



ACCREDITATION MATTERS

Vol. 5 - December 2025

Welcome to the fifth edition of *Accreditation matters*, the Occupational Therapy Council of Australia's (OTC's) update for education providers and assessors. In the final issue of the year, we share updates, insights, and resources to support your work in what is another fast-paced and dynamic year.

In this update you will find the following information:

- Update on OTC Program Accreditation Committee membership
- 2026 Interprofessional Education (IPE) Colloquium – call for presenters
- Publication of accreditation report summaries on the OTC website
- Introduction of streamlined accreditation reports
- Survey on the relationship between the OTC and education providers
- Simulation as practice education
- Podcasts on Indigenising curriculum in practice
- Indigenous Allied Health Australia: Supporting Indigenous allied health students.

We will also introduce you to Ally Cheah, who has joined the OTC accreditation team as Senior Accreditation Officer.

We welcome your feedback, so if you have any comments about the format of this update, any queries or topics you would like us to address in future updates, please let us know via accreditation@otcouncil.com.au.

As 2025 comes to an end, we want to express our appreciation for your ongoing collaboration and support throughout the year. All of us at the OTC wish you a joyful Christmas and a safe, restful festive season. We look forward to continuing our work with you in 2026.

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Update on OTC Program Accreditation Committee membership

After many years of service to the OTC, Dr Lynne Adamson is retiring from the OTC Program Accreditation Committee (PAC). We extend our heartfelt thanks to her for her invaluable work and dedication to the OTC, including the OTC Board and the PAC since 2012. Her expertise, commitment and collaborative spirit have made a lasting impact on the OTC's work and the profession. We are grateful for her significant contributions and wish her every success in her future endeavours.

Dr Jill Hummell is retiring as the Chair of the PAC and as an OTC director. We are pleased to welcome her back as a PAC member.

We also welcome the new PAC Chair – Professor Geneviève Pépin as well as the PAC's two new members – Ms Ali Gebhardt and Ms Jan Connolly. Ali is a proud Wiradjuri woman and lecturer in occupational therapy at Western Sydney University. Jan is a community representative with significant experience in program accreditation and the higher education sector. We look forward to their contributions to the PAC into the future.



2026 Interprofessional Education Colloquium: Call for presenters

The topic for the 2026 Interprofessional Education Colloquium, hosted by the Australian Pharmacy Council (APC), is 'Empowering voices: Educating health professionals for respectful and inclusive conversations'.

The event will be held on Tuesday, 5 May 2026 at Hotel Realm in Canberra. The 2026 theme will explore how to equip future health professionals with the capabilities to have meaningful, inclusive conversations that help communities and colleagues feel heard, respected and empowered.

Under this overarching theme, the APC invites presentations on case studies and/or activities that have provided opportunities for students to build skills for respectful and inclusive conversations.

Presenters should be educators and health professionals or supervisors from any health profession or collaborative teams across health professions. Joint presentations are encouraged. Presenters are encouraged to invite a student to share their perspective.

Of note, a maximum of three presentations will be selected. Two authors per submission will receive sponsored registration, travel to and from their city within Australia and one night of accommodation. Student presenters will receive complimentary registration. They may apply for external funding for travel and accommodation support.

Submissions will close on Sunday, 14 December 2025, and presenters will be announced in late January 2026.

For more information, visit <https://www.ipecolloquium.com/join-the-program>.

Publication of accreditation report summaries on the OTC website

From mid-2026, the OTC will begin publishing summaries of accreditation reports on its website following confirmation and recommendations from the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency's (Ahpra's) Independent Accreditation Committee.

Ahpra's advice is for agreed minimum reporting requirements, ensuring a uniform standard across health profession accreditation bodies within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme. This approach aligns with the OTC's commitment to transparency and collaboration.

For education providers, these summaries will offer valuable insights into accreditation outcomes and common themes, helping programs benchmark their practices, identify areas for improvement and stay informed about sector-wide expectations. The OTC will send program leaders a draft of the summary template early in 2026, seeking feedback.

For other external stakeholders, such as current and potential students, employers, consumers of occupational therapy services or the wider public, the reports will give greater transparency to the accreditation decision-making process.

By sharing these summaries, the OTC aims to enhance stakeholder confidence and support continuous quality improvement in occupational therapy education.

Introduction of streamlined accreditation reports

From the second half of 2025, the OTC has introduced streamlined accreditation reports, a change designed to make reporting clearer, more concise and easier to navigate.

The change responds to feedback from education providers and assessors seeking reports that are easier to interpret and apply. The revised format is designed to present essential information in a concise and accessible manner, reducing administrative burden while maintaining the rigour and transparency expected of our standards.

These reports will help education providers quickly identify key outcomes, understand expectations and apply insights to continuous improvement.



Survey on the relationship between the OTC and education providers

We thank all the education providers who participated in our recent survey on the relationship between the OTC and education providers.

This survey was conducted as part of Ahpra's whole-of-scheme annual reporting requirements, which require each accreditation authority within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme to seek feedback on the strength and quality of these relationships. The questions were developed by Ahpra in collaboration with accreditation authorities, including the OTC, to ensure consistency and relevance.

The feedback gathered will inform the progress we make in enhancing communication, streamlining processes and ensuring our approach continues to meet the needs of education providers and stakeholders. Your input is invaluable in helping us identify opportunities to strengthen engagement and improve accreditation processes, and we look forward to continued collaboration into the future.



Simulation-based learning in occupational therapy programs

Simulation is increasingly recognised as a transformative approach in occupational therapy education. It gives students a safe, structured space to practise skills before stepping into real-world placements.

In the 2025 annual monitoring reports, we asked education providers to share how many hours of simulation they counted as practice education and what activities were included. The responses showed a wide range: some programs reported up to 200 hours, while others had fewer than 50 hours, and some none at all.

An analysis of the comments shows significant variation in how simulation is integrated and counted toward the World Federation of Occupational Therapists' 1,000-hour practice education requirement.

The types of simulation used are diverse, ranging from high-fidelity experiences such as hospital ward setups, telehealth scenarios and interprofessional simulations, to low-fidelity activities like role plays and case-based learning. Digital and virtual platforms, including virtual reality and telehealth technologies, are also gaining traction. Some education providers run immersive simulated placements assessed with the SPEF-R2 or use advanced technologies and interprofessional collaboration that mirrors real-world practice.

Across programs, simulation serves multiple purposes: preparing students for placements, assessing competency and scaffolding learning throughout the curriculum. Most programs include structured pre-briefing and debriefing, consumer feedback and reflection activities to make the experience meaningful.

We look forward to sharing some innovative simulation activities used by some of our education providers in our next edition.

We will also be using the feedback to inform our review of the OTC's 'Explanatory notes for the use of simulation in practice education': <https://www.otcouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Explanatory-notes-for-simulation-in-practice-education-updated-March2020.pdf>.

Podcasts on Indigenising curriculum in practice

Indigenising curricula has been an important focus for education providers over the past several years, with significant and meaningful work being undertaken in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure teaching and learning more authentically reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, knowledge systems and ways of knowing. We have seen some excellent progress in this space, with thoughtful approaches that enhance both cultural understanding and educational quality.

Professor Tracey Bunda and Associate Professor Katelyn Barney from The University of Queensland co-host a compelling series of podcasts exploring practical and scholarly approaches to Indigenising the university curriculum. Each episode is an interview with Indigenous and/or non-Indigenous staff across the faculties at The University of Queensland.

Podcast topics include:

- Relationships
- Respect
- Cultural capability
- Benefits
- Truth
- Reciprocity

The link to the podcast series is:

<https://indigenisingcurriculum.podbean.com/>



Indigenous Allied Health Australia: Supporting Indigenous allied health students

Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) is a national organisation committed to growing and supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tertiary students enrolled in allied health programs, IAHA offers a suite of culturally safe supports and professional development opportunities designed to help them succeed academically and transition confidently into their careers.

What IAHA offers students:

- Mentoring and networking: Access to experienced professionals and peers who understand the unique challenges faced by Indigenous students.
- Scholarships and career pathways: Financial assistance and structured programs to help students complete their studies and explore diverse health careers.
- Leadership and cultural training: Workshops and resources that strengthen cultural identity while building leadership skills for future health roles.
- Employment and internship opportunities: Connections to employers committed to culturally safe workplaces.

IAHA's approach is holistic, supporting not just academic success but also wellbeing, cultural safety and career readiness. Students engaging with IAHA can gain access to a strong community and resources that empower them to become leaders in improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Education providers can help their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students open doors to leadership, cultural empowerment and rewarding health careers by connecting them to IAHA's programs. These supports can enhance Indigenous students' educational journey and future career opportunities.

Visit <https://iaha.com.au/> to learn more and ensure Indigenous students are accessing this additional level of support.



Meet Ally Cheah, Senior Accreditation Officer

Ally recently joined the OTC team as a Senior Accreditation Officer, bringing expertise in leading cross-functional projects and streamlining processes. Passionate about making a positive impact in education and the community, Ally values collaboration, innovation and continuous learning – values that align well with the OTC's mission. She looks forward to strengthening accreditation practices and supporting education providers.

What inspired you to join the OTC?

I chose to join the OTC because it offers me the chance to contribute to projects that create real impact and drive meaningful change. The OTC's focus on collaboration, innovation and continuous improvement matches my professional values. I was drawn to its supportive culture and commitment to excellence, which provide an ideal environment to grow and work alongside dedicated professionals who share a passion for making a difference.

What do you enjoy about your current role?

I enjoy participating in projects that influence positive outcomes in occupational therapy education. My role allows me to work with similar-minded professionals, tackle complex challenges and improve processes in ways that benefit education providers, students, assessors and the fabulous people I work with. I appreciate the variety and continuous learning the position offers, as well as the chance to apply innovative thinking in a supportive environment. Being part of an organisation committed to excellence and meaningful change makes the work both fulfilling and inspiring.

What is one of your career highlights?

One of my career highlights was playing a key role in improving accreditation policies and processes at the Australian Dental Council. I led risk-based assessments and collaborated closely with education providers, committee members and assessors to strengthen compliance and quality standards. This work not only enhanced the integrity of accreditation outcomes but also contributed to continuous improvement across systems and practices, making the experience impactful and worthwhile.

What is your favourite travel destination?

I am fortunate to have explored several countries in Asia, each offering unique cultural experiences. Among them, places that beautifully balance tradition and modernity, such as Taiwan and Kyoto, stand out as my favourites. I love wandering through serene temples and lush gardens, immersing myself in streets steeped in centuries of heritage, and then shifting to the energy of bustling night markets and vibrant cityscapes. These contrasts create an experience that is, to me, at once grounding and uplifting, and I often return feeling refreshed and enriched.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I enjoy activities that help me disconnect and recharge mentally and physically. Spending time outdoors is my favourite way to unwind, whether it is taking a peaceful walk, going for a refreshing swim, cycling along scenic routes or tending to my garden. I find that these activities clear my mind and give me a sense of balance after a busy day. They keep me energised, focused and help me go into a new day with a positive outlook.



Do you have any pets?

I don't have any pets now, but I do dog-sit for friends. We even joke that it's like time-sharing a dog!

What is one thing on your bucket list?

I would love to visit Scandinavia to explore its castles and cities, go kayaking through its fjords and stay at an ice hotel.

This, and previous issues of *Accreditation matters* can be found on our website [here](#).



The Occupational Therapy Council of Australia Ltd acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands where we work and live. We celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of Australia. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

*Commissioned artwork by Katrina Graves, Wiradjuri woman.