



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

Accreditation, defined as “the formal process of evaluation of an educational program, institution or system against defined standards by an external body for purposes of quality assurance and enhancement”¹ seeks to implement, strengthen and support quality medical education.^{1,2} Accreditation of an educational program is a valuable asset and aids in the regulation of a health care profession. “The purpose of accreditation is to build a competent health workforce by ensuring the quality of training taking place within those institutions that have met certain criteria. It is the combination of institution or program accreditation with individual licensure—for confirming practitioner competence—that governments and professions use to reassure the public of the capability of its health workforce. Accreditation offers educational quality assurance to students, governments, ministries, and society.”³

In the global naturopathic profession there are three recognized accreditation organizations that provide standards for naturopathic education:

- *Council of Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) (United States and Canada)*
- *Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH) (Australia and New Zealand)*
- *Organisation der Arbeitswelt Alternativmedizin Schweiz (Oda AM) (Switzerland)*

Note: The scope of this document is limited to the comparison of the three recognized accreditation standards for the naturopathic profession. It is not a review of the implementation of those standards in the various naturopathic educational institutions.



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

Naturopathic Accreditation Standards

The following provides an overview of the different accreditation documents and is followed by a chart that summarizes the highlights of each document.

[Council of Naturopathic Medical Education \(CNME\) \(United States and Canada\)](#)

The Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) Handbook of Accreditation for Naturopathic Medicine Programs provides the basis for licensing and regulating naturopathic medicine programs in North America. CNME has offered accreditation of naturopathic educational programs since 1978 and accredits doctoral programs in naturopathic medicine that qualify graduates for licensure in the United States and Canada. The programs recognized by CNME are residential, consist of a minimum of four academic years, and require a minimum of 4,100 clock hours, including a minimum of 1,200 hours devoted to clinical training.(1)

[Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists \(ARONAH\) \(Australia and New Zealand\)](#)

The Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH) Naturopathic Course Accreditation Standards are accreditation standards that have been developed for naturopathic education in Australia and New Zealand. The ARONAH standards mirror the statutorily regulated Boards administered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (AHPRA) of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme and came into effect in October 2021. For a naturopathic program to qualify for accreditation with ARONAH it must be given at a minimum baccalaureate level over four years of full-time study or its equivalent, and it must be offered by a university or higher education provider that is registered and recognized by Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), or by a jurisdictional equivalent. The 4-year degree is anticipated to enable students to achieve the Competency Standards for Naturopathic Practitioners rather than being an hours-based program.(2)



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

Organisation der Arbeitswelt Alternativmedizin Schweiz (Oda AM) (Switzerland)

The Organisation der Arbeitswelt Alternativmedizin Schweiz (Oda AM) is a Swiss organization that provides accreditation for alternative medicine practitioners, including naturopaths. The current standards came into effect in June 2019, with the accredited qualification being a naturopath with a federal diploma in European traditional medicine (ETM), a 5–7-year residential qualification that includes 4550 hours with an additional 800 hours under mentorship.(3)

The following table summarizes the main criteria from each of the accreditation documents.

	(United States and Canada)	(Australia)	(Switzerland)
Accrediting body	Council of Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME)	Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists (ARONAH)	Organisation der Arbeitswelt Alternativmedizin Schweiz (Oda AM)
Jurisdiction	United States, Canada	Australia, New Zealand	Switzerland
Date initiated	1978	2015	2000
Date latest update	August 2022	October 2021	June 2019
Qualifications and length	Naturopathic doctor (ND) - doctoral-level naturopathic medicine program, 4 years, 4,100 clock hours, residential	Bachelor's degree, 4 years	Naturopath with a federal diploma in European traditional medicine (ETM), 4550 hours residential +800 hours mentorship, between 5 years and 7 years.
Student Admission Requirements	The program shall have a published student admissions policy that (i) reflects the program's mission and outcomes, and (ii) clearly specifies the educational prerequisites, personal characteristics, and minimum qualifications of applicants that the program considers necessary for academic and	Do not admit students to the program if the student does not yet possess the capability to be academically successful. Education providers are expected to ensure that processes are in place to support the student's transition to higher education and academic success.	Proof of completion of basic education at the level of secondary education II



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

	<p>professional success. The program shall endeavor to select students who possess the intellectual capacity, integrity, and personal characteristics necessary to become effective naturopathic physicians/doctors.</p>		
Additional External Oversight	<p>The Council is recognized as a programmatic accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education, is a member of the Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors (ASPA), and subscribes to ASPA's Code of Good Practice; it is also a member of the Association of Accrediting Agencies of Canada.</p>	<p>The education provider must be registered with the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA); is expected to have a robust academic and organizational governance structure which ensures ongoing program evaluation which enables students to meet the Competency Standards for Naturopathic Practitioners; and regularly engage in formal and informal external stakeholder engagement.</p>	<p>The education provider must be accredited by the Organisation der Arbeitswelt Alternativmedizin Schweiz (OdA AM) with Education Quality System Called EDUQUA given by the SVEB Swiss Federation for Adult Learning.</p>
Program content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturopathic history, philosophies, principles, and theories • Naturopathic medical knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturopathic therapeutic modalities, practices, and treatments • Supervised clinical practice • Ethics and business practices • Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturopathic history, philosophies, principles, and theories • Naturopathic medical knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturopathic therapeutic modalities, practices, and treatments • Supervised clinical practice. • Ethics and business practices • Research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Traditional Medicine (ETM) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETM medical knowledge • ETM traditional medicine therapeutic modalities, practices, and treatments • Supervised clinical practice • Ethics and business practices • Research



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

Subject areas			
Naturopathic history, philosophies, principles, and theories	✓ ¹	✓ ²	✓ ^{3,4}
Naturopathic medical knowledge			
<i>Biosciences</i>	✓	✓ ^{5,6}	✓ ^{5,6,7}
<i>Basic medicinal knowledge</i>	✓	✓ ⁶	✓ ^{6,7}
<i>Clinical medicine knowledge</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Environmental and public health</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Psychology</i>	✓	✓	✓ ⁸
Naturopathic modalities, practice and treatments			
Modalities			
<i>Clinical nutrition</i>	✓	✓	✓ ⁹
<i>Applied nutrition</i>	✓	✓	✓ ¹⁰
<i>Herbal medicine</i>	✓	✓	✓ ^{11, 12}
<i>Lifestyle counseling</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Nature cure</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Homeopathy</i>	✓	✓ ¹³	C ¹⁴
<i>Hydrotherapy</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Other physical medicines</i>	✓ ¹⁵	✓	✓ ¹⁶
<i>Exercise therapy</i>	✓	✓	Not specified



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

<i>Other</i>	Oriental medicine Emergency and legend drugs Medical procedures/emergencies and minor surgery		Detox therapies (Wet and dry cupping, Baunscheidt method, Hirudotherapy) Drainage (Cantharis plaster)
<i>Basic first aid</i>	✓	✓ ¹⁷	✓ ¹⁸
Diagnosis			
<i>Patient history</i>	✓	✓	✓ ^{19,20}
<i>Laboratory test diagnostics</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Clinical examination</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Iridology</i>	✗ ²¹	✓	✓ ²²
<i>Pulse diagnosis</i>	✓	✓	✓
<i>Tongue diagnosis</i>	✓	✓	✓ ²³
<i>Psychophysiology</i>	✗	✗	✓
Supervised clinical practice	✓ ²⁴	✓ ^{25, 26}	✓ ^{27, 28}
<i>Hours</i>	1200 hours	700 hours	600 hours + 800+ hours of professional practice under mentorship
<i>Clinical supervisor qualifications</i>	Supervised by a senior academic administrator, typically an experienced naturopathic physician/doctor	Must be supervised by a qualified naturopath or content specialist with relevant post-graduate qualifications; has 5+ years' clinical experience; has 2+ years' experience in academic or clinical education	A training supervisor must be professionally qualified to perform the task and must have at least 5 years of professional practice. It is considered sufficiently professionally qualified if the trainee supervisor is:



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a naturopathic practitioner with a national diploma or a certificate from the OrTra MA or registration with the RME, ASCA, APTN, SPAK, or a cantonal license to practice in their discipline. - a doctor who holds a federal diploma in continuing education in the discipline concerned. - a foreign doctor or therapist who has received at least equivalent training and holds a diploma in the discipline.
<i>Telehealth</i>	Up to 25% of the supervised clinical practicum can be delivered via telehealth	Up to 25% of the supervised clinical practicum can be delivered via telehealth	-
<i>Student-to-supervisor ratio</i>	6:1	8:1; 4:1 for telehealth	6:1 (for internship), 13:1 (for mentorship)
Ethics and business practices	✓ ²⁹	✓ ³⁰	✓ ³¹
Research	✓ ³²	✓ ³²	✓

¹Includes courses that comprehensively cover the subject areas of naturopathic medical history, principles, philosophy, and clinical theory, and that integrate these subject areas throughout the program.

²Must include a discrete subject that specifically addresses naturopathic philosophy and traditional knowledge, and which develops knowledge of core naturopathic principles engendering a critical and balanced understanding of the interface between new and traditional knowledge within contemporary naturopathic practice.

³European Traditional Medicine, part of the wisdom from the past on which the naturopathic philosophies and principles are based (according to WNF White Paper: Naturopathic Philosophies, Principles, and Theories <https://worldnaturopathicfederation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/White-Paper-2-1.pdf>). These philosophical foundations of naturopathy include: Vitalism; Theory of principles; Astromedicine (microcosm and macrocosm); Seven Stars; Natural rhythms; Alchemy basics (the World Alchemist view, Tria Principles).

⁴Integrated throughout the program.

⁵Includes basic sciences of biology, chemistry, and physics to the extent necessary to lay foundations for proper understanding at an advanced level of the human and clinical sciences taught later in the course.



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

⁶Endocannabinoid system is specifically mentioned as an inclusion.

⁷Traumatology is included. Sensory organs are an additional special focus.

⁸Includes important psychopathologies and developmental disorders, i.e., psychotic, neurotic, personality, stress and somatoform disorders, attachment disorders, suicidality, and addictive diseases.

⁹Includes Schussler's Tissue Salts.

¹⁰Includes energetic and humoral qualities of food; fasting and draining with nutrition; acid-base; constitutional aspects of nutrition; different forms of nutrition (e.g., vegetarianism, raw food).

¹¹Includes basic terminology in botany and systematic botany

¹²Includes spagyrics.

¹³Homeopathic first aid.

¹⁴Dynamised therapies.

¹⁵Includes acupuncture, manipulation, and electrotherapies.

¹⁶Includes classic massage, and reflex zone therapy.

¹⁷A first aid certificate is required before the clinical practice component of the degree can be completed.

¹⁸Medical emergency measures, hygiene, and protection against infection.

¹⁹Includes observation, analysis, and assessment according to humoral, constitutional, salutogenic, and pathophysiological aspects.

²⁰Includes environmental toxicology as part of patient history.

²¹Can learn as continuing professional education (CPE) after degree completion.

²²Broy or Deck iridology.

²³According to Bach or Ferronato.

²⁴1,200 hours with at least 900 hours supervised by a licensed naturopathic doctor, and a minimum of 850 hours involved in patient care in either a primary or secondary capacity.

²⁵Students must undertake 700 hours of clinical education, of which 500 hours must be clinical hours where 60% of the required hours are completed as the primary clinician.

²⁶Students are provided with the opportunity to interact with other health professionals to support their understanding of multi-professional healthcare environments, facilitate interprofessional learning for collaborative practice and develop an understanding of referral networks and a team approach to care.

²⁷In professional practices, clinics, and school internships. These learning hours consist mainly of "practicing" and "reflecting" activities. "Practising" refers to practical work at the placement. "Reflecting" refers to work such as preparation, post-processing, research, documentation, evaluation interviews, and learning diaries, which can be done at a given location. The ratio of "practice" to "think" is about 50/50. Overview of the management of a practice) = 30 to 40 learning hours; Observing consultations = 40 to 80 hours of learning; Taking patients = 480 to 530 learning hours.

²⁸At least 2 years with a minimum occupation rate of 50% or a maximum of 5 years with equivalent volume. A total of at least 800 hours of treatment involving direct contact with patients (including treatment and aftercare time), and at least 60 hours of mentoring. These mentoring hours include both individual and group mentoring hours. The mentee is responsible for the organization of his/her mentoring.

²⁹Business skills, principles of financial record keeping, effective marketing, and communication.

³⁰Patient recordkeeping, financial recordkeeping, ethics, jurisprudence (including knowledge of Australian Consumer Law), marketing, and naturopathic practice management.

³¹Ethical principles in professional actions (60 hours). Run and manage operations (business plan, budget, basics of administration, marketing, legalities, patient recordkeeping) (90 hours)

³²Includes the applicability and use of evidence-based and evidence-informed research approaches in the context of naturopathic medicine.



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

Subject Areas and Inclusions

The following section outlines the types of courses covered in each subject area. Variation by jurisdiction and naturopathic program may occur.

Basic medical knowledge: anatomy, genetics, biophysics (selected), histology, embryology, physiology, biochemistry, microbiology, psychology (including human development across the lifespan and transitions), pathology, pharmacology, pharmacognosy.

Biosciences: anatomy, gross anatomy lab, neuroanatomy, embryology, and histology; physiology; pathology and microbiology; and biochemistry, genetics and selected elements of biomechanics relevant to the program.

Clinical medical knowledge: body systems and their interactions, cardiology, dermatology, endocrinology, ear/nose and throat, gastroenterology, urology, proctology, gynecology, neurology, orthopedics, pulmonology, natural childbirth/obstetrics, women's health, reproductive health, paediatrics, geriatrics, rheumatology, oncology, hematology, general medicine (especially those aspects of general medicine most important to naturopathic diagnosis and management (including interactions between conventional and naturopathic treatments, and an understanding of medical interventions)).

Diagnostics: diagnostic subject matter/course includes physical, psychological, clinical, laboratory, diagnostic imaging, and differential diagnoses.

Environmental and public health: includes not only environmental and public health, but also epidemiology, immunology and infectious diseases.

Ethics and business practices: practice management, professional ethics and jurisprudence, and business skills.



Naturopathic Education Accreditation Standards Comparison

Naturopathic philosophies: Vitalism and Holism

Naturopathic principles: The healing power of nature; First do no harm; Identify and treat the cause; Physician/doctor as teacher; Treat the whole person; Disease prevention and health promotion.

Research: critical research skills, knowledge mobilization skills, understanding of the uniqueness of naturopathic research.

References:

1. Blouin D, Teklan A, Kamin C. 2017. Impact of accreditation on medical school's processes. *Med Educ.* 2017;52(3):13461. doi.10.1111/medu.13461.
2. Frank JR, Taber S, van Zaten M, Scheele F, Blouin D. 2020. The role of accreditation in 21st century health professions education: a report of an international consensus group. *BMC Med Educ.* 2020;20(305). doi.10.1186/s12909-020-02121-5.
3. Proceedings of a Workshop. Exploring the Role of Accreditation in Enhancing Quality and Innovation in Health Professions Education. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; Health and Medicine Division; Board on Global Health; Global Forum on Innovation in Health Professional Education. Washington (DC): [National Academies Press \(US\)](#); 2016 Oct 5. ISBN-13: 978-0-309-44925-0
4. Council of Naturopathic Medical Education. Handbook of accreditation for naturopathic medicine programs [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2023 Apr 28]. Available from: <https://cnme.org/naturopathic-accreditation/>
5. Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists. Naturopathic course accreditation standards. Brisbane, Australia: Australian Register of Naturopaths and Herbalists; 2021.
6. The Organization of the Working World of Alternative Medicine Switzerland. Modulbeschreibungen M1 – M7: Höhere Fachprüfung für Naturheilpraktikerin und Naturheilpraktiker [Internet]. The Organization of the Working World of Alternative Medicine Switzerland. 2019 [cited 2023 Apr 28]. Available from: <https://www.oda-am.ch/de/module/>