

National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions

A response to the consultation paper on the Proposed Arrangements for Accreditation issued by the Practitioner Regulation Subcommittee, Health Workforce Principle Committee, Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council on 6 November 2008.

Provided by Professor Peter Stewart, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science, Monash University

Response

The faculty is strongly supportive of an accreditation process that ensures the highest standards of education and training of pharmacy graduates. In general, the faculty supports the following:

- The six principles reflected in section 1.6 of the consultation document.
- The accreditation scope of the proposed program including the development of accreditation standards, the assessment of individual education and training courses and institutions against the standards, the assessment of overseas accrediting authorities to determine whether the courses they accredit provide the required knowledge and skills to practise in Australia, and the assessment of individual overseas trained practitioners qualified in courses which are not recognised in Australia. However, while we support the concept of assessing overseas accrediting authorities, it may be difficult to undertake such an exercise in a detailed and objective manner without considerable time and expense to conduct an investigation.
- The conceptual association with registration, but a process of accreditation which is independent of registration
- The need to have effective standards of accreditation that will ensure an education process that will provide the knowledge base, professional and generic skills, and developed competencies that will ensure that the graduate is well equipped for practice. The knowledge must include the appropriate enabling sciences, applied pharmaceutical sciences, clinical sciences and pharmacy practice. The professional and generic skills and the competencies are well defined in current accreditation documents. However, the accreditation standards must give consideration to a number of other education related areas not directly related to the curriculum. These should

include standards related to (1) quality and appropriate numbers of academic and support staff, (2) infrastructure such as laboratories and equipment, teaching spaces and library facilities, (3) practice settings for student placement teaching experiences and (4) educational management policies and processes.

The faculty is supportive of all proposals of the consultation paper which relate to the proposed new accreditation arrangements, Linkages with the Commonwealth, State and territory government bodies, international linkages and transitional arrangements.

In summary, the ultimate ability of an accreditation process will depend on the development of appropriate standards that will ensure that the educational providers will have the ability to produce graduates who will be able to apply the knowledge and skills gained to promote and contribute to the quality use of medicines and to the health of the community.