



Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of Charles Sturt University Bachelor of Dental Science program

September 2019

Amended May 2020

Summary Report

Program provider	Charles Sturt University
Program/qualification name	Bachelor of Dental Science
Program/qualification abbreviation	BDentSc
Program/qualification code	4409DS
Head office address, including State	School of Dentistry & Health Sciences, PO Box 883, Orange, NSW 2800
Campus	CSU Albury, CSU Bathurst, CSU Dubbo, CSU Orange, CSU Wagga Wagga
Program length	5 Years
Registration division	Dentist
Registration speciality	N/A
Qualification type	HE (Higher Education)
Australian Qualifications Framework level	Level 7 (Bachelor degree)
Accreditation standards version	ADC/DC(NZ) Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs – (Approved Dec 2014)
Date of site evaluation	24 - 25 September 2019
Date of ADC decision	8 November 2019
Type of accreditation	Monitoring - Condition
Accreditation start date	1 January 2015
Accreditation end date	31 December 2021

Background

Charles Sturt University's (CSU's) Bachelor of Dental Science (BDentSc) program was reviewed in 2014 and accredited for a period of seven years without conditions.

In May 2018, concerns were raised informally with the ADC regarding the program. These concerns were addressed with the School directly, as the ADC did not have sufficient justification at the time to warrant further action. Concerns were raised in August 2018 and the ADC was advised that an external review of the program had been instigated by the education provider in response to the concerns of a third party.

The ADC considered the concerns reported and the actions taken by the education provider to undertake an external review of the program. The ADC placed a monitoring requirement on the program requesting the University to provide the final report of the external review commissioned into the concerns raised about the program.

The final external review report was provided to the ADC in January 2019. Following consideration of the report's findings, the ADC determined that there were potentially serious concerns with the program's ability to continue to meet the accreditation standards. The ADC determined that as a condition of accreditation, a Site Evaluation Team (SET) be appointed to undertake a site visit to review the BDentSc program against all of the standards.

The visit was undertaken in April 2019 and identified a range of significant challenges the School faced, calling into question the ability of the program to continue to meet the accreditation standards. As a result, the ADC imposed a series of conditions on the program. The conditions required CSU to provide reports in June 2019, September 2019, November 2019 and March 2020 addressing the issues identified in the April 2019.

As a further condition, the ADC advised CSU a site visit was to be undertaken within six months of the April visit. The purpose of this visit was to verify the information included in the June 2019 report and to assess the progress made by the School to address the shortfalls against the accreditation standards.

To date, CSU has met each of the conditions by the required timeline, with the ADC determining the June 2019 condition report was satisfactory.

Overview of evaluation

An ADC SET conducted a site visit on 24 and 25 September 2019 to CSU's Orange campus. The SET reviewed CSU's 23 page submission against the Standards, attached appendices and additional information requested following the SET's teleconference of 3 September 2019.

The SET reviewed CSU's condition report submitted on 30 June 2019 in response to conditions of accreditation imposed on the program following the April 2019 visit.

During the visit, the SET interviewed a range of individuals, including:

- The Executive Dean
- Acting Head of School
- Year co-ordinators
- Discipline Lead
- Academic staff, including permanent and adjunct appointments
- Clinical tutors
- Course Director
- Director, Student Safety and Wellbeing
- Student Liaison Officer
- Current students and recent graduates
- Public and private sector employers
- Members of the External Advisory Committee (EAC)
- Clinical Director
- Workplace Learning Administrative Officer
- Operations Project Officer
- Sub Dean Workplace Learning and Accreditation

During the visit, the SET was provided with additional information including:

- Examples of student assessments across all five years of the program, including student log books.
- A draft of the 2020 placement roster for Year 5 BDentSc students.

In the week following the visit, the SET also reviewed the report submitted as a condition of accreditation on 30 September 2019 and the program's annual report.

Key findings

The School has made significant progress in addressing the issues identified at the time of the April 2019 visit. Clarity has been provided regarding reporting relationships, roles and responsibilities. The recruitment of staff has continued, with new appointments in train at the time of

the visit. These additional staffing resources have helped to address the previous pressure that staff and students felt and has greatly improved the morale as witnessed by the SET during interview sessions. The School is using adjunct appointments to fill vacancies and has expanded its clinical tutor pool. Further updates on the staffing profile will provide reassurance that the recruitment drive has been successful.

The resourcing provided by the School and Faculty to address some of the administrative tasks has also assisted in program delivery and allows academic staff to focus on supporting student learning needs. The previous issues regarding supervision of students in clinics have been addressed. The clinics comply with legislative and regulatory requirements based on the evidence collected by the SET. Consideration should be given to an independent validation of the policies and processes used in CSU owned and operated dental clinics.

CSU is engaging proactively with the local dental practitioners to provide further external input and validation of its program, which is a positive improvement. The EAC has met twice since the April 2019 visit, with further meetings planned. The SET was advised of opportunities to include students on the EAC and the School Committee, both of which will increase student representation in decision making.

A new approach to complaints and concerns has been created, with responsibility resting with the Head of School to take action if and when appropriate. Students and staff have provided input into this process, which will allow a more effective means of dealing with any issues as they arise.

The School continues with the course review, with all staff involved and feedback from students also being sought at each stage of the process. The School is addressing areas identified previously as not explicitly taught and assessed in health promotion and research literacy with current cohorts. The School has identified areas for improvement such as access to paedodontic and exodontia patients, as well as opportunities for broader inter-professional practice including in the aged care setting. These are excellent opportunities for the School to explore and are encouraged.

All evidence gathered continues to indicate that graduates will be safe and competent to practice. The School has made significant progress in a short period of time to address interrelated issues and should be commended for its willingness to do so. The School appears on track to address the remaining conditions of accreditation within the specified timeframes and should be well prepared, following the completion of the program review, for the next reaccreditation visit scheduled for 2021.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC determined that Charles Sturt University's Bachelor of Dental Science program remains accredited until **31 December 2021**.

As a further monitoring requirement, to ensure the actions planned and explained at the time of the September 2019 visit are completed:

1. CSU is requested to provide an update by **31 March 2020** of the staffing profile and the recruitment outcomes currently in progress or about to commence. The report should include progress on the recruitment of a new Head of School.

The ADC has determined that this monitoring requirement has now been met.

2. As part of the 2020 annual report for the program, the School is to include a summary of student feedback collected to inform program design and delivery and:
 - a. detail how the School will address the feedback;
 - b. advise of any changes to be made to the program as a result.

The ADC has removed this monitoring requirement.

ADC Secretariat Note:

At the ADC/DC(NZ) Accreditation Committee on 1 May 2020, the ADC considered the monitoring report submitted by CSU on 31 March 2020. Monitoring requirements that the ADC has determined to have been met or amended are indicated above.