

**AASW
ASWEAS**

Accreditation Appeal Policy

V2.0 October 2025



AASW

.....
Australian Association
of Social Workers

1. Purpose

1.1 The Australian Association of Social Workers (**AASW**) accredits social work programs provided by the Higher Education Providers (**HEPs**) under the Australian Social Work Education Accreditation Standards (**ASWEAS**).

1.2 This policy applies to the following accreditation decisions:

- a) a decision not to accredit a social work program (including a decision to revoke the accreditation of an existing program);
- b) a decision not to approve variations of an accredited program; and
- c) a decision imposing conditions on an accredited program.

1.3 If a HEP disagrees with an Accreditation Decision, that HEP may apply to appeal the Accreditation Decision in accordance with this policy.

1.4 The appeal will involve the following steps:

- a) a review of the Accreditation Decision against the chosen grounds for appeal as stated in Clause 3; and
- a) a decision as to whether the Accreditation Decision should be affirmed or set aside and substituted with a different decision in accordance with Clause 5.2.

2. Procedure to apply for an appeal of an Accreditation Decision

2.1 An application for an appeal of an Accreditation Decision must:

- a) be made within thirty (30) business days of the date of the letter advising the HEP of the Accreditation Decision;
- b) be made in writing and submitted to the AASW either by email to education@aasw.asn.au or aasw.ceo@aasw.asn.au. The AASW will not accept oral applications for an appeal of an Accreditation Decision;
- c) clearly identify the appealable Accreditation Decision under Clause 1.2;
- d) clearly state the ground/s for appeal (see Clause 3.1);
- e) particularise the basis and reasons for each ground/s; and
- f) include and annex any relevant material on which the HEP wishes to rely.

2.2 It is the responsibility of the HEP to ensure that application(s) for the appeal are received by AASW within thirty (30) business days from the date of the letter advising the HEP of

the initial Accreditation Decision. If an application for appeal is not received by AASW within the thirty (30) business day period, then AASW is not required to consider the appeal of the Accreditation Decision.

3. Grounds for appeal

3.1 Without limiting the grounds that a HEP may apply for an appeal of an Accreditation Decision, an appeal may be made on the basis of one or more of the following grounds:

- a) relevant procedures were not observed when making the initial Accreditation Decision;
- b) relevant and significant evidence or information received as part of original application was not considered (or not properly considered) when making the initial Accreditation Decision;
- c) irrelevant information, misinformation or information which was unfairly prejudicial to the HEP was considered when making the initial Accreditation Decision;
- d) an error was made in relation to a finding on a material fact; and/or
- e) the manner in which the accreditation process was conducted was procedurally unfair.

3.2 An application for appeal should include all information and supporting documents that the HEP seeks to have considered and which supports their grounds of appeal. AASW may, but is not obliged to, provide the HEP with further opportunity to supply reasonable additional supporting evidence. If AASW allows for additional reasonable supporting evidence to be submitted as part of the appeal, such information must be provided by a date set by AASW. The Appeal Panel may also re-assess any information that was supplied as part of the HEP's original accreditation submission.

4. How AASW will undertake the appeal process

4.1 Upon receiving an application to appeal an Accreditation Decision, the AASW will acknowledge receipt of the application..

4.2 Upon receiving the appeal documentation, the AASW Accreditation team will notify the AASW Financial team to issue an invoice to the HEP for the appeal application fee, which covers the cost of the appeal process.

4.3 The AASW will convene (and notify the HEP of) the panel that will determine the application for appeal within twenty (20) business days of AASW's receipt of the HEP's application for appeal (and provided the HEP has paid the appeal fee). The panel consists of:

- a) a nominee of the AASW Accreditation Council;
- b) an experienced ASWEAS Chair or senior accreditor; and

- c) an independent individual, not a social worker, or a social worker private practitioner, with either possessing relevant experience, nominated at the discretion of the AASW CEO.

(Appeal Assessment Panel).

- 4.4 The Appeal Assessment Panel members will be familiar with accreditation processes but would not have been directly involved in the Accreditation Decision of the program in question and will not have any perceived or actual conflict of interest with the HEP.
- 4.5 If a HEP has any bona fide concerns that one or more members of the Appeal Assessment Panel may have a potential conflict of interest, AASW must be notified in writing within ten (10) business days from the date they were notified of the Appeal Assessment Panel composition, outlining the basis for the concerns. The AASW Accreditation Council Chair or CEO will consider any conflict concerns raised and will notify the HEP of its decision to retain or update the Assessment Panel composition. The AASW Accreditation Council Chair or CEO's decision on this issue will be final and not be subject to further review. The applicable appeals process time frames will be extended accordingly to allow Council time to consider this potential conflict.
- 4.6 The Appeal Assessment Panel will be provided with the documentation lodged by the HEP, a copy of the Accreditation Decision letter, the Accreditation Report, and any other documentation previously submitted as part of the accreditation process, as requested by the Panel.
- 4.7 Although the Appeal Assessment Panel will predominately makes it decision based on the material provided, the Panel may call for additional information from the HEP and/or AASW, at their discretion. The Appeal Assessment Panel may also obtain information from other relevant sources (where applicable) and will detail the source of such information in their outcome statement, for transparency.
- 4.8 The Appeal Assessment Panel is entitled to obtain independent legal advice if a question of law arises during the review. The AASW is responsible for the cost of its independent legal advice. Any such advice will remain confidential and privileged of AASW and is not required to be shared with the HEP.
- 4.9 The internal appeal review will be conducted in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, confidentiality and ethical behaviour.
- 4.10 Subject to any extensions under clause 4.4 or 4.11, the Appeal Assessment Panel will endeavour to issue its decision within forty (40) business days of the date that the HEP is notified of the Appeal Assessment Panel under clause 4.2.
- 4.11 If the Appeal Assessment Panel is unable to finalise its decision within the period referred to in clause 4.10, the date for providing the appeal decision may be extended by a further twenty (20) business days, and written notice of any such extension will be provided to the HEP.
- 4.12 Nothing in this policy prevents the HEP or AASW pursuing any other legal avenues or remedies available at law in respect of an Accreditation Decision or the appeal (including by commencing legal proceedings).

4.13 In this policy, a reference to "business day" means any day except Saturdays, Sundays and declared public holidays in Victoria, Australia.

5. The Appeal Assessment Panel decision

- a) The Appeal Assessment Panel will determine whether the program of study, and the Higher Education Provider (HEP) delivering meet the accreditation standard based on the ASWEAS; or
- b) substantially meet the ASWEAS accreditation standards and could fully meet the accreditation standard within a reasonable timeframe. This timeframe must allow for the implementation of additional changes, which may be subject to conditions attached to the accreditation approval.

5.2 The Appeal Assessment Panel may:

- a) affirm the Accreditation Decision; or
- b) set aside the Accreditation Decision, and substitute it with a decision to:
 - i. accredit the program of study (including, where applicable, approve any variation in the program); or
 - ii. accredit the program of study with conditions; or
 - iii. not accredit the program of study.

5.3 The Appeal Assessment Panel will complete an Appeal Outcome Statement which will be provided to the AASW Accreditation Council Secretariat for noting at the next available meeting. The AASW Accreditation Council will confirm that the review has been conducted in accordance with the ASWEAS and this policy. The AASW CEO will notify the AASW Board of the Appeal Assessment Panel's decision.

5.4 The HEP will then be notified of the outcome of the appeal, including a copy of the outcome statement outlining the decision of the appeal.

5.5 In any instance, where the Appeal Panel outcome nominates a new accreditation expiration date, the outcome statement date will be used.

5.6 The decision of the Appeal Assessment Panel in respect of an appeal of an Accreditation Decision will be final and will not be subject to further review within AASW.

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved By	Amendment
1.0	28 th Sept 2023	CEO	New document
2.0	28 th Oct 2025	CEO	Reviewed and updated