



Australian  
Dental  
Council

**AUSTRALIAN DENTAL COUNCIL  
REPORT OF AN EVALUATION OF  
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE  
BACHELOR OF ORAL HEALTH THERAPY  
PROGRAM**

**May 2017**

# SUMMARY REPORT

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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| <b>Program provider</b>                          | University of Newcastle  |
| <b>Program/qualification name</b>                | Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy  |
| <b>Program/qualification abbreviation</b>        | BOHT   |
| <b>Program/qualification code</b>                | 480764   |
| <b>Head office address, including State</b>      | Central Coast (Ourimbah), Chittaway Road, Ourimbah NSW                       |
| <b>Campus</b>                                    | Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah   |
| <b>Program length</b>                            | 3 years full time  |
| <b>Registration division</b>                     | Dental Hygienist, Dental Therapist, Oral Health Therapist                    |
| <b>Registration specialty</b>                    | NA   |
| <b>Qualification type</b>                        | HE   |
| <b>Australian Qualifications Framework Level</b> | Level 7  |
| <b>Accreditation standards version</b>           | Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs (Approved Dec 2014) |
| <b>Date of site evaluation</b>                   | 17 - 18 May 2017   |
| <b>Date of ADC decision</b>                      | 18 August 2017   |
| <b>Type of accreditation</b>                     | Re-Accreditation   |
| <b>Accreditation start date</b>                  | 1 January 2018   |
| <b>Accreditation end date</b>                    | 31 December 2022   |

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## Background

The University of Newcastle introduced its Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy (BOHT) in 2014 as a development and amalgamation of its then accredited Graduate Diploma in Dental Therapy (GradDipDT) and Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH) programs. A desktop review of the BOHT was undertaken in 2014 with the ADC/DC(NZ) Accreditation Committee (the Accreditation Committee) determining that the program be accredited from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017, subject to the following conditions (the standards referred to are the accreditation standards in use at the time of the Accreditation Committee decision):

That in order for the ADC to determine if Standard 5 – Physical facilities and resources and Standard 11 – Preparation for practice have been met:

- 1) That by **1 December 2014** the University of Newcastle provides:
  - a) an explanation of how it has determined what constitutes an acceptable number of clinical hours per student as the clinical operator to allow students to develop the required competencies to safely practice all modalities of the Oral Health Therapist (including adult scope in dental therapy).
  - b) a detailed timetable for each year of the program demonstrating how every student in both the Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy and the Bachelor of Oral Health will be accommodated in the available pre-clinical and clinical facilities, including the number of clinical hours each will spend working as a clinical operator.
- 2) That by **16 January 2015** the University of Newcastle report to the ADC on the total number of BOHT 1<sup>st</sup> Year intake and demonstrate their fit with the available clinical and pre-clinical resources.

At its March 2015 meeting the Accreditation Committee determined that condition 2 had been satisfied.

At its December 2014 meeting the Accreditation Committee considered the University's response to Condition 1 and imposed a further condition on the program as follows:

'... that a monitoring visit be undertaken in the final quarter of 2015 to review compliance with the Accreditation Standards – and in particular Standard 11 – Preparation for practice.' The monitoring visit was conducted on 7 October 2015.

In response to the report from the Site Evaluation Team (SET) undertaking the monitoring visit the Accreditation Committee determined that the program remain accredited until 31 December 2017 subject to the following condition:

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- 1) In order to demonstrate that it fully meets Standard 11 – Preparation for Practice – the School must provide a report to the ADC detailing the additional clinical outplacement opportunities that it has put in place for students. The report should also demonstrate how the totality of the clinical experience that the students will gain is sufficient for them to gain the full range of professional attributes and competencies for the newly qualified oral health therapist. This report is to be provided to the ADC by **30 June 2016**.

At its August 2016 meeting the Accreditation Committee determined that the condition had been satisfied but noted concerns over the proposed reduction of clinical hours that students would gain in the 2018 academic year.

The BOH program is currently being taught out and remains accredited until 31 December 2017. Upon commencement of the BOHT program in 2015 year 1 and 2 BOH students were provided the opportunity to transfer to the BOHT program. The transfer of students and the operation of parallel programs has created some short term spikes in student numbers.

## Overview of the Evaluation

The SET received the University of Newcastle's 80-page submission against the Accreditation Standards, various appendices and subsequent information requested from the University following the SET teleconference of 13 April 2017. The SET undertook a site visit to the University on 17 and 18 May 2017. During the visit, meetings were held with:

- The Head of School of Health Sciences
- The Head of Discipline, Oral Health
- The Program Convener
- A range of professional staff
- Year co-ordinators and hygiene and dental therapy leads
- A staff member from another discipline teaching into the program
- A range of clinical staff and supervisors
- Members of the Curriculum Committee

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- A representative group of students from all years of the program
- The Director, Centre for Oral Health Strategy
- Representatives of the Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists Association (ADOHTA) and Dental Hygienists Association of Australia (DHAA)

The SET also toured the clinical and simulation facilities on campus and met with a range of clinical staff. During the site visit the SET was provided with further documentation including sample log books and student rosters.

The findings in this report are based on the SET's assessment of the material outlined above, interview evidence and a review of the facilities at the time of the site visit.

## Key Findings

The program is in the final stages of its rollout with the first cohort of students in the third and final year. The discipline has put in place a range of external clinical placement opportunities to build on the experience that students gain at the on-campus clinic which should provide students with access to a suitable number and range of patients.

The program is well resourced and staff have identified a number of external funding streams to support internal university funding. On site facilities are of suitable quality and sufficient to support existing student numbers. The program is delivered by a well-qualified and dedicated staff group with the university supporting many staff to develop their research experience and qualifications. Academic governance is appropriate with good external input into the program from a range of stakeholders.

Students are provided with access to a suitable number and range of patients. Assessment of a suitable range of patient types and complexity occurs although the documentation to support this could be optimised to provide greater clarity for students, tutors and mentors.

Attrition in the program is also high compared to similar programs offered by other education providers, although the levels of attrition are consistent with the levels experienced by other programs in the School of Health Sciences and the wider university. A number of recommendations are made for how the university may address this challenge.

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## ADC Accreditation Decision

The ADC had determined that the University of Newcastle's Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy program is accredited until **31 December 2022**.