

Accreditation guidelines - diploma and higher education courses

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Introduction

ACWA accreditation signals quality assurance for potential students and indicates that students will have access to adequate and appropriate resources, including teaching staff. Graduates from an accredited course are work ready and well equipped to provide quality services to the community.

These guidelines outline the obligations and requirements to be met by education providers in order to gain and maintain accreditation for **diploma and higher level courses**. Separate guidelines apply for providers seeking accreditation for certificate level courses.

The accreditation process involves assessing the course (content, duration etc) as well as the campus (teaching staff suitability, resources). For this reason, the accreditation applies to a course at a specific campus. If students complete the same course at a different non-assessed campus they cannot be considered to have undertaken an ACWA accredited course.

Accreditation will only be granted to courses at AQF **diploma and higher level** that have ASQA or TEQSA accreditation and meet the guidelines contained in this document and the associated fieldwork placement guidelines. In some cases, if the course as a whole does not meet all the assessment requirements, ACWA may accredit an 'ACWA accredited pathway' that students have the option of undertaking.

Education providers will need to complete and submit an application, pay the relevant fees and meet all requirements to obtain ACWA accreditation. To maintain this accreditation providers will need to meet the ongoing conditions including paying annual registration fees and submitting annual registration, renewal or course upgrade forms when applicable.

Requirements

These requirements identify the current obligations with which a diploma or higher education level course must comply to achieve and maintain ACWA accreditation. An education provider must agree to comply with the ACWA requirements in seeking to conduct an accredited course.

Where the purpose of the course is to provide skills for remote communities and/or specialised community services programs the provider may submit a variation request to ACWA.

1. Minimum qualification and duration

- a) The minimum qualification for which accreditation, based on these guidelines will be granted is an AQF Diploma studied over a minimum of two academic years (minimum 18 calendar months) of full time study (or part-time equivalent).
- b) Courses which include the **certificate** level qualification packaged into the **diploma** over a total of 2 academic years will be granted accreditation if the ACWA packaged qualifications requirements are met.
- c) Where a diploma course is delivered to employees in a community sector workplace the course duration must be between 12 – 18 months. For additional requirements for workplace delivery see the *mode of delivery* section.

2. Core content

- a) An accredited course must include the following core content:
 - (i) society (including individual and family roles)
 - (ii) community, social and political structure and function
 - (iii) individual human structure and function, including psychological, physical and social aspects
 - (iv) general and specialised welfare services and welfare systems
 - (v) work with individuals, families, groups and communities
 - (vi) communication, interpersonal and basic counselling skills
- b) A course must include a minimum of 400 hours of supervised fieldwork placement which complies with ACWA guidelines. See the associated *Fieldwork placement requirements for diploma and higher education courses* for more details.
- c) Where an education provider offers a Certificate IV packaged into the **diploma** the electives and fieldwork placement components must be delivered and assessed at AQF level 5 or above. See the *packaged qualifications* section for more details.
- d) ACWA can explore accreditation for a number of courses within the community services training package. For some of these courses ACWA has determined certain electives that need to be run in order for the course to allow students to meet practice standards. These are outlined below; any variation to the structures should be discussed with ACWA. If the name of the course is not listed please contact ACWA to see if it falls under our scope.

Diploma of Community Services (general)

Total number of units – 16

Core units – 8

Elective units – 8

Core units

1. CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs
2. CHCCOM003 Develop workplace communication strategies
3. CHCDEV002 Analyse impacts of sociological factors on clients in community work and services
4. CHCDIV003 Manage and promote diversity
5. CHCLEG003 Manage legal and ethical compliance
6. CHCMGT005 Facilitate workplace debriefing and support processes
7. CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice
8. HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety

Compulsory electives for ACWA accreditation

1. CHCDEV001 Confirm client developmental status
2. CHCCSM005 Develop, facilitate and review all aspects of case management
3. CHCCCS004 Assess co-existing needs

4. CHCADV002 Provide advocacy and representation services or CHCADV005 Provide systems advocacy services
5. CHCCDE010 Develop and lead community engagement strategies to enhance participation or CHCCDE011 Implement community development strategies or CHCCDE012 Work within organisation and government structures to enable community development outcomes
6. CHCCSL001 Establish and confirm the counselling relationship or CHCCSL002 Apply specialist interpersonal and counselling interview skills or CHCCSL003 Facilitate the counselling relationship and process or CHCCSL007 Supporting counselling clients in decision-making processes
7. Education provider's choice
8. Education provider's choice

Diploma of Community Services (Statutory & Forensic Child, Youth and Family Welfare)

Total number of units – 16

Core units – 8

Elective units – 8

Core units

1. CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs
2. CHCCOM003 Develop workplace communication strategies
3. CHCDEV002 Analyse impacts of sociological factors on clients in community work and services
4. CHCDIV003 Manage and promote diversity
5. CHCLEG003 Manage legal and ethical compliance
6. CHCMGT005 Facilitate workplace debriefing and support processes
7. CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice
8. HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety

Compulsory electives for ACWA accreditation

1. CHCDEV001 Confirm client developmental status
2. CHCCSM005 Develop, facilitate and review all aspects of case management
3. CHCCCS004 Assess co-existing needs
4. CHCCSL001 Establish and confirm the counselling relationship
5. CHCMHS013 Implement trauma informed care
6. CHCPRT001 Identify and respond to children and young people at risk
7. CHCPRT003 Work collaboratively to maintain an environment safe for children and young people
8. CHCCDE011 Implement community development strategies)

Diploma of Community Services (Case Management)

Total number of units – 16

Core units – 8

Elective units – 8

Core units

1. CHCCCS007 Develop and implement service programs
2. CHCCOM003 Develop workplace communication strategies
3. CHCDEV002 Analyse impacts of sociological factors on clients in community work and services
4. CHCDIV003 Manage and promote diversity
5. CHCLEG003 Manage legal and ethical compliance
6. CHCMGT005 Facilitate workplace debriefing and support processes
7. CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice
8. HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety

Compulsory electives for ACWA accreditation

1. CHCDEV001 Confirm client developmental status
2. CHCCSM005 Develop, facilitate and review all aspects of case management
3. CHCCCS004 Assess co-existing needs
4. CHCCDE010 Develop and lead community engagement strategies to enhance participation or CHCCDE011 Implement community development strategies or CHCCDE012 Work within organisation and government structures to enable community development outcomes
5. CHCCSL001 Establish and confirm the counselling relationship or CHCCSL002 Apply specialist interpersonal and counselling interview skills or CHCCSL003 Facilitate the counselling relationship and process or CHCCSL007 Supporting counselling clients in decision-making processes
6. CHCCSM004 Coordinate complex case requirements or CHCCSM007 Undertake case management in a child protection framework or CHCCSM006 Provide case management supervision
7. CHCCSM004 Coordinate complex case requirements or CHCCSM007 Undertake case management in a child protection framework or CHCCSM006 Provide case management supervision
8. Education provider's choice

Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Total number of units – 22

Core units – 16

Elective units – 6

Core units

1. CHCADV005 Provide systems advocacy services
2. CHCAOD001 Work in an alcohol and other drugs context
3. CHCAOD004 Assess needs of clients with alcohol and other drugs issues
4. CHCAOD006 Provide interventions for people with alcohol and other drugs issues
5. CHCAOD007 Develop strategies for alcohol and other drugs relapse prevention and management
6. CHCAOD008 Provide advanced interventions to meet the needs of clients with alcohol and other drug issues

7. CHCAOD009 Develop and review individual alcohol and other drugs treatment plans
8. CHCCCS004 Assess co-existing needs
9. CHCCOM006 Establish and manage client relationships
10. CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people
11. CHCMHS005 Provide services to people with co-existing mental health and alcohol and other drugs issues
12. CHCMHS007 Work effectively in trauma informed care
13. CHCPOL003 Research and apply evidence to practice
14. CHCPRP002 Collaborate in professional practice
15. CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice
16. HLTAID003 Provide first aid

Compulsory electives for ACWA accreditation

1. CHCDEV001 Confirm client developmental status
2. CHCCSM005 Develop, facilitate and review all aspects of case management
3. CHCCSL001 Establish and confirm the counselling relationship or CHCCSL002 Apply specialist interpersonal and counselling interview skills or CHCCSL003 Facilitate the counselling relationship and process or CHCCSL007 Supporting counselling clients in decision-making processes
4. CHCEDU001 Provide community focused health promotion and prevention strategies or CHCCDE004 Implement participation and engagement strategies
5. CHCMHS013 Implement trauma informed care
6. Education provider's choice

Diploma of Mental Health

Total number of units – 20

Core units – 15

Elective units – 5

Core units

1. CHCADV005 Provide systems advocacy services
2. CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people
3. CHCDIV002 Promote Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural safety
4. CHCMHS002 Establish self-directed recovery relationships
5. CHCMHS003 Provide recovery oriented mental health services
6. CHCMHS004 Work collaboratively with the care network and other services
7. CHCMHS005 Provide services to people with co-existing mental health and alcohol and other drugs issues
8. CHCMHS009 Provide early intervention, health prevention and promotion programs
9. CHCMHS010 Implement recovery oriented approaches to complexity
10. CHCMHS011 Assess and promote social, emotional and physical wellbeing
11. CHCMHS012 Provide support to develop wellness plans and advanced directives
12. CHCMHS013 Implement trauma informed care
13. CHCPOL003 Research and apply evidence to practice
14. CHCPRP003 Reflect on and improve own professional practice

15. HLTWHS004 Manage work health and safety

Compulsory electives for ACWA accreditation

1. CHCDEV001 Confirm client developmental status
2. CHCCSM005 Develop, facilitate and review all aspects of case management
3. CHCCSL001 Establish and confirm the counselling relationship or CHCCSL002 Apply specialist interpersonal and counselling interview skills or CHCCSL003 Facilitate the counselling relationship and process or CHCCSL007 Supporting counselling clients in decision-making processes
4. CHCEDU001 Provide community focused health promotion and prevention strategies
5. Education provider's choice

3. Mode of delivery

- a) A course must be delivered in a manner that, in the opinion of ACWA, will provide the learning outcomes of the specific units being delivered.
- b) If ACWA accreditation is sought for a course that is delivered online then the following requirements need to be met:
 - (i) 400 hours of supervised fieldwork placements must be offered as per *the ACWA fieldwork placement requirements*.
 - (ii) Courses that have specialised practice based streams must have fieldwork placement outcomes that link directly with the field of specialisation.
- c) Where a diploma course is delivered to employees in a community sector workplace the following requirements must be met:
 - (i) The course duration must be between 12 - 18 months.
 - (ii) Instead of campus approval, the accreditation will be for the RTO providing the training and the normal accreditation requirements will need to be met
 - (iii) The fieldwork placement must be for a minimum of 140 hours at a diploma skill level where the tasks, client group and supervision are different from the regular work undertaken by the student in their workplace
 - (iv) The fieldwork placement should not take place within the first six months of the course

4. Staffing requirements

- a) **Course coordinator:** A course coordinator must have a qualification in community work, social welfare, human services, social work or the like and at least 3 years relevant industry experience. Their qualification must be equivalent to or higher than the course they coordinate.
- b) **Teaching staff:** Teaching staff of an accredited course must have a qualification in an area related to the units that they will be teaching and at least two years full time relevant

industry experience. Education providers must ensure that teaching staff teaching core units undertake at least 20 hours of continuing professional education per annum.

- c) **Fieldwork placement coordinator:** The fieldwork placement coordinator must hold a qualification in welfare work, community services, human services, social work or the like and have at least 3 years broad industry experience. Their qualification must be equivalent to or higher than the course for which they coordinate placements.
- d) Education providers must ensure that staff teaching core units or supervising fieldwork placements retain current experience in the field.

5. Student requirements

- a) Student selection criteria must be transparent and fair, and comply with legislation.
- b) Student numbers must not exceed available fieldwork placement opportunities. Education providers are responsible for ensuring that every student can undertake appropriate fieldwork placements which will comply with ACWA requirements.
- c) Between 20 – 30 students per class are allowed for the necessary tutorial, group discussion and workshop classes however class sizes for counselling subjects are to be limited to 15.
- d) Education providers must ensure adequate academic reference material is available and students have access to hard copy, and digital materials. All subject areas must be adequately covered:
 - general social work/welfare/human services work, including field education guides
 - counselling and case management
 - community work, including radical social action
 - introductory psychology
 - introductory sociology
 - the Australian welfare system and welfare state, including social policy
 - ethics, values and professional practice
 - networking, communication, meetings, & group work
 - a selection of specialised areas such as aged, mental health, disabilities, etc;
 - agency management
 - understanding research
 - legal aspects.

6. Recognition of prior learning (RPL)

- a) For the purposes of migration and/or membership assessments ACWA will accept a maximum of 40% RPL awarded from an education provider or course which is not ACWA accredited.

- b) For the purposes of migration and/or membership assessments ACWA will accept a maximum of 40% credit transfer awarded from an education provider or course which is not ACWA accredited.
- c) For the purposes of migration and/or membership assessments ACWA will accept a maximum of 40% RPL awarded on prior work experience.

7. Packaged qualifications

Where a Certificate III or IV is packaged in to a diploma course, accreditation can only be granted if the delivery strategy complies with the ACWA packaged qualifications policy as set out below. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that course packaging meets the prescribed standard and does not diminish the quality of a diploma qualification.

- a) Courses that package a certificate III into an AQF level diploma qualification may be granted accredited course status, if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) The Certificate III qualification is packaged with a Certificate IV qualification into an AQF level Diploma
 - (ii) The components of the diploma level qualification (as packaged) are delivered over a minimum of two (2) academic years full time study (or part time equivalent)
 - (iii) The electives offered as part of the Certificate IV component of the package are at least at an AQF level 4
 - (iv) Field placements conducted during the Certificate III component of the package are not counted towards the ACWA fieldwork placement requirement of 400 hours of suitable and relevant fieldwork which is required for the diploma qualification
 - (v) Each field placement is assessed at AQF level 5
 - (vi) Recognition of prior learning for Certificate IV components are assessed at least at an AQF Level 4
 - (vii) Recognition of prior learning for AQF level diplomas are assessed at least at an AQF level 5.
- b) Courses that only package the Certificate IV into an AQF level diploma qualification may be granted accredited course status, if all of the following conditions are met:
 - (i) The diploma qualification (as packaged) is delivered over a minimum of two (2) academic years (or part time equivalent)
 - (ii) The electives for Certificate IV are assessed at least at an AQF level 4
 - (iii) Each fieldwork placement is assessed at AQF level 5

- (iv) Recognition of prior learning for Certificate IV must be assessed at least at AQF level 4
- (v) Recognition of prior learning for AQF level diploma is assessed at least at an AQF level 5

Terms and conditions

In order to receive ACWA accreditation courses must meet the accreditation guidelines. In order to maintain the accreditation education providers must meet certain ongoing requirements. These are outlined in full in *ACWA's terms and conditions* and which need to be agreed to during the application process. **Please download the *ACWA's terms and conditions* document for the full details.** Here are some of the key points to note.

1. Ongoing notification obligations

Providers of accredited courses must notify ACWA under the following circumstances:

- a) ACWA must be informed of any significant changes in an accredited course including changes to course leader, fieldwork coordinator, teaching staff, campus location, or any other aspect associated with delivery of the accredited course.
- b) Education providers must provide ACWA with an up-to-date staff matrix upon application as well as when any of the following events occur:
 - (i) upon any significant change to staffing (for example, a change in the course coordinator position, fieldwork placement coordinator position or when more than 10% of teaching staff identified in the staff matrix change)
 - (ii) upon any significant change to unit allocations

2. Audit

An accredited course may be the subject of an audit conducted by ACWA. Please refer to *ACWA's course and campus audit policy*.

3. Provisional accreditation

- a) An accredited course may have its status downgraded to provisional accreditation status.
- b) Details in relation to provisional accreditation can be found in the *terms and conditions*.

4. Course review and grievance procedure

- a) An accredited course will be required to comply with the course review and grievance procedure.

- b) Details in relation to the ACWA course review and grievance procedure can be found in the *terms and conditions*.

Definitions

Annual course registration refers to the annual process by which an education provider seeks to maintain accreditation

Accredited course means a course which has been assessed by ACWA and has been accredited, in connection with a specified campus, as one which is designed to meet the training needs of the community worker profession.

Accreditation time limit for a course shall mean the period for which ACWA determines that the course is entitled to hold accreditation. Currently this is three years.

Course coordinator shall refer to a person employed by an education provider in relation to the conduct of an accredited course.

Course renewal refers to the process by which an education provider seeks to renew its accreditation on expiry of the accreditation time limit.

Course upgrade shall refer to the process of applying for an upgrade of an accredited course from a previously approved package.

Fieldwork placement means the placement of a person at an agency for the purposes of gaining practical experience in the profession of community welfare work.

Fieldwork placement coordinator means a suitably qualified employee of an education provider whose role is to coordinate and supervise the fieldwork placement arrangements of students

Fieldwork placement supervisor means a suitably qualified employee of an education provider whose role is to supervise the fieldwork placements of students

Packaged/packaging refers to the combination of two separate qualifications to provide a pathway to the higher qualification (also known as 'embedding' or 'nesting').

Provisional accreditation refers to a type of accreditation that is less than full accreditation.

Relevant industry experience refers to employment in the community services sector at the required skill level. This may also refer to experience which directly relates to a unit of study being taught or supervised.