieldwork implementation and evaluation of placements. program (e.g. supervisory strategies, supervisor

education, teaching learning strategies, types of

placements offered). Include key references.

| Section | Section 5: Local context of professional practice | | |
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| | Standard | Evidence | |
| 5.1 | The curriculum content is relevant to Australia's national, state/territory and local region health, well-being and occupational therapy needs. | Indicate strategies used to ensure the curriculum content is relevant to the needs of the health, welfare, education, justice and disability systems; arts and cultural sector, and legislative environment in which the program is being delivered. | |
| | | Outline the strategies used to enable students to learn how to adapt their approach to take account of the local context of their practice e.g. placements in role-emerging locations as well as acute care; learning tasks that address a diverse range of social, economic and cultural factors. | |
| 5.2 | Graduates engage in culturally safe practice. | Identify how the curriculum incorporates the principles/standards of culturally safe practice. Provide specific description of content of particular relevance for the health and well-being of first Australians. | |
| 5.3 | The program incorporates and updates content in response to major national, state/territory and local health priorities and practice standards. | Identify how the curriculum incorporates current health priority policy directions, e.g. palliative care, mental health, chronic disease self-management. | |
| 5.4 | Academic staff maintain up-to-date knowledge of the local contexts of practice. | Indicate the strategies undertaken to ensure academics maintain up-to-date knowledge of the local contexts of practice. | |

| Section | Section 6: Educators | | |
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| | Standard Standard | Evidence | |
| 6.1 | is an experienced occupational therapist with evidence of leadership in the clinical and/or higher education sector; has a post-graduate qualification, normally at doctoral level, and research experience in occupational therapy; has demonstrated capacity to develop innovative and contemporary occupational therapy education at undergraduate and postgraduate level, and has demonstrated leadership capacity in complex and changing environments across multiple sectors (e.g. education, health, disability, community, higher education); will normally be appointed at professorial level or a minimum of associate professor level; has the capacity to manage complex university processes to ensure the academic approval of the program. | Provide the name, title, qualifications, CV and contact details of the academic leader of the program. | |
| 6.2 | There are a sufficient number of appropriately qualified occupational therapy academics to ensure effective development and delivery of the program. | Provide evidence that the number of academics is sufficient for the size of the intake and demands of the curriculum to be implemented. Indicate how the balance of full-time, part-time, sessional, contract and tenure ensures effective program development and delivery. Where there are aspects of the program not fully supported by the academic staff, indicate strategies used to address this. | |
| 6.3 | The combined qualifications and experience of the academic staff supports the curriculum content and education methods used in the program. Academics have a degree higher than the qualification received by graduates of the program, and can demonstrate excellence in their area of teaching. | Detail staff expertise that prepares them to deliver program, include comment on how the mix professional backgrounds, qualifications a experience of the educators enables the delivery of program that is consistent with its stated philosop and purpose (attach CVs for those in leaders positions). Provide some detail of the expertise of occupation therapy educators (permanent and regular sessions). | |
| | | teaching staff) responsible for the delivery of the program(s), including names, qualifications, fraction of appointment, key relevant expertise, role and research interests. | |

| | | Describe the management strategies implemented to support, supervise and mentor less experienced occupational therapy academic staff. |
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| 6.5 | Academic staff are up-to-date with knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to their teaching. They maintain their currency with the international occupational therapy, health, disability, welfare community and educational thinking and practice, and they are competent to teach in their allocated areas. | Indicate the methods used by occupational therapy educators to remain up-to-date e.g. accessing international literature, gaining further formal qualifications, attending programs and conferences, international collaboration with recognised experts, engaging in research, practising as an occupational therapist, supervision of practising occupational therapists, learning from visiting experts, student feedback, critical appraisal of teaching practice by consumers; knowledge of teaching/learning research findings, and skills in effective teaching. |
| 6.6 | There are policies and practices that address the balance of teaching, research, community or university service and administrative functions for academic staff | Outline the policies and procedures in place to address the balance between teaching, research, administrative and community service functions of staff. Include any published policy documents as attachments. |
| 6.7 | Adequate numbers of administrative staff are providing support for the academic activities of the occupational therapy educators. | Outline the administrative systems and number of administrative staff, their fractional appointment, and key role. |

| Section 7: Res | | esources |
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| | Standard | Evidence |
| 7.1 | The program is adequately resourced in terms of physical facilities to effectively deliver on its intent. | Provide evidence that demonstrates the program currently and will continue to be adequately resourced to deliver its intent e.g. a business case or three to five-year budget for new programs or documentation demonstrating there is: |
| | | adequate and accessible teaching space; offices for educators and support staff; venues for specialist learning activities; equipment that is relevant to recipients of occupational therapy services; storage space to effectively and efficiently deliver the program; library and information technology resources that are accessible, up-to-date and supported by effective internet and off campus access. Comment on any strategies used to manage limitations. |
| 7.2 | The educational facilities and resources available to the program are consistent with the program's philosophy and purpose. | Outline how the educational facilities and resources are consistent with the program's philosophy and purpose e.g. a program that includes a focus on developing economically viable employment options for disadvantaged populations may require opportunities for students to experience local work settings and the occupations performed there. |
| 7.3 | Plans are in place for the continual improvement of facilities and resources to support curriculum development where needed. | Strategies to ensure facilities and resources will remain up-to-date, and support curriculum development is documented. |
| 7.4 | Adequate and effective administrative services are provided to the occupational therapy program to support its effective delivery. | Outline the administrative arrangements in place. Where aspects of the program are not fully supported, indicate the strategies being used to address this. |

| Section | Section 8: Quality Improvement | | |
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| | Standard | Evidence | |
| 8.1 | Conditions and recommendations made in previous accreditation reports have been addressed. | Provide a summary of achievements and progress related to each of the conditions and recommendations in the previous accreditation report and any subsequent reports. | |
| 8.2 | The program philosophy and purpose, curriculum, content/sequence and educational methods (including practice education) are reviewed in an ongoing manner and revised in response to local changes and development of international knowledge. Current literature/evidence is used to inform program improvement. | Outline the quality improvement/assurance processes that are used to review and revise the program. Include comment on the strategies used to ensure that current evidence is used to inform program improvement. Indicate when the program was last reviewed and when the next review is scheduled. Provide an overview of the university's teaching and learning policies and procedures of direct relevance to the development, implementation and review of the occupational therapy program. | |
| 8.3 | Key stakeholders are engaged in the provision of feedback relevant to the occupational therapy program. | Provide names and titles of members of the advisory board/steering committee. Provide evidence that there is adequate and appropriate consultation with key stakeholders on program design and delivery, including curriculum content and the fieldwork/practice education arrangements. | |
| 8.4 | A steering committee or advisory board including key occupational therapy stakeholders provides advice to the program. | Indicate how the program receives and is responsive to feedback from the: Clinicians, practitioners, managers, fieldwork/ practice education supervisors; employers, funders representing a range of | |
| 8.5 | There is support for the program from local employers, practitioners and the relevant state or territory division of the professional association, Occupational Therapy Australia | government, private, and NGOs servicing a range of human service activities across the lifespan; • state/territory occupational therapy division of the association; • recent graduates; • students (including their perspective on all aspects of the teaching and learning experience); • representatives, such as allied health advisors, from government departments (health, education, disability). | |

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| 8.6 | The perspective of consumers/service users/clients (i.e. people with a health and/or occupational issue/people who are recipients of OT services) are valued and integrated within the delivery of program. | Provide details and examples of the manner in which consumer feedback and perspectives are obtained and incorporated into the design, delivery and evaluation of the program. |
| 8.7 | The effectiveness of the program's graduates as occupational therapists is evaluated and monitored. Graduate performance/feedback is incorporated into the ongoing development of the program. | Indicate the strategies used and the results e.g. from graduate destination survey, stakeholder feedback and review mechanisms.PROVIDE MORE EXAMPLE Provide evidence of continuing demand for the program e.g. enrolment statistics and completion rates, attrition rates, graduate employment data. |
| 8.8 | The program draws on current research from new/recent graduates to shape the curriculum and the teaching and learning methods used (including practice education/fieldwork), and to promote successful integration of students into the workplace and workforce following graduation. | Provide evidence of how current research on the experiences of new/recent graduates informs the curriculum and facilitates their integration into the workforce. |
| 8.9 | Strategies/admission policies are in place to target groups under-represented in the program to ensure student profile is reflective of the community profile. | Provide details of admission policy documents. |
| 8.10 | Processes/accommodations including the assessment and management of at risk/special needs students are used across all aspects of the program, including fieldwork. | Provide policy documents relevant to sub groups of students e.g. international and culturally and linguistically diverse students, students with disabilities, and students with academic performance issues. |

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