

Policy Statement 3.8 – Overseas Qualified Dentists

Position Summary

Australia must prioritise and be self-sufficient with regard to the training of the dental workforce. The skills and knowledge of overseas qualified dentists approved to be registered in Australia must be equivalent to those of Australian-trained dentists.

Background

- 1.1. There is a maldistribution of dentists in Australia.
- 1.2. Australian dental schools have increased in number, which has resulted in increased graduating dentist numbers and the combined output of dentist graduates now exceeds Australia's workforce requirements.
- 1.3. The number of Overseas Qualified Dentists (OQDs) eligible to register in Australia annually exceeds the number of graduates from several Australian dental schools combined.
- 1.4. OQDs are not a long-term solution to the provision of a dental workforce in regional and remote areas.
- 1.5. There is a need for precise, reliable and contemporary data to aid workforce planning.
- 1.6. There are ethical considerations why a developed country such as Australia should be self-sustaining and not be reliant on recruiting dentists from countries, which may have a greater need for local dentists.
- 1.7. It is in the interests of public safety that appropriate, clearly defined and transparent standards and appropriate workforce requirements are in place to govern the assessment, recruitment and training of OQDs.
- 1.8. Orientation to health care programs is provided to several internationally qualified health professions seeking registration in Australia, including nurses, midwives and doctors, to provide culturally safe and sensitive practice.

Definitions

- 1.9. ALLIED DENTAL PRACTITIONER are those dental practitioners other than dentists.
- 1.10. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.11. OVERSEAS QUALIFIED DENTISTS are dentists whose primary dental degree was gained outside of Australia.
- 1.12. TRANS-TASMAN MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT is a non-treaty agreement between the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments and the Government of New Zealand with the objective of removing regulatory barriers to the movement of goods and service providers between Australia and New Zealand.

2. Position

- 2.1. Australia must be self-sufficient with regard to the training of the dental workforce.
- 2.2. Future Australian dental workforce requirements should be nationally coordinated.
- 2.3. Recruitment of OQDs should be directed to areas of workforce shortage. The Australian Dental Association must be consulted and involved in the decision-making process if dentists are considered for inclusion in migration pathways.
- 2.4. Dentists, like medical practitioners, should be an exempt occupation under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement.
- 2.5. The Board must ensure that the skills and knowledge of OQDs are equivalent to those of Australian-trained dentists.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 3.1 Dental Workforce, 3.3 Allied Dental Personnel & 5.9 Dental Accreditation Authority

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- 2.6. Orientation of health professionals to the Australian health system, culture and society should be extended to OQDs.
 - 2.7. The statements in this Policy Statement relating to dentists should also apply to allied dental practitioners and the entire dental team.

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