

NSW DENTAL TECHNICIANS REGISTRATION BOARD

Newsletter

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Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics Course

In December 1999 the NSW Dental Technicians Registration Board considered the various modes of delivery of the Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics Course conducted by TAFE.

TAFE have provided the following information relating to the delivery modes:

The course is delivered flexibly in Tasmania and Victoria:

In Tasmania it is delivered as self paced theory components and the clinical experience is gained under supervision by registered dentists or dental prosthetists resident in Tasmania. A number of visits are then made to assess competency. Ongoing tutorial support is made available.

In Victoria the clinical component of the course is delivered by five periods of three weeks each at block release at the United Dental Hospital Sydney. Competency is assessed at the end of this period and tutorial support is also given.

The Board has approved the Advanced Diploma of Dental Prosthetics for the purposes of registration as a dental prosthetist in NSW. It is anticipated that TAFE will provide the flexible delivery of the course to NSW students.

Career Path in Dental Technology Survey

The Board undertook an opinion survey during 1999. The survey dealt with the broadening of the profession to include other levels of employment. There was an excellent response rate to the survey and the Board wishes

to thank all registrants who responded to the survey. The following is a summary of the responses to the five questions posed.

Results of the survey indicate that dental prosthetists are generally more resistant than dental technicians to the introduction of further levels of employment within the profession. However, as a joint group, the results indicate a positive response to the question *Do you feel the profession should be widened to include other levels of employment?*

Comments provided ranged across the continuum from very positive to very negative. Negative responses included fear of exploitation and 'devaluation' of the profession. While those who supported widening the profession saw it as a good opportunity to relieve dental technicians and dental prosthetists of more routine tasks, allowing them to concentrate on those that are more complex.

The following tasks were supported by those surveyed as the most acceptable for an 'assistant' to perform.

- Disinfect Models/Impressions
- Pour Models and Trim
- Articulations.

Investing, deflasking, constructing bites and trays were the only tasks that were not supported strongly, particularly by the dental prosthetists.

Laboratory training, with placements at TAFE, was seen to be the most supported form of education for this position. There was very little consensus when looking at pre-training education, a small majority accepting the School Certificate as a possible entrance requirement.

Registration of the new position seemed to have a positive response.

Conference of Regulating Authorities (CORA)

The Dental Prosthetists Registration Board of Tasmania hosted the 1999 Conference of Regulating Authorities for Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists in March 1999.

The Conference was attended by State

Registration Boards, educational authorities, and professional associations. Mr R Boshier, and Mr R Scott represented the Board at the Conference. Items for discussion included:

- Constitution
- Progress on Legislation from all States
- Glossary of Terms
- National Competency Standards
- Standardisation of Training
- Proposed Bachelor of Oral Health
- Defence Force Training accreditation
- Infection Control
- Safe Working Practices in Dental Laboratories
- Oral Health Certificate

Review of the NSW Dental Technicians Registration Act 1975

The Board has been pleased to receive the Issues Papers for review of several other Health Professional Registration Acts, from the Department of Health. The Board has reviewed these Issues Papers in preparation for the review of the NSW Dental Technicians Registration Act 1975.

Random Inspections by the Inspector

An Inspector appointed by the Board has undertaken

random inspections in the last 12 months. Areas visited included Albury, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn, Armidale, Lismore and Nelson Bay. Assessments were made in respect of practitioners and their compliance with the provisions of the Dental Technicians Registration Act 1975. These random inspections have now become a regular part of the Board's Compliance Strategy.

All practitioners are expected to know the provisions of the Act that affect how their practice is to operate. A particular focus is being placed on ensuring that dental technicians do not do any technical work without an order from either a dental prosthetist or a dentist and that dental prosthetists only attend upon patients with healthy mouths and that patients are referred to Dentists where appropriate. All practitioners should be aware of the infection control guidelines that are outlined in the Dental Technicians Regulation 1998.

Statistics

There were 610 dental technicians and 391 dental prosthetists registered as at 22 February 2000.

Copies of the NSW Dental Technicians Registration Act 1975, No.40 and regulations can be obtained from the Government Information Service, Goodsell Building, Hunter Street, Sydney (Tel: 9743 7200).