



Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of Curtin University's Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy) program

September 2020

Summary report

Program provider	Curtin University
Program/qualification name	Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy)
Program/qualification abbreviation	BSc (OHT)
Program/qualification code	B-ORALHT
Head office address, including State	17 Monash Avenue, Nedlands WA 6845
Campus	Oral Health Centre of Western Australia
Program length	3 years
Registration division	Dental Hygienist, Dental Therapist, Oral Health Therapist
Registration specialty	NA
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework level	7
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs (Approved Dec 2014)
Date of site evaluation	Paper-based review
Date of ADC decision	30 October 2020
Type of accreditation	Re-accreditation
Accreditation start date	1 January 2021
Accreditation end date	31 December 2025

Background

Curtin University's Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy) program was last reviewed for the purposes of accreditation by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) in 2015. The program was reviewed against the accreditation standards in effect at the time. Several Standards were identified as being 'Substantially met' resulting in conditions imposed on the program. The conditions were subsequently met and two monitoring requirements were imposed regarding the outcomes of scheduled reviews of the School scheduled for 2017 and a Comprehensive Course Review scheduled 2018.

The monitoring requirement regarding the School Review was determined to have been met in 2018. The monitoring requirement regarding the Comprehensive Course Review was removed from the program in May 2020, with the ADC noting that the review had not yet been undertaken. In accordance with the ADC's protocol to monitor the impacts on accredited programs of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ADC determined that the reaccreditation process provided opportunity for the ADC to ensure the program continues to meet the Standards without the need for additional monitoring.

The program enables graduates to apply to the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) to register as a Dental Hygienist, Dental Therapist and Oral Health Therapist.

Overview of evaluation

A two-day site visit had been scheduled to take place on 4-5 August 2020. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and in line with the advice of the Australian Government Department of Health and the World Health Organisation (WHO) the ADC made the decision on 15 April 2020 to postpone the visit until 2021, with a paper-based review to be undertaken in 2020. The ADC also developed a protocol to monitor the impacts on accredited programs of the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure all programs continued to meet the Standards throughout the pandemic.

A Site Evaluation Team (SET) conducted a paper-based review based on Curtin University's 44-page submission and associated appendices. The SET held a teleconference on 16 July 2020 to discuss the submission. Additional information was requested from Curtin University following the teleconference. The SET met by teleconference on 24 September 2020 to discuss the additional information provided.

The findings in this report are based on the SET's assessment of the material outlined above, annual reports submitted for the programs and the ADC Report of an evaluation of Curtin University's Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy) program August 2015.

Key findings

The provider has a robust academic governance structure and student support facilities (both academic and personal) in place and access to a range of clinical placements across both the public and private sectors. Since this was a paper-based review these facilities will need to be confirmed at a subsequent site visit. The SET did have concern about the increasing workload for the dedicated academic staff for the program, especially in light of the increasing student numbers.

The evidence provided supports that students enrolled in the program have the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and competencies expected of a Dental Hygienist, Dental Therapist or Oral Health Therapist. There appears to be the range and number of cases needed to develop the competencies expected.

The SET identified a lack of evidence or reference in the submission to the assessment moderation. While the shortfall was not considered significant enough to impact on the overall recommendation to re-accredit the program, a condition was imposed on the program relating to Standard 5.

A number of further recommendations have been made by the SET where areas were identified for potential improvement, including a recommendation to address the high workloads for existing staff with increasing student numbers.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that Curtin University's Bachelor of Science (Oral Health Therapy) program is re-accredited for a period of five (5) years from **1 January 2021** until **31 December 2025**, subject to the following condition:

1. In order to fully meet Standard 5 – Assessment, the provider is required to provide by **16 February 2021** details of the moderation processes in place to ensure consistency of marking by clinical supervisors and an example of marking rubrics used to assess clinical competencies.