

Alignment Accreditation Standards Review 2025

Overview of the project, findings, and outcomes



Project objectives and scope

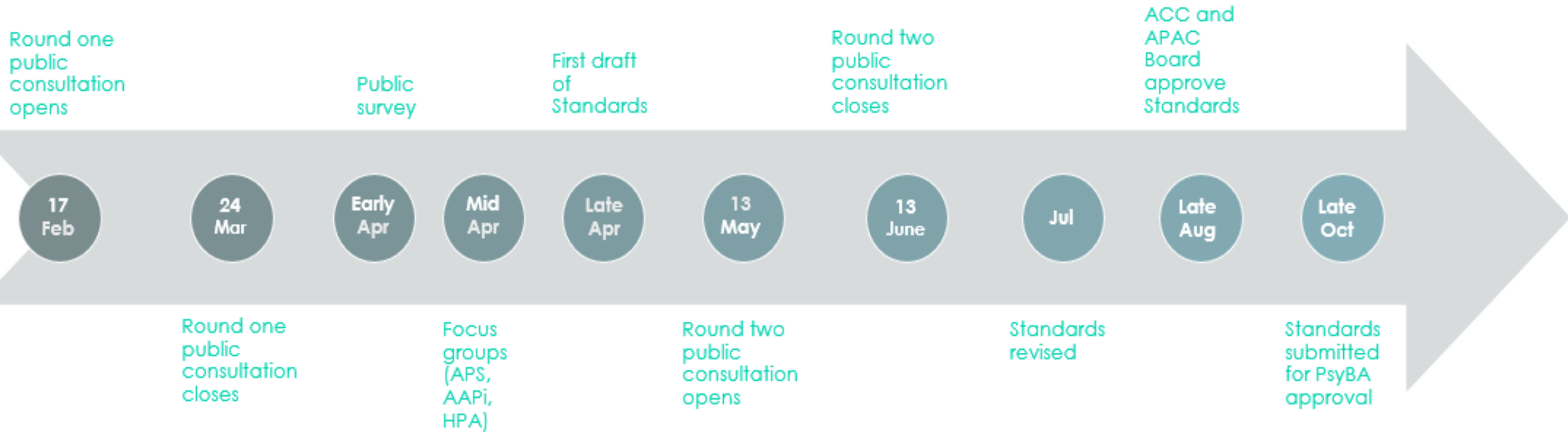
Primary objective of the Alignment Accreditation Standards Review 2025:

- Alignment with PsyBA's Professional competencies for psychologists and Code of conduct for psychologists (Professional Practice Standards).

Secondary objectives of the Alignment Accreditation Standards Review 2025 were:

- to consider key areas of the Accreditation Standards to ensure they remain consistent with the paramount principle, guiding principles and objectives of the National Law, including recent amendments,
- to consider improvements identified through regular accreditation assessment activities since the previous review,
- and finally, to remain responsive to contemporary developments in health practitioner education and psychology practice.

Timeline for conducting the review



Expert advisory groups

Expert advisors contributing to the development of revised Accreditation Standards

- **Psychology Accreditation Standards Working Group**

- Associate Professor Chien Hoong Gooi (Chair), Associate Professor Glen Hosking, Associate Professor Josephine Paparo, Associate Professor Katherine Lawrence, Professor Lisa Philips, Professor Liz Jones, Professor Maria Kangas, Associate Professor Megan Jenkins

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group**

- Dr. Stacey McMullen (Chair), Ms Belle Selkirk, Associate Professor Darren Garvey, Ms Cherise Daiyi, Ms Emily Darnett, Associate Professor Peter Smith

- **Diversity in Psychology Advisory Group**

- Professor Judith Gullifer (Chair), Dr. Rachel Hogg, Professor Kathryn Nicholson Perry, Dr. Sharon Varela, Mr Benjamin Weir

Additional consultants and drafting team

Assisted and supported the drafting and revision process of the Accreditation Standards

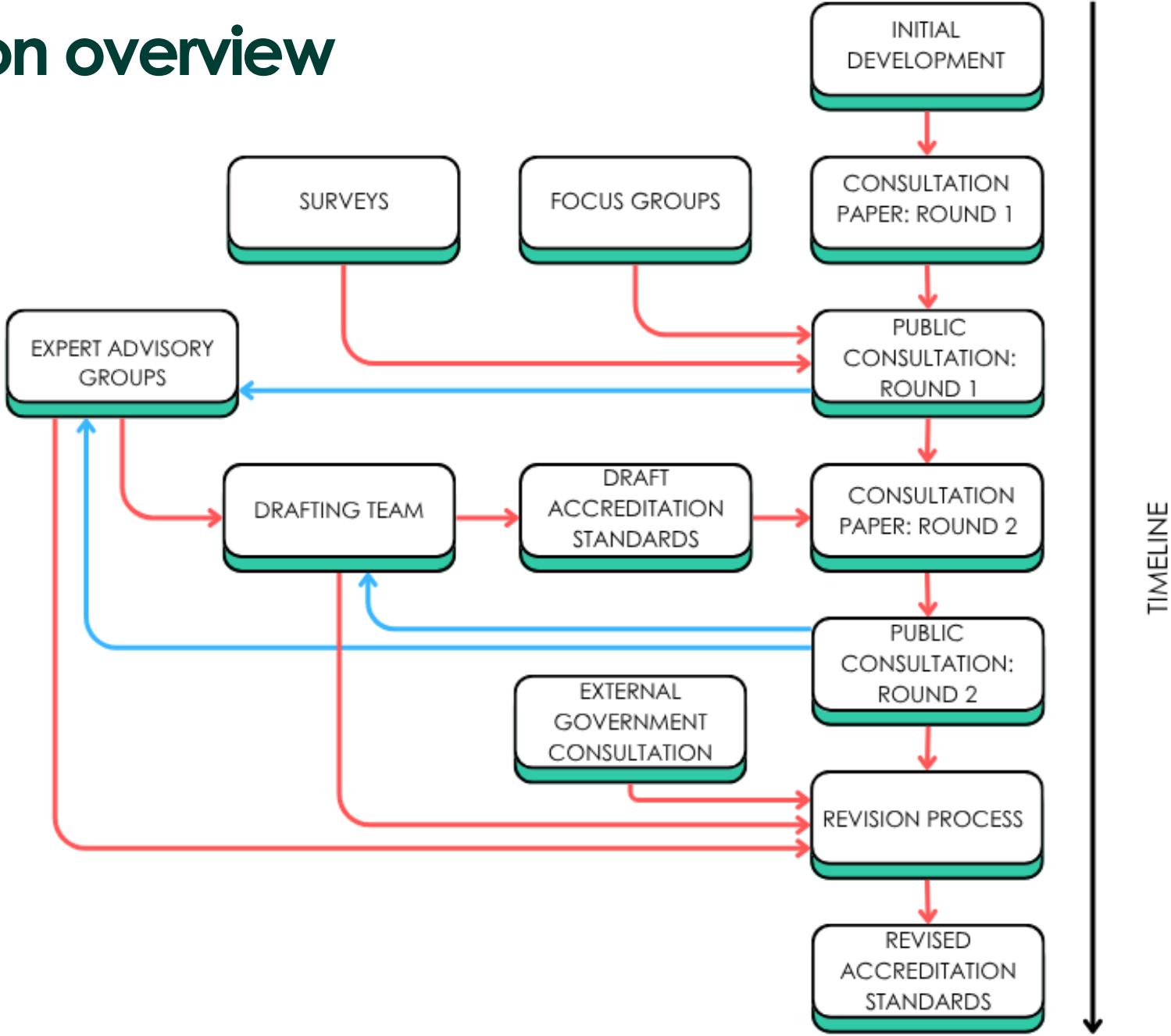
- **Additional consultants**

- APAC contracted three drafting consultants, Adjunct Professor Debra Dunstan, Honorary Professor Alison Garton and Professor Jonathon Mason.

- **Accreditation Standards Drafting Team**

- Associate Professor Chien Hoong Gooi, Dr Stacey McMullen, Professor Judith Gullifer, Adjunct Professor Debra Dunstan, Honorary Professor Alison Garton and Professor Jonathon Mason.

Consultation overview



Surveys

Formative consultation inputs

- APAC conducted 3 surveys from **12 March to 4 April 2025**:
 - Public and community survey
 - Student and recent graduate survey
 - Area of practice endorsement (AoPE) survey
- **Findings:**
 - Responses highlighted some concerns interpreting and integrating the new PsyBA Professional competencies 3, 7, 8 and digital competencies. In particular, upskilling the psychology workforce to be ready to teach and supervise students in these competencies.
 - Students and recent graduates thought the pathway, resourcing and speciality training needed to be more responsive to evolving mental health needs.

Focus groups

Formative consultation inputs

- APAC ran three separate focus group sessions with professional groups **APS, AAPI** and **HPA** **between March and April 2025.**
- **Findings:**
 - Early and progressive scaffolding of the PsyBA Professional Competencies into programs, comprehensive integration of cultural safety, diversity, and inclusion, enhanced digital competence and ethics.
 - Understanding practitioner wellbeing and psychosocial risks as a shared duty, addressing systemic barriers, such as workforce supply, and work readiness.
 - Improving accessibility in psychology programs for students through increased staff training.

Focus group findings continued.

Formative consultation inputs

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists have a high cultural load to provide expertise and support. This burden should be shared by non-Indigenous staff through cultural capacity-building training.
- Concerns about the devaluing of psychology and its distinctiveness compared to other allied health fields.
- Peer supervision and professional networks are vital for practitioners working in isolation to foster self-reflection and ethical practice.
- Unsustainable placement arrangements and workload pressures on students, resulting in placement poverty.

Round 1 public consultation

Process and engagement

- APAC ran a formative consultation round on aligning its Accreditation Standards to PsyBA's practice framework, focusing on key themes to address in the drafting phase. The consultation ran from **17 February 2025 to 31 March 2025 (6 weeks)**. APAC received **14 submissions**, 3 from individuals, 7 from organisations, and 4 from education providers.
- **Engagement during Round 1 Public Consultation**
 - Total Campaign Reach: Generated almost **28,000 impressions** (combined organic and sponsored) across APAC's LinkedIn account and Website.
 - Total Engagements: Achieved **2,341 total engagements** with organic content showing higher effectiveness than sponsored posts in both click-through rate and engagement.
 - Strong Email Performance: Three campaign-related emails shared to subscribers of APAC's mailing list (N=1,437), achieving an average open rate of 62% (peaking at 65%) and an average click-through rate of 9.7%.



Round 1 public consultation

Overarching findings

- PsyBA Professional Competencies, such as reflexivity, should be scaffolded and introduced early in students' training.
- Integrating and teaching strong ethical skills is critical for safe practice.
- More opportunities are needed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete their training and become registered practitioners.
- Achieving and maintaining cultural safety necessitates active and genuine engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and a shared ongoing commitment to developing cultural capacity and cultural responsiveness.
- Clients and diverse groups, communities, and individuals are recognised as experts in their own lived experiences.

Round 1 public consultation findings continued.

Overarching findings

- A lack of self-care can lead to impaired decision-making, boundary violations, ethical lapses, burnout, poor client outcomes, complaints, and erosion of public trust.
- Teaching students about risk assessment and management, ethical practice, legal and professional contexts, informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and cultural safety is crucial.
- Students need to be taught digital competence principles to ensure they can ethically use digital technologies and adapt to future digital technologies.

Drafting the Accreditation Standards

Overview of the process and proposed changes

- The drafting process considered feedback from previous consultation activities and the objectives of the Alignment Accreditation Standards Review 2025.
- The Accreditation Standards Drafting team and expert advisory groups formulated draft Accreditation Standards, which were distributed for feedback in the public consultation round 2 paper.
- The primary proposed changes included:
 - Introduction of a new Domain 6 for Cultural Safety.
 - Addressing duplication in and across Domains.
 - Expanding interprofessional education and practice.
 - Introducing self-care, digital competence, culturally safe and respectful working relationships, and reflection and reflexivity.
 - Adherence to the new PsyBA Code of Conduct and professional ethics.

Round 2 public consultation

Process and engagement

- The consultation ran from **13 May 2025 to 13 June 2025 (4 weeks)**. APAC received 64 written format submissions and 17 through the online survey tool SurveyMonkey, for **a total of 81 submissions** - 23 from individuals, 18 from organisations, and 40 from education providers.
- **Engagement during Round 2 Public Consultation**
 - Total Campaign Reach: Generated over **33,000 organic impressions** across APAC's LinkedIn account and Website, supported by almost 4,000 unique page views to the campaign landing page, making it APAC's 7th most popular webpage. Improved Round 1 performance by 18% without the use of sponsored advertising.
 - Total Engagements: Achieved **7,803 total engagements** through a bespoke social media campaign delivered on LinkedIn, improving Round 1 performance by 233%.
 - Strong Email Performance: Six campaign-related emails shared to subscribers of APAC's mailing list (N=1,437), achieving an average open rate of 60% (peaking at 83%) and an average click-through rate of 4.4%.

Round 2 public consultation findings

Overarching themes from feedback

- Support for the goal of alignment with PsyBA's Professional Competencies and Code of Conduct
- Support for the introduction of Domain 6
- Feasibility of meeting the proposed Accreditation Standards
- Increased regulatory burden
- Duplication or redundancy of the Accreditation Standards
- Clarity and definition of the Accreditation Standards
- Measurability and ability to provide evidence against the Accreditation Standards
- Workload and colonial load increase for staff
- Financial impacts of meeting the Accreditation Standards
- Unintended consequences of introducing new Accreditation Standards
- Dilution of the scientific basis of psychology (Criterion 3.1)
- Credibility of the profession
- Scope of the changes to the Accreditation Standards

Additional consultation round

Consulting with government departments

- APAC contacted Ahpra to assist with this consultation, using their committee Jurisdictional Lead Officials (JLO), who regularly and normally informally review initial consultations within the National Scheme.
- These officials include Commonwealth, State, and Territory health officials specialising in health policy, registration, accreditation, and workforce planning, including chief allied health, medical, nursing, and midwifery officers.
- The consultation ran from **16 July to 13 August 2025** and received **7** submissions. Feedback from submissions was considered in the revision phase of the review.

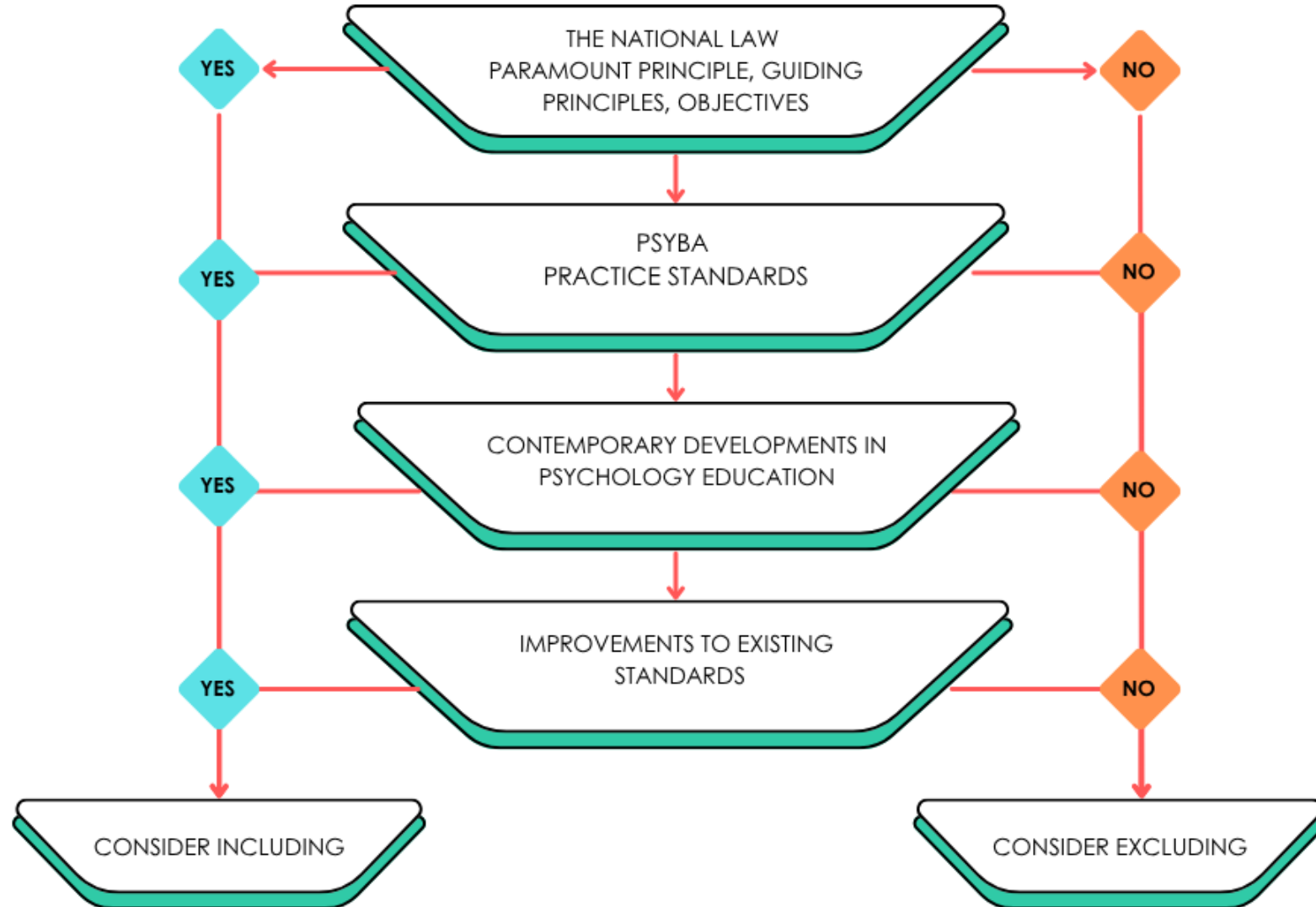
Revising the Accreditation Standards

Feedback received and the process of revising the draft Accreditation Standards

- After the round 2 public consultation closed, the Accreditation Standards Drafting Team and expert advisory groups considered all feedback and submissions to refine and amend the draft Accreditation Standards.
- The revision process addressed key themes and concerns from the consultations and made amendments to specific criteria and graduate competencies to ensure a balanced approach.
- A decision-making hierarchy was used to assess the proposed changes and ensure they remained aligned with the objectives of the review.

Decision making hierarchy

DOES THE CHANGE MEET THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STANDARDS REVIEW?



Revising the Accreditation Standards continued.

Primary areas that underwent further revision after consultation feedback and additional consideration.



Addressing areas of duplication in the Accreditation Standards



Amending criterion 3.1 (Psychology as a science)



Amending Domain 6 Cultural Safety to consider feasibility, burdens and impact.



Addressing the increase in criteria and graduate competencies



Addressing clarity, scope and ability to evidence criteria and graduate competencies.

Deliberation and decision

APAC internal decision-makers review and approve the Accreditation Standards, before submission to PsyBA

- The APAC Accreditation Assessment Committee has approved the Accreditation Standards for consideration by the APAC Board in July 2026.
- The APAC Board endorsed the proposed Accreditation Standards for PsyBA consideration in October 2025.
- The Psychology Board of Australia received the proposed Accreditation Standards for approval in October 2025. The PsyBA are currently deliberating and deciding on the approval of the proposed Accreditation Standards.

Next steps

Process for approval and next stage

- The Psychology Board of Australia will consider and either approve the Accreditation Standard or will liaise with APAC to refine the Accreditation Standards and then approve them.
- The Psychology Board of Australia will publish the revised Accreditation Standards on its website.
- APAC will communicate with education providers and the public about the next steps in integrating the PsyBA Professional Practice Standards and transitioning to the revised Accreditation Standards.
- APAC is in the process of updating the Evidence Guide to align with the revised Accreditation Standards. Additional resources and support will be in place to manage the transition phase.
- APAC will release a consultation report on its website to ensure transparency regarding the consultation process, findings and revision of the Accreditation Standards.



Thank you

Please visit the Alignment Accreditation Standards Review website for further information about the review.



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 <https://apac.au/news/accreditation-standards-review-2025/>