



Scheme Requirements

National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards (NSQDMH)

Name of Scheme

The name of this scheme is Australian Health Service Safety and Quality Accreditation Scheme (AHSSQA). The standards are the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards [NSQDMH].

The following is a summary of aspects of the NSQDMH assessment process as detailed in requirements set out in approved procedures. Further detail is available from HDAA on request.

HDAA Obligations

HDAA will co-operate with the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (*The Commission*) as a participant in the Scheme in ensuring the integrity and standing of the Scheme as a valuable tool of clinical governance for digital mental health service organisations, including participating in various fora, meetings, research, reviews, and other Commission activities relevant to the Scheme such as reporting on assessment activity and outcomes.

In conducting accreditations using the Scheme (including the relevant standards), HDAA must properly and effectively implement all provisions and components of the Scheme applying to accrediting agencies, including:

- The Commission's [policy on approval](#) under the scheme
- Conditions of approval as an accrediting agency
- The relevant applicable standards
- Any orientation or training programs required by the Commission to be undertaken by assessors
- Data specifications and processes for the scheme
- Membership and Terms of Reference of the Accrediting Agencies Working Group established by the Commission to consult on the ongoing design and application of the scheme and its associated activities.
- Commission Advisories and Fact Sheets in respect of any aspect of the Scheme, as issued from time to time

Preventing bias and managing conflicts of interest

HDAA will ensure that there is no real bias or apprehension of bias, on the part of HDAA or its assessors at any time in conducting accreditation assessments and awarding accreditation using the Scheme.

In accordance with the Commission's policy on [avoiding and managing conflicts of interest](#), HDAA will report any actual or perceived conflict of interest on the part of HDAA or its assessors that arises at any time in managing or conducting assessments or awarding of accreditation to the Commission as soon as practical after HDAA becomes aware of it. At this time HDAA will also advise the Commission how the conflict will be effectively managed.

Without limiting the circumstances in which an apprehension of bias on the part of HDAA may arise, involvement of a person for and on behalf of HDAA in an accreditation assessment of a digital mental health service organisation, within less than 3 years of concluding employment, providing support or consultancy services with that digital mental health service organisation, constitutes an apprehension of bias on the part of HDAA.

For the avoidance of doubt, HDAA does not provide consultancy or other services to a digital mental health service organisation, which involves any advice or services to enable or assist the organisation:

- To achieve or maintain accreditation under the Scheme; or
- To achieve or maintain any standards to be used in an accreditation process under the Scheme.

HDAA will ensure it, and its assessors, always conduct themselves ethically and lawfully in respect of the conduct of assessments and the awarding of accreditation using the Scheme.

Obligations on the digital mental health service organisation

As part of an accreditation assessment, the digital mental health service organisation must:

- Disclose at the commencement of the assessment process any external consultant contracted or appointed by your organisation to provide services or support in respect of the accreditation of the organisation or any of its relevant facilities or services (whether of a preparatory nature in anticipation of an accreditation assessment or services and support during or following an accreditation assessment)
- Enable HDAA assessors to routinely request and obtain information from the clinical, operational and technical management, staff and others (including service users) of the digital mental health service organisation, or any of its relevant facilities or services, in the course of an accreditation assessment
- Work with HDAA to ensure assessors do not engage or discuss with any such external consultant, or where applicable the consultant's personnel, in relation to any aspect of the accreditation assessment either before, during or after the process
- Provide an annual declaration to HDAA in relation to clinical governance as directed by the Commission
- Consent to the attendance of personnel from the Commission in any on site or virtual component of an assessment as observers, at the discretion of the Commission, and
- Where the Commission personnel attend as observers, to access to any documentation prepared by the Agency as part of any such assessment and to information concerning the management and conduct of the assessment process by the Agency which may be requested by the Commission.

Prior to any assessments, HDAA will require the following to be provided, using systems as determined by HDAA:

- A list of not applicable actions
- Conflict of interest objections in relation to HDAA assessors
- The digital mental health service organisation's completed self-assessment
- Documented evidence to demonstrate conformance to the NSQDMH Standards
- Details of Systems, IT and/or building access for assessments

Consent to disclosure of information relating to digital mental health service organisations

In signing this Client Service Agreement, you are providing written consent for HDAA to:

- Provide the Commission with demographic information, accreditation outcome data or other information in respect of your organisation, or any of your facilities or services, in accordance with [the Policy](#) and HDAA's conditions of approval

- Disclose any reportable information to the relevant regulator or for the Commission to disclose this information to a relevant regulator at any time
- Provide for inclusion of certain reportable information relating to demography and accreditation assessment outcomes of your organisation, as determined by the Commission from time to time, in public reporting on individual digital mental health service organisations. This may include:
 - Significant risks identified during the assessment
 - All actions that are requested to be or rated as not applicable;
 - Instances where accreditation is not awarded; and
 - Information relating to demography and accreditation assessment outcomes of your organisation for routine aggregated public reporting by the Commission of accreditation assessment outcomes of digital mental health service organisations.

HDAA assessment teams and personnel

HDAA lead assessors are qualified to lead, manage, and coordinate any accreditation assessment process, and will have participated fully and actively in accreditation assessment days as set out by the Commission in [the Policy](#).

The lead assessor:

- Has the knowledge, skills and experience required to manage accreditation assessment processes, an accreditation team and service provider engagement
- Has a sound understanding of digital mental health service delivery within an Australian context
- Is adequately supported by HDAA in their role as lead assessor.

HDAA will ensure that any assessor in an assessment team, regardless of role, has not undertaken more than 2 consecutive assessment cycles in respect of a facility or service.

HDAA assessment teams are comprised:

- Of qualified assessors with experience in the sector and service type where they will be assessing
- With the mix of skill to effectively assess each of the relevant standards, including technical skills and experience in maintaining information and cyber security
- Of the appropriate size and with enough time to rigorously assess the service
- At least half of the assessors (including the lead assessor) having participated fully and actively as assessors (not as observers or trainees under supervision) in at least 5 accreditation assessment days using relevant standards under the Scheme in the preceding 24 months.

HDAA will ensure the assessment team is adequately briefed, including being provided with adequate documentation, about your digital mental health service organisation and any facility or service to be assessed, and the scope of the assessment to be undertaken.

Assessment planning and sampling

In determining the assessment duration and sampling, HDAA shall consider the requirements of the Scheme and relevant advisories.

HDAA will not conduct an accreditation assessment using relevant standards under the Scheme at the same time as it conducts an accreditation assessment using any non-Scheme standards, proprietary or otherwise. For the avoidance of doubt, this does not prevent HDAA from undertaking

an on-site assessment visit for a non-Scheme accreditation immediately following an on-site assessment visit for an accreditation assessment conducted under the Scheme.

Provision of assessment services

HDAA provides a 3-year accreditation cycle.

Digital Mental Health services entering the scheme will be assessed using a staged assessment process. There will be a two-stage Initial assessment, including a desktop review of evidence provided, followed by a verification, either onsite or virtually, to verify the safety and quality systems described by the service provider. Where required, a remediation period of a duration specified in the Commission's instructions on the Scheme, to allow a digital mental health service organisation to address any material concerns identified at initial assessment will be followed by a Final assessment.

HDAA provides both on-site and virtual assessments in line with the Scheme Requirements.

Reporting during assessment process

Significant risk is one where there is a high probability of a substantial and demonstrable adverse impact for service users if the practice is to continue.

Where any significant risk of service user harm is identified in the course of an assessment, HDAA will:

- Ensure assessors inform the digital mental health service organisation that a significant service user risk has been identified
- Discuss immediate action with the digital mental health service organisation and required them to develop and submit, within 2 working days, a plan of action to remedy the risk
- Notify the relevant regulator and the Commission within 2 working days that a significant risk of service user harm has been identified and provide a copy of the digital mental health service organisation's action plan as soon as practicable.

Where a digital mental health service organisation terminates its contract for accreditation services during the course of an accreditation assessment, HDAA will notify the Commission within two working days.

Reporting on assessment outcomes

HDAA will:

- Notify providers in writing, within 5 working days of completion of an initial accreditation assessment of the outcome of the initial assessment, including specifying all matters that require remediation
- Provide a written report of the accreditation assessment within 30 working days of completion of a final accreditation assessment
- Notify the Commission where exemplar practice has been identified in the course of undertaking an assessment using the Scheme.

Accreditation certificates

HDAA will include the following information on certificates awarded for any accreditation using the Scheme:

- name of service provider

- service provider unique identifier
- list of each digital mental health service provided by the service covered by the award
- the relevant standards to which the accreditation relates
- category of accreditation
- date of commencement and expiration of the relevant accreditation cycle
- date accreditation is awarded.

Accreditation testimonial

HDAA will include the following information in a testimonial which is to accompany the certificate of accreditation:

- name of service provider
- list of each digital mental health service provided by the service covered by the award
- the relevant standards to which the accreditation relates, and any parts of the relevant standard excluded from the assessment as not applicable or not assessed
- category of accreditation
- date of commencement and expiration of the relevant accreditation cycle
- date accreditation is awarded.

Digital accreditation badge

A digital accreditation badge will be awarded to service providers who are either accredited or working towards accreditation.

Digital accreditation badges will include:

- date of accreditation (DD/MM/YYYY)
- date of accreditation expiry (DD/MM/YYYY)

HDAA will report to the Commission each instance where an accreditation badge is awarded to a service provider.