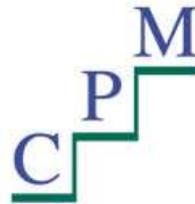




AUSTRALIAN
MARKETING
INSTITUTE



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Australian Marketing Institute

Part 3: Assessment and Accreditation Process (University)

Assessment and Accreditation of Marketing Degree Courses in Tertiary Education

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Accreditation Process

1. Introduction

In its accreditation role, the AMI's aim is to evaluate the quality of marketing education. The AMI will not comment on the desirability or otherwise of new tertiary institutions or degree courses, nor will it evaluate the workforce implications of any such proposals.

The key focus is to provide industry feedback, knowledge and experience for curriculum development and improvement which will ensure continual professional relevance for marketing graduates.

The Accreditation Committee sets a forward program for assessments twelve (12) months in advance. Institutions seeking to be included in the forward program need to provide adequate notice of their intentions. This would normally require the AMI to receive a notice of their intention at least twelve (12) months in advance of intended course commencement.

The decision-making procedures for accreditation and the requirements for periodic reporting during the period of accreditation are also described.

The Australian Marketing Institute has developed standard procedures for the assessment and accreditation of established marketing programs, major course changes and newly developed courses.

2. The Accreditation Cycle

As far as possible, accreditation is scheduled so that the degree courses offered by a tertiary institution are reviewed at intervals of five (5) years.

Accreditation is normally accorded on a full calendar year basis. Should AMI be unable to schedule procedures to re-accredit within a five (5) year period, or should a tertiary institution be unable to meet a schedule through genuine reason, existing accreditation will normally be extended for one (1) further calendar year. Where a program is scheduled for closure, accreditation can normally be extended from year to year for a limited time.

3. The Accreditation Process and Outcome

The process entails both accreditation (validating that standards are met) and peer review to promote high standards of marketing education, to stimulate self-analysis and to assist the institution under review to achieve its objectives. Accreditation is conducted in a collegiate manner that includes consultation, advice and feedback to the institution under review.

The accreditation process is summarised below:

- The institution conducts a self-study guided by the criteria described in *Part 2: Accreditation Criteria Guidelines*, and submits an accreditation submission to the AMI.
- The AMI appoints an accreditation team to review the marketing programs.
- The team reviews the institution's documentation and assess whether it is meeting the accreditation standards and its own objectives. The team confirms the information in the accreditation submission by holding discussions with senior academics and administrators involved in the relevant education programs, students and others associated with delivery of the education programs.
- The team prepares a detailed preliminary report on its findings. The tertiary institution is given opportunities to comment on the draft preliminary report.
- The Accreditation Committee considers the team's report. It submits to the AMI Board the report (with or without amendment) and its recommendations concerning the accreditation outcome.
- The Board makes the final decision concerning the accreditation outcome.
- The process includes mechanisms for mediation of any difficulties between a marketing school and an accreditation team or Accreditation Committee. And, if necessary, appeal against the recommendations of the Committee.

4. The Criteria for Assessment of Tertiary Institution Seeking Initial Accreditation

Tertiary institutions seeking initial accreditation are assessed against the same standards as established degree courses.

Assessment and Accreditation Process

5. Procedure

The stages of an assessment of a marketing program are described below

5.1 Initial Contact: Request for Accreditation

In the case of a tertiary institution seeking initial accreditation by the AMI, the institution will write to AMI to register its intention for accreditation twelve (12) months before the accreditation process takes place.

For degree courses that are already accredited, AMI will issue a reminder that re-accreditation is due in good time for the institution to make the necessary preparation.

5.2 Scheduling of Accreditation Process

AMI will acknowledge the accreditation request by issuing a date, usually ten (10) months ahead of accreditation, a target date for the assessment, and an agreed date for the receipt of initial documentation. Advice will also be given on the required number of copies of documentation to be submitted by the educational institution.

5.3 Assessment Team

An independent assessment team comprising senior academic and industry marketing subject experts undertake the evaluation of marketing programs. The Accreditation Committee formally approves the assessment team.

The AMI policy on accreditation requires that members of the assessment team declare to the Executive Standing Committee any relevant personal, professional, or ideological interest that may be perceived to conflict with their ability to undertake impartially their duties as a member of the assessment team. Nominees are asked to complete and return a standing notice of interests and to notify the AMI immediately of any conflict of interest that subsequently arises that is not covered in the standing notice.

5.4 Documentation

The submission documentation provides a fundamental self-assessment of the marketing programs against the AMI accreditation criteria (*Accreditation Criteria Guidelines*). The AMI also seeks information on plans for future development and improvement areas by the institution, and requests that topics be nominated for specific consultation with the assessment team during the review process.

The AMI may ask the institution to arrange for an appropriate sample of students to respond to a survey on the education program, support services, and the learning environment.

The AMI will not release accreditation document to a third party except with the agreement of the tertiary institution.

5.5 Selection of the Accreditation Team

Before the AMI appoints assessors to review the marketing programs, the institution has the opportunity to comment on the proposed membership of the team.

Each proposed team member is required to declare to the Accreditation Committee any relevant personal or professional interest that may be perceived to conflict with their ability to undertake impartially their duties as a member of an assessment team.

Following receipt of any such comments, the Committee, in consultation with the tertiary institution, makes recommendation to the AMI Board on the composition of the assessment team. In doing so it will disclose all declared interests of the persons recommended, and any comments made by the institution in relation to the proposed composition of the team,. The AMI has full regard to such interests and comments in appointing assessors.

Where a member of the Accreditation Committee or an assessment team has given recent informal advice to a tertiary institution outside the accreditation process, that member must declare their interest.

The team members are allocated specific responsibilities according to their expertise and interests. These responsibilities are directly linked to the program of reviews conducted by the assessor during the assessment visit and to the contents of the eventual accreditation report.

5.6 Review of Initial Documentation

Following receipt of the documentation submission, the assessment team reviews the education program and meets, either face to face or via teleconference, to discuss the documentation and areas where additional information will be required.

The team informs the tertiary institution of its initial review comments and any requirements for additional information. The institution is given an opportunity to provide supplementary information and to suggest changes to the accreditation submission format.

5.7 Conduct of the Accreditation

The team conducts the accreditation according to the agreed format e.g. face to face, teleconference, visits, etc. Typically this would include:

- Meetings of the team to consider the written submission
- Where appropriate interviews with the senior office bearers of the tertiary institution, and the individuals and committees responsible for the education programs. Topics for discussion would include the curriculum, selection of students, the design and management of the education program, the assessment of students, and the evaluation of the marketing program.
- All interviews are conducted with the knowledge of the senior office bearers although not necessarily in their presence. This ensures that dissenting views can be expressed freely without being attributed to individuals.
- The program is structured to allow on-site changes if necessary, including additional time to allow further consultation with key individuals and groups as required.

5.8 Consultation and Additional Feedback - Preliminary Report

At the end of the assessment, the team prepares a preliminary report of its findings to the office bearers of the tertiary institution. The tertiary institution is invited to comment on the draft.

The statement identifies what the team perceives to be the strengths and improvement opportunities in the education program, concerned areas requiring attention, and distinctive activities to be encouraged. Subsequent discussion about the statement, in addition to correcting any errors or fact, should extend to any draft recommendations and action that would need a response from the institution.

The team makes no announcement concerning accreditation outcome, as this is a decision of the AMI Board.

5.9 Formal Report

Having regard to any comments, the team finalises its formal report and draft recommendations and forward to the institution for comment, usually within 4 weeks of the conclusion of the accreditation review. The institution confirms, within a reasonable timeframe, on the factual accuracy of the draft and on any recommendations, conclusions or judgments in the draft.

The team then present the formal report to the Accreditation Committee, together with any comments from the institution. The Accreditation Committee considers the report and recommends an accreditation outcome to the AMI Board.

The institution may ask:

- that the Committee’s report and recommendations be forwarded direct to the AMI Board without further comment from the institution; or
- that the Committee’s report and recommendations be forwarded to the AMI Board together with further comment from the institution; or
- that a review panel be constituted.

5.10 Formal Review of the Accreditation Report

Where the institution requests that a review panel be convened, the institution should specify those aspects of the Committee’s recommendations with which it is dissatisfied.

The AMI then selects an appropriately qualified person, who is not a member of the Board or Committee, to chair the review panel. The Chair, in consultation with the AMI Chair, will decide whether any additional members should be appointed to the panel, having regard to the nature and substance of the issues raised by the school and, if so, the Chair and the Board Chair will select suitable persons of appropriate expertise.

The review panel considers the Accreditation Committee’s report and recommendations, and the comments and responses of the institution. The panel may seek further information from the accreditation team, the Committee, the institution or the Accreditation Standing Committee. The panel then prepares its report and provides a copy to the institution and the AMI Board for consideration in order to reach their final decision on accreditation.

5.11 Final Decision on Accreditation

The AMI will determine an accreditation outcome generally in accordance with the following four possible outcomes:

5.12 Options for Accreditation Decisions

The AMI may grant accreditation with or without conditions. Conditions placed on an accreditation are intended to provide guidance to the tertiary institution on required developments. They do not infer that further accreditation will not be granted.

Accreditation Options

These include:

- (a) Full accreditation:** Accreditation for five (5) years subject to the usual periodic reports.
- (b)** The AMI reserves the right to revisit an institution granted accreditation subject to periodic reporting requirements. If periodic reports are satisfactory, reaccreditation will be subject to an on-site assessment in the fourth (4th) year.

- (c) **Conditional:** Accreditation for three (3) years subject to certain conditions being addressed within a specified period and to satisfactory periodic reports. The AMI reserves the right to revisit an institution granted “accreditation subject to conditions”.
- (d) **Shorter accreditation:** Accreditation for shorter periods of time. If significant deficiencies are identified, the AMI may award accreditation with conditions and for a period of less than two (2) years. At the conclusion of this period, or sooner if the institution considers that it has addressed its deficiencies, the AMI will conduct a review. The institution may request either:
- A full assessment of the institution and the degree courses, with a view to granting accreditation for a further three (3) years; or
 - A more limited review, concentrating on the areas where deficiencies were identified, with a view to extending the current accreditation to five (5) years.
- (e) **Accreditation refused:** Accreditation may be refused where the AMI considers that the deficiencies are so serious as to warrant that action.

5.13 Accreditation

After the AMI Board has approved the period of accreditation, it advises the tertiary institution of the decision and supplies hard copies of the accreditation report.

5.14 Published Programs

AMI publishes a listing of accredited tertiary institutions on its website.

The institution may wish to publish statements that their courses are accredited by the AMI. They are responsible for ensuring the accuracy of such statements.

Accreditation reports are confidential between AMI and the education provider concerned, and should not be published.

6. Periodic Report to AMI

Tertiary institutions are required to provide periodic reports to ensure that the Accreditation Committee is apprised of curriculum changes, or emerging issues that may affect the institution’s ability to deliver the marketing curriculum, and of the institution’s response to issues raised in the AMI accreditation report. The requirement for periodic reporting is in no way intended to inhibit new initiatives or changes in curriculum.

Tertiary institutions granted the full period of accreditation are asked to submit an annual written report after the assessment by the AMI. The report required in the fourth (4th) year

of accreditation is a comprehensive report providing assurance and, where possible, evidence that the institution has maintained its standards of education and of resources.

The AMI may require additional reports of a tertiary institution granted a shorter period of accreditation or which has specific conditions on its accreditation. The AMI may also require additional reports of a tertiary institution where information otherwise available to it indicates that there are or may be matters of concern in relation to the continued accreditation of a program. If such reports are required, the AMI will advise the institution of the nature of those concerns.

Tertiary institutions granted accreditation of a major structural change and new tertiary institutions are asked to submit annual reports. A comprehensive report will be required halfway through the period of accreditation providing evidence that the course is being implemented successfully and that the institution has maintained its standards of education and of resources.

A tertiary institution may report to the Accreditation Committee at any time on matters it judge to be of relevance to its accreditation.

6.1 Unsatisfactory Progress Procedure

A goal of the accreditation process is to encourage further improvements and developments in the education program being accredited. It is expected that during an accreditation process, in addition to identifying the relevant strengths of the institution, the accreditation team will also identify areas for improvement.

The periodic reporting process is the mechanism by which tertiary institutions keep the AMI informed of their actions in response to these areas of concern, and of actions in response to any new concerns identified since the formal accreditation.

In the event that the Accreditation Committee finds that the required progress on the conditions is not being achieved or is unlikely to be achieved, the Board may:

- (a) Place further conditions on the accreditation. The Board could specify actions to be taken or issues to be addressed by the institution. An institution with such a restricted period of accreditation may apply for re-instatement of its full period of accreditation at any time subject to the normal procedures for review of accreditation.
- (b) Withdraw accreditation from the institution, if the Board considers that the institution is unable to deliver the program at a standard or in a manner compatible with the Accreditation guidelines.

7. Assessment of a Major Structural Change in an Established Marketing Course

Major changes to a course may affect the accreditation status of a tertiary institution and require a series of procedures to be instituted. If an institution is in doubt about whether proposed changes fall into the category of a major change, it should approach the AMI so that consultation with the Accreditation Committee can occur.

While plans for major change are evolving, the Committee will be available to give general advice as to whether the proposed changes are likely to comply with the established accreditation standards of the AMI. Institutions contemplating such changes are advised to consult the AMI as early as possible.

7.1 Definition of a Major Structural Change

A major change in a marketing program could comprise a change in the *length* or *format* of the program, a significant change in *objectives*, or a substantial change in *philosophy*, *emphasis* or *institutional setting*. Significant changes forced by a major reduction in *resources* leading to an inability to achieve the objectives of the existing course would also come into this category.

The gradual evolution of a marketing course in response to local initiatives and ongoing review would not be considered a major change.

7.2 The Criteria for Assessment of Major Structural Changes

Major course changes are assessed against the same criteria as established courses.

7.3 Assessment of Proposed Changes

Depending on the nature of the proposal, the AMI may decide either that approval for the change can be given within the current period of accreditation of the institution, or that the proposed changed course requires separate accreditation.

Accreditation Committee will advise the institution of its decision, including whether the assessment will be carried out by correspondence or by visit. It will also specify the documentation that will be required in support of the assessment.

The AMI and the tertiary institution then negotiate a timetable for the assessment process.

Administration of the Accreditation Process

8. The Accreditation Committee

Within the AMI Board, the Accreditation Committee oversees the accreditation process.

The Committee:

- develops standards, policy and procedures relating to the accreditation of tertiary institution including:
 - a Making recommendations on policies and procedures relating to the accreditation of tertiary institutions
 - b Periodically reviewing the accreditation standards, and tertiary institutions information and reporting requirements and advising the Board on any changes it consider appropriate
- oversees the Board's program of accreditation of marketing education including:
 - a Implementing Board policies and procedures relating to the accreditation of marketing schools
 - b Determining an annual program of tertiary institution accreditation activities
 - c Making recommendations on the appointment of teams to assess tertiary institution for accreditation purposes
 - d Making recommendations on the accreditation of marketing programs and tertiary institutions
 - e Presenting a report to each general meeting of the Board on its accreditation activities and on other matters referred from the board

9. Assessment Team

Assessment teams are formed to conduct an accreditation of a particular marketing education. Teams report to the Accreditation Committee and work within the accreditation policy and standards of the AMI.

The AMI maintains a database of potential assessment team members. It provides orientation and training for assessment team members, including written guides on the roles of team members and team chairs, and ensures a mix of new and experienced members on each team. The size of the team is dependent on the scope of the marketing programs.

Cost of Accreditation

The AMI strive to keep the accreditation process efficient and cost effective.

The costs of an accreditation review can include:

- The accommodation, travel and approved incidental expenditure of accreditation team members;
- Sessional fees paid to accreditation team members;
- Administration costs

The AMI will meet many of the costs of the accreditation process, such as staff costs, support of the Accreditation Committee and the accreditation teams.

Submission of Initial Documentation

The tertiary institution submits the required documentation addressing the accreditation criteria, and should be intended to provide prima facie evidence that the accreditation criteria are met.

The submission documentation should be bound in one or more volumes, and should include a Table of Contents clearly indicating the structural layout of the submission.

The educational institution should submit sufficient copies of the initial documentation to provide:

- One copy for each member of the assessment team
- One reference copy for filing
- One CD ROM containing the submission documentation
- Secured intranet access links to its quality system on the website

The initial documentation should be accompanied by:

- The tertiary institution's calendar
- The Marketing Handbook, Calendar supplement, or other official publication relating to the school, and containing the public statement of the degree course details
- Major current items of promotional literature concerning marketing programs and/or website references to these items

It is appreciated that some details/items may be more appropriately provided in electronic format rather than hard copy. In this case the provision of a CD ROM is suggested.

All submission documentation should be sent to:

The Accreditation Committee
Australian Marketing Institute
GPO Box 5295,
SYDNEY NSW 2001

The documentation will be distributed to the individual assessment members. Documentation should be received by AMI ten (10) weeks prior to the scheduled assessment date.