



Australian
Dental
Council

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

October 2015

SUMMARY REPORT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Program provider	University of Newcastle
Program/qualification name	Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy
Program/qualification abbreviation	BOHT
Program/qualification code	480764
Head office address, including State	Central Coast (Ourimbah), Chittaway Road, Ourimbah NSW
Approved campus	Central Coast Campus at Ourimbah
Program length	3 years full time
Registration division	Dental Hygienist, Dental Therapist, Oral Health Therapist
Registration specialty	NA
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework Level	Level 7
Accreditation standards version	June 2010
Date of site evaluation	7 October 2015
Date of ADC decision	29 October 2015
Type of accreditation	Monitoring Visit
Accreditation start date	1 January 2015
Accreditation end date	31 December 2017

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Background

In January 2013 the University of Newcastle advised the Australian Dental Council (ADC) that it was commencing work on a major revision of its Bachelor of Oral Health (BOH) program. The University advised that the revision was in response to both internal and external stakeholder feedback and was aimed at incorporating the competencies attained in the Graduate Diploma in Dental Therapy (GradDipDT) program within the existing BOH program. The ADC determined that the proposed Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy (BOHT) program was not a major change, but a new program and as such would need to be accredited separately.

The BOHT program is a three year course that will enable graduates to register as dental therapists, dental hygienists and oral health therapists. The program also aims to equip graduates with the knowledge and skills required to practice dental therapy on persons of all ages.

A desktop review of the BOHT was undertaken in 2014 with the ADC/DC(NZ) Accreditation Committee determining that the program be accredited from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2017. However, the Site Evaluation Team (SET) noted in their report:

‘...the size of the proposed student intake is of concern. The University of Newcastle will need to demonstrate that the proposed intake can be accommodated through the 16 available chairs at the Oral Health Centre. Furthermore the University will need to provide evidence that all students will receive adequate clinical time as operators to develop the skills required for solo practice on graduation, particularly given the extended scope of dental therapy for persons of all ages.’

In response to this concern the Accreditation Committee imposed the following conditions on the program:

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).

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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 1st Year intake and demonstrate their fit with the available clinical and pre-clinical resources.

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.'

Overview of the Evaluation

The SET reviewed the University's 80 page submission against the Accreditation Standards together with supporting appendices and a range of additional information supplied to the SET at their request.

During the site visit the SET toured the clinical and simulation laboratory facilities and met with:

- The Dean/Head of School
- The Program Convenor
- The Discipline Lead
- Year coordinators and program leads
- Clinical laboratory staff
- Students
- Lecturing and tutoring staff from the BOHT and BOH

As this was a monitoring visit compliance with the full set of accreditation standards was not reviewed. This report addresses only the following standards:

Standard 5 – Physical facilities and resources

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Standard 6 – Staff and staff development

Standard 7 – Admissions policies and procedures

Standard 10 – Clinic administration

Standard 11 – Preparation for Practice

Key Findings

The program is now nearing the end of its first year. The staff have demonstrated a strong commitment to the program and the students and this was evident during the monitoring visit.

The SET remains concerned that the student numbers remain high for the number of patients and clinical opportunities that will be available to students in the second and third years of the program, particularly given that the program covers both dental hygiene and dental therapy, including adult scope in dental therapy. The School is working on identifying further placement opportunities for the students and a condition is proposed to report on this and how it will ensure that the students achieve a sufficient level of competency upon graduation.

ADC Accreditation Decision

The ADC has determined that the University of Newcastle's Bachelor of Oral Health Therapy program remains accredited until **31 December 2017** subject to the following condition:

- 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**.