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Registration Arrangements Submission
Attention: Practitioner Regulation Subcommittee
National Health Workforce
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To Whom It May Concern:

Submission: Professor and Doctor Titles

I refer to the "Consultation paper: Proposed Registration Arrangements", which has only recently come to my attention. I note that submissions on this consultation paper closed on 29 October 2008, but ask that you accept this late submission.

The University of Queensland is concerned with Section 8 of this document ("Title Protection") in which the report recommends that there should be no statutory restriction on the use of the titles "Doctor" or "Professor" describing them as "courtesy" titles. We are alarmed at the interpretation of these titles; both carry significant status in the academic community and are indicators of both qualification and merit. The title "Professor" is reserved for only the elite of the academic community. Promotion to the title of Professor is based upon merit and, to be promoted to this title, the person must be able to demonstrate that they have reached the skill base required.

The title "Doctor" carries similar weightings. Those in the academic community who have gained the right to the title "Doctor" have undergone rigorous and lengthy study and undertaken extensive programs of research that have been peer-assessed. Consequently, it is only bestowed upon those with medical qualifications on the same basis as those who come from any other discipline. Medical practitioners are recognised as being in a special category and the MBBS course is recognised as being lengthy and arduous. Elevating any person who works in the allied medical field to a "Doctor" or indeed "Professor" severely undermines the credibility that the community attaches to the title and the academic significance of the title.

The University of Queensland requests that the Taskforce consult the wider academic and higher education community rather than restrict its examination to the narrower health field.

In conclusion, The University of Queensland wishes to reiterate concern that this proposal sanctions the widespread use of the titles "Doctor" and "Professor" without their use being based on an academic qualification, or the common usage for medical practitioners.

David Siddle
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
14 November 2008