

NATIONAL REGISTRATION AND ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Proposed arrangements for specialists within the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme for the Health Professions

The Dental Board of New South Wales would make the following submission regarding the proposed arrangements for specialists within the NRAS for Health Professionals.

Proposal 10.1

1. The Board does not endorse the change of wording from 'Qualifications' to 'qualification standards'. In dentistry, the minimum standard has always been indicated by way of requiring a particular qualification. In dental specialities, a three year Masters degree. This has allowed a clear career path for potential specialists and is easy to manage.

The standards of the various Masters degrees is determined by an accreditation system for university courses currently undertaken but the Australian Dental Council in conjunction with the Academies of Specialists in each area on. The Board has power to carry out this accreditation itself or delegate the task.

Thus, from a management viewpoint, the Board merely accepts that if a registration applicant possesses the appropriate degree, it can have confidence that the candidate is of a suitable standard.

A potential specialist registrant who might have alternative qualifications, usually from overseas, would have their qualifications assessed for equivalence to the Australian Masters degree courses and approved or not approved accordingly.

The Board contends that this is a much more efficient system than asking the Board to assess 'standards' itself. This would require the Board to develop a curriculum for each specialty with detailed skill requirements and training programs that is currently managed by the university providing the degree course.

Thus, it is the specific qualifications that the Board needs to determine in dentistry rather than a general standard.

2. The Board would not support a power of the Ministerial Council to dictate which specialties are appropriate within a health profession without reference to that profession. The Board would contend that the Ministerial Council would not possess the necessary expertise. The Ministerial Council may issue guidelines for Specialist registration following the recommendation of a Health Profession Board but not without consultation with a Board.

Proposal 12.1

1. The NSW Board is unclear as to how the proposed clauses operate with respect to the transition period. Is it intended that all Specialists currently recognised in each State or Territory automatically become registered as Specialists and will remain so unless changed for disciplinary or other reasons?

The amendment possibly implies that only those practitioners who have satisfied the training requirements set by the Board/Ministerial Council will remain registered. Since training requirements have changed over the years for each specialty, recognition of completion of the approved training program undertaken at the time of the original specialty registration application should be sufficient for ongoing speciality recognition.

The Dental Board of New South Wales is happy to endorse the consultation document proposal in all other respects.

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Registrar

16 February, 2009.