



HEALTH PROFESSIONS LICENSING AUTHORITY

TITLE: Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme Conditional Registration Policy

EFFECTIVE DATE: December 2004

REVIEW DATE: July 2006, February 2009

BOARD: Dental Board of the Northern Territory

Purpose

This policy has been developed to provide guidance to the staff at the Health Professions Licensing Authority, members of the Dental Board of the Northern Territory and intending registrants regarding the eligibility of overseas educated dentists to apply for conditional registration under the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme (PSDWS).

Legislative requirements

Section 20(3) of the Health Practitioners Act states that a person may apply to be registered or enrolled ...if the person –

- (a) has successfully completed an accredited course in the category of registration or enrolment in the Territory;
- (b) has successfully completed a course in the category of registration or enrolment outside the Territory that the Board considers is at least substantially equivalent to an accredited course in the category of registration or enrolment; or
- (c) has experience and training in the category of registration or enrolment that the Board considers is at least substantially equivalent to the successful completion of an accredited course in the category of registration or enrolment.

Section 20(4) provides that “a person who is not otherwise eligible to apply for a category of registration or enrolment may do so if the relevant Board is satisfied that accepting the application and registering or enrolling the person is in the public interest or meets a community need.”

National perspective

The Australian Dental Council (ADC) was established in 1993 and has as part of its membership representatives from all Dental Registration Boards in Australia. The ADC is authorised under the Migration Act (Cth) for assessing and certifying overseas-educated dentists and providing recommendations to Dental Registration Boards in Australia regarding the subsequent suitability for registration.

The ADC has recognised the very severe workforce problems being experienced in rural and remote areas and in the public sector in general. This has been raised at the national level with the Australian Health Workforce Officials Committee (AHWOC). The ADC has developed criteria that will provide guidance to Dental Registration Boards that will enable them to offer conditional registration to dentists who were not previously entitled to registration.

Who is eligible to apply for conditional registration under the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme?

Utilising *Section 20(4)* the Board will consider issuing conditional registration to persons who have a primary dental qualification from one of the institutions recognised by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) for the purposes of the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme.

An up to date list of these recognised institutions can be viewed on the ADC's website www.adc.org.au/publicsector.html under the list – ‘Whose Graduates Are Eligible To Participate In The Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme’.

In addition to holding a qualification as outlined above on this website, the applicant must meet the requirements set out in *Section 22 of the Health Practitioners Act* relating to physical and mental capacity to practise, English language competence, professional indemnity arrangements, and good character.

Process to be followed

1. Registration under this Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme (the Scheme) is only available to applicants if they are to be employed by the Northern Territory public sector as part of the Scheme.
2. Applicants must make a written application to the Board using the "*Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme Application for Conditional Registration*" form.
3. Applicants must provide details of the employment program outlining:
 - who will supervise his or her work;
 - where they will be practising; and
 - the period of employment.
4. An essential element of the Scheme is that those registered under it are adequately supervised, therefore the Board requires the following of the supervision arrangement:
 - a. Supervision is carried out on-site;
 - b. The supervisor is a registered dentist with at least 5 years experience;
 - c. The supervisor will report to the employer and the Board if there is concern about the standard of dental care provided by the dentist being supervised;
 - d. The employer provides each supervisor with prior training and a clear definition of the supervisory role;
 - e. The employer advises the Board if for any reason the supervision arrangement breaks down.
5. The Board will review the application and ensure the application meets all the ADC requirements.
6. The Board may then grant conditional registration for a period of 12 months at a time (for a maximum of 3 years). The applicant will need to reapply each year for the renewal of the conditional registration and provide evidence to the Board that they are working toward the completion of the ADC final clinical examination.
7. Once the applicant has undertaken the final clinical examination of the ADC within three years of initial registration a new application for full registration is to be submitted with the evidence of passing the final ADC examination.
8. Any dentist issued with conditional registration must at all times work within the confines of the visa issued to them by the Australian Government and the supervision requirements of the Board.

Practising in accordance to the conditions

At all times, the dentist must practise in accordance with the conditions attached to the registration. Pursuant to Section 50(1(a) of the *Health Practitioners Act 2004*, the Board may remove from the register that name of a person who contravenes a condition subject to which the person is registered.

**All forms and any other updated information can be found on the Dental Board of the Northern Territory's website www.nt.gov.au/health/registrationboards

***Further information regarding the Australian Dental Council's assessment of qualifications can be found on website www.adc.org.au