

Alternative Pathway Protocol – Certificate of Training for Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs)

Under AMDRAS clause 34(b)

October 2025

1. The Board provides this protocol under AMDRAS cl 34(b) for an Alternative Pathway allowing recognition of certain prior learning for FDRPs for the Certificate of Training (COT).
2. This protocol is to be read together with, and does not replace, other protocols for Alternative Pathways.
3. Recognised Providers (RPs) may be asked to recognise prior learning of Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners (FDRPs). RPs have sought guidance about how the training, qualifications and regulated registration of FDRPs conform to AMDRAS.
4. The Board has considered the following core principles in managing pathways for mediators who are FDRPs wanting also to be accredited under AMDRAS:
 - Recognising professional skills, knowledge, ethics and expertise of facilitated mediation practice
 - Aligning requirements with AMDRAS expectations
 - Recognising contributions to mediation
 - Fairness and consistency

Background – FDRP qualifications and accreditation criteria

5. The Board understands there are pathways for accreditation addressing competencies and qualifications as a FDRP.
6. The Australian Government Attorney-General's Department (AGD) accredits FDRPs. Accreditation requirements are set out in the *Family Law (Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner) Regulations 2025*. In 2006 following Family Law reforms, Family Dispute Resolution was introduced to the Family Law Act requiring families to attempt Family Dispute Resolution. From 2007, all Family Mediators needed to become registered with the AGD FDR Practitioner Unit. From 2009, all FDRPs needed to become accredited. All FDRPs are required to continue to meet ongoing accreditation requirements to remain accredited.

7. FDRP qualifications are issued under the Vocational Training and Education System (VET) or by a Higher Education provider. FDRP courses vary between registered training organisations (RTOs) or approved equivalent units offered by a higher education provider. These currently include either 6 (core units) or 10 units with varying clinical placement (practice hours) arrangements. FDR courses have changed over time. The Board notes that FDR courses continue to change, and the body of FDRPs includes practitioners who have completed courses with different requirements.
8. Being a registered practitioner under AMDRAS (previously NMAS) is included as one entry pathway into an FDRP course. Not all FDRPs are accredited under AMDRAS.

Potential Pathways for FDRPs into AMDRAS

9. First FDRP Pathway (Accredited FDRPs as at 30 June 2025)
 - 9.1 Under AMDRAS cl 35(a), RPs may certify that an applicant has satisfied the requirements for a Certificate of Training by an alternative pathway.
 - 9.2 The Board recognises that FDRPs who had attained the competencies and qualifications necessary to become an accredited FDRP as at 30 June 2025 will have satisfied the requirements for a Certificate of Training by an alternative pathway.
 - 9.3 An applicant who obtains a Certificate of Training by this alternative pathway must still be assessed under the AMDRAS to obtain a Certificate of Assessment.
 - 9.4 Once accredited as an AMDRAS mediator (by completing a Certificate of Assessment or Certificate of Assessment by Alternative Pathway), any period of registration with the AGD FDRP Practitioner Unit and any previous (pre-AMDRAS accreditation) practice hours and CPD hours may be credited at a 50% rate towards any AMDRAS higher accreditation requirements. The AMDRAS requirements of Advanced Mediator and Leading Mediator may be fulfilled and met according to this specified adjusted rate. For example, a registered FDRP with 200 practice hours and 100 CPD hours over a 4-year time frame may be recognised under AMDRAS for 100 practice hours and 50 CPD hours over a 2-year time frame.

Note. This partial recognition is intended to balance the interests of FDRPs obtaining AMDRAS accreditation for the

first time and then seeking recognition at higher levels with the requirements of the Standards and the pre-existing interests of other AMDRAS-accredited mediators (including AMDRAS-accredited FDRPs).

10. Second FDRP Pathway (Recent qualifications):

10.1 An FDRP qualification or Statement of Attainment issued on and from 1 July 2024 under the Vocational Education and Training System (VET) or by a Higher Education provider, may be recognised in part or in full according to the “Alternative Pathway Protocol – Certificate of Training (COT)” dated 19 June 2025.

10.2 The Board recognises that an FDRP qualification course may meet the educational requirements for a Certificate of Training and may be recognised in part or in full if, upon review by the RP:

- the time spent by the applicant,
- the qualifications of the course trainer, and
- the practical components and simulated mediations in the prior course,

are all substantially equivalent to the relevant requirements described in Part 4, Division 5, and Appendix 1 of AMDRAS.

10.3 If training was completed more than 12 months before the application date, and the applicant does not meet the First FDRP Pathway (above), or if the course did not meet other essential elements of AMDRAS recognised training, the Recognised Provider may reasonably require the applicant to complete additional training. This may include refresher training, targeted assessment, or further study specifically focused on the AMDRAS Standards and Professional Attributes. These measures ensure the applicant’s knowledge and competence are current and meet the standards required for certification by an alternative pathway.

10.4 An RP may charge a fee to facilitate any additional training assessment requirements.

Procedures

11. The Board expects that the representatives of Recognised Providers assessing the appropriateness of an alternative pathway to have the

requisite skills, knowledge and qualifications to make this assessment.

12. Any Certificate of Training granted according to an alternative pathway must state on the certificate that the certification has been given by an alternative pathway and include relevant information. The Board has provided a templated Alternative Pathway Certificate of Training which contains the information to be provided.
13. Any Recognised Accreditation Provider (RAP) must comply with Part 4 Division 9 of AMDRAS regarding applications for accreditation. Any RAP subsequently asked to grant accreditation based on an Alternative Pathway Certificate may require a copy of the evidence of the alternative pathway provided by the applicant.
14. In exceptional circumstances, the Board may approve an application by a Recognised Provider to waive compliance with any one or more requirements for accreditation under cl 19 of AMDRAS. The waiver application must provide evidence demonstrating that the applicant's training and experience are at least equivalent to the standards expected of an AMDRAS-accredited mediator.
15. When considering applications for alternative pathways, the board reminds recognised providers of the board's auditing and complaint handling powers under clauses 80 and 81 of AMDRAS, respectively.

Certificate of Assessment and Practicum Certificate

16. This protocol is an alternative pathway exclusively to a Certificate of Training and is not an alternative pathway for a Certificate of Assessment nor a Practicum Certificate.
17. As a matter of general practice, the Board considers that applicants who have met the requirements of a Certificate of Training by an alternative pathway (including FDRPs) ought to obtain a Certificate of Assessment according to Part 4 Division 6 of AMDRAS.

Note. The expectation of a Certificate of Assessment is intended to ensure that all mediators newly accredited under AMDRAS have an equivalent baseline competency in mediation according to the AMDRAS Training and Accreditation Framework. In appropriate cases, applicants may consider seeking a Certificate of Assessment by an alternative pathway or a waiver under cl 19 of AMDRAS.

18. As a matter of general practice, the Board considers that accredited mediators, including FDRPs met the requirements of a Certificate of Training and a Certificate of Assessment, ought to obtain a

Practicum Certificate according to Part 4 Division 7 of AMDRAS
before being considered for accreditation as an Advanced Mediator.