



Australian  
Dental  
Council

**AUSTRALIAN DENTAL COUNCIL  
REPORT OF AN EVALUATION OF  
CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (ORAL HEALTH THERAPY)**

**August 2015**

# SUMMARY REPORT

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<b>Program provider</b>	Curtin University of Technology
<b>Program/qualification name</b>	Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy)
<b>Program/qualification abbreviation</b>	BSc (OHT)
<b>Program/qualification code</b>	
<b>Head office address, including State</b>	GPO Box U1987 Perth WA 6845
<b>Campuses</b>	Nedlands and Bentley
<b>Program length</b>	3 years
<b>Registration division</b>	Dental Therapist , Dental Hygienist , 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 DH DT June 2010, Version 1.0
<b>Date of site evaluation</b>	4 - 5 August 2015
<b>Date of ADC decision</b>	29 October 2015
<b>Type of accreditation</b>	Re-accreditation
<b>Accreditation start date</b>	1 January 2016
<b>Accreditation end date</b>	31 December 2016

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## Background

The Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy) (BSc(OHT)) program was first accredited by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) following a Site Evaluation Team (SET) visit in September 2010. The course received five years accreditation, subject to a number of conditions on reporting developments with the new program. The new course replaced the previous Associate Degree in Dental Hygiene.

The BSc(OHT) program is a three year course that will enable graduates to register as dental therapists, dental hygienists and oral health therapists.

The students are largely based at the Oral Health Centre of Western Australia (OHCWA) and are located in close proximity to the dental students at the University of Western Australia (UWA).

## Overview of the Evaluation

The SET received Curtin University of Technology's (CUT's) 63-page submission against the Accreditation Standards and subsequent information requested from the university following the SET teleconference of 25 June 2015. The SET undertook a site visit to CUT on 4 and 5 August 2015. During the visit, meetings were held with:

- The Pro Vice-Chancellor; Dean – Teaching and Learning; and Head of School of Biomedical Sciences
- The Head of Department of Dental Hygiene and Therapy
- Subject co-ordinators
- The Clinical Co-ordinator
- Administrative and financial support staff
- A selection of staff from the UWA
- Students from all years of the program
- Recent graduates
- Department of Health Services (DHS) staff involved in the program
- Representatives from the Australian Dental Association (ADA), Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association (ADOHTA) and the Dental Hygienists' Association of Australia (DHAA)

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- Practitioners participating in external clinical placements
- Private sector employers

The SET also toured the facilities at the OHCWA and met with a range of clinical demonstrators and clinical staff. Community Dental Health Services facilities at Mount Henry were also viewed.

## Key Findings

The Department enjoys good working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders who are clearly very supportive of the program, its students, staff and graduates. The Department is also in a sound financial position, delivering a small budget surplus with this projected to continue into the future. Forward plans also include the potential addition of an honours year which would be a significant positive for the program.

The program includes a first year that is integrated with other health programs at the university, which delivers an interprofessional experience for students. This does mean however, that students do not begin to see patients until half-way through the second year, which leads to a high workload during the second half of the program. Despite being an Oral Health Therapy (OHT) program, the curriculum appears to compartmentalise dental hygiene and dental therapy as two separate streams which is a missed opportunity.

Staffing is sufficient to support the program, although staff workload means that there has been only a limited focus on course development which does need to be considered as a priority. There are also issues created by the limited patient mix available to students, for example the restricted age range of 4 up to 18 years at DHS clinics. It appears that DHS is open to exploring how this may be expanded and the Department is encouraged to pursue this.

A program review is planned for 2016 and provides an excellent opportunity to address many of the issues identified by the SET. A condition is imposed so that the outcome of the review is reported to the ADC.

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## ADC Accreditation Decision

The ADC has determined that Curtin University of Technology's Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy) is re-accredited for a period of five (5) years until **31 December 2020** subject to the following condition:

- 1) In order to fully meet Standard 8 – Curriculum, Standard 11 – Preparation for Practice and Standard 12 – Assessment and Examination, the Department of Dental Hygiene and Therapy (the Department) must provide a satisfactory report to the ADC on the outcome of its 2016 program review. The report must identify how the Department will:
  - a. Amend the curriculum to ensure the development of an integrated oral health therapist
  - b. Expand access to a diverse range of patients in order to strengthen clinical competency of graduates
  - c. Ensure that assessments align with the curriculum and clearly test and demonstrate clinical competency

This report to be submitted to the ADC by **31 August 2016**.