

1. Purpose

The purpose of this accreditation guideline is to ensure that all accredited programs and those seeking accreditation for Intern training in Queensland are aware of the parameters for which notification to Prevocational Medical Accreditation Queensland (PMAQ) of changes to the Intern Training Program (ITP) are required.

2. Scope

This guideline applies to all accredited Intern Training Programs in Queensland, which includes all components of the program from governance arrangements to terms and sites in which training is conducted.

3. Context

The providers of Accredited Intern Training Programs are responsible for ensuring ongoing compliance with accreditation standards. The Australian Medical Council (AMC) Intern training national standards for programs and the PMAQ Standards for the accreditation of intern training in Queensland, standard 1.2.2 requires that *the intern training program documents and reports to the intern training accreditation authority on changes in the program, units or rotations which may affect the program delivery meeting the national standards.*

Facilities that train interns are dynamic, and it is acknowledged that changes to an ITP occur regularly. These changes may be a result of forward planning for the ITP or they may be due to influences outside the control of those managing and governing the ITP.

Where changes are planned, irrespective of the anticipated consequences, approval by PMAQ is required **prior to the changes taking effect** or placement of an intern in the relevant program or term following implementation of such changes.

Where changes occur as a result of external influences and are not planned, it is expected that notification to PMAQ occurs in a timely manner and that consequences for ongoing accreditation are mediated between the training provider and the PMAQ Accreditation Committee.

4. The Standard

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) Intern training national standards for Programs and the PMAQ standards for the accreditation of intern training in Queensland, standard 1.2.2 requires that *the intern training program documents and reports to the intern training accreditation authority on changes in the program, units or rotations which may affect the program delivery meeting the national standards.*

The AMC suggests major changes to an accredited program that may result in a review include:

- Absence of senior staff with significant roles in intern training for an extended period with no replacement (for example, a Director Medical Services or Director of Clinical Training who is absent for more than one month).
- Plans for significant redesign or restructure of the health service that impacts on interns (for example, a significant change to clinical services provided or a ward closure causing change to caseload and case mix for the term).
- Rostering changes that significantly alter access to supervision or exposure to educational opportunities.
- Resource changes that significantly reduce administrative support, facilities or educational programs available. Intern training accreditation authorities also need to be informed of significant changes in a term or unit that may lead to a review. This would include an increase in posts in an accredited term or the inclusion of a new term in an accredited program.

PMAQ also needs to be informed of significant changes in a term or unit. These changes may lead to a review and include:

- An increase in posts in an accredited term or the inclusion of a new term in an accredited program.
- Absence of a term supervisor for an extended period (such as one month) with no replacement
- Absence of immediate clinical supervision for any period
- Significant reduction in clinical staff available to directly supervise and support prevocational trainees, including after hours
- Changes to unit medical staffing resulting in interns undertaking, for an extended period, higher-level or alternative clinical duties than those given in the term position description
- Significant changes to term case mix or clinical activity that impact on intern patient load for an extended period.
- Significant changes to rostered hours that diminish the role of the intern in the unit and/or their clinical supervision (for example, introducing a predominantly after-hours roster).

Notification to PMAQ is required via the applicable Change in Circumstance form. Like for like changes of term and clinical supervisors are considered part of the day-to-day management of an Intern Training Program and do not require notification to PMAQ. PMAQ must however be notified of significant changes to position descriptions, minimum qualifications or key responsibilities for those positions with responsibility for the ITP, or where a supervisor is absent for a period of more than one month without alternative supervisory arrangements in place.

Please note each Change in Circumstance is required to be submitted on a separate form.

5. Assessment of Change in Circumstance

Providers of accredited ITP's are required to complete and submit the Change in Circumstance (CiC) form to PMAQ. In collaboration with the facility, PMAQ will determine the standards that are required to be addressed in response to the change. An assessor team will normally be convened to examine the evidence. In certain circumstances, it may be deemed appropriate for the change to be assessed by PMAQ agency staff. An interview with training provider staff or site visit may be required to assist in the evaluation of evidence against the standards. The requirement for these is at the discretion of the Assessor team. Following analysis of the available evidence against the relevant standard/s the Assessor team will develop a report of their findings and make recommendation on the outcome to the Accreditation Committee for adjudication. Recommendations may include:

- The change is approved
- Further information is required for the change to be adequately assessed
- The change is approved with condition (general or monitoring)
- The change is not approved

Interns placed in terms that have undergone changes which have not been through a process of review and subsequently approved, will be deemed to have completed an unaccredited term. This includes core and non-core terms. This may impact the intern's eligibility for general registration and intern and patient safety.

The outcome of an accreditation decision prompted by this process is subject to the PMAQ internal review process in accordance with the National Law.

6. Examples of changes which should be notified to PMAQ

Table 1 provides examples of changes which may occur within an Accredited Program and of which PMAQ should be notified.

This table is intended to provide guidance to providers of accredited ITP's, however, does not constitute an exhaustive list.

Table 1: Examples of changes which should be notified
Governance
Nature of how Interns are being hosted at a facility/site changes <i>Eg: Site changes from taking interns on a rotational basis to becoming a 'parent' site to interns for full 52 weeks</i>
Absence of senior staff with significant roles in intern training for an extended period with no replacement <i>eg: a Director Medical Services or Director of Clinical Training absent for more than one month</i>
Changes to the Medical Education Unit including number of staff, staff position descriptions or areas of responsibility. PMAQ does not however require notification of staffing changes that are considered 'like for like' and part of the recruitment to already existing positions. Change in roles or staffing of the Medical Education Unit or equivalent including a change in capacity or expertise
Rotations of interns to new off-site terms or to other terms not previously included in the ITP
Term structure
Term status change (non-core to core)
An increase in the number of posts in a term
Two similar/same specialty units from different sites amalgamate, resulting in a new model of care, patient flow and changes to team structure
Two or more terms merge to form one term
One term is split into two or more terms
Establishment of, or changes to a Team within a Term

Table 1: Examples of changes which should be notified
Rostering
Significant change to Intern rostering, eg: increased hours worked; rostered/not rostered overtime; change from conventional working week
Change in intern roster or allocation to include ward call or night shift
Supervision
Changes in the clinical supervision and/or supervision arrangements resulting in impact on level of supervision, patient numbers, case-mix, workload
Absence of a term supervisor with no replacement for a period of greater than one month
Clinical Experience
Intern clinical duties in a core term changes considerably resulting in reduced or modified clinical exposure
Intern clinical duties in a non-core term changes considerably resulting in reduced or modified clinical exposure
Intern clinical duties altered due to unit staffing changes or model of care changes
Education Experience (including orientation, assessment and evaluation)
Education and Training program is changed significantly with a new untried model

8. Supporting documents

- Change in Circumstance Form
- PMAQ Intern Medical Accreditation Standard
- PMAQ Accreditation Standards- Standards for the accreditation of medical intern training in Queensland

9. Version Control

Version	Date	Comments
0.1	December 2018	<i>Initial draft prepared by PMAQ</i>
0.1	13 December 2018	Reviewed by PMAQ Accreditation Committee
0.2	17 December 2018	Endorsed by PMAQ Governance Committee
0.3	6 February 2019	Presented to PMAQ Governance Committee -update to logo and wording to 'change in circumstance'
1.0	27 February 2020	Migrated to QH template and reviewed current information.
1.1	9 July 2020	Guideline reviewed by Accreditation Committee
2.0	28 October 2020	Endorsed by A/DDG & Chief Medical Officer