

Policy Statement 3.8 – Overseas Qualified Dentists¹

1. Introduction

- 1.1. There is a growing oversupply of dentists in Australia.
- 1.2. Australian dental schools have increased in number which has resulted in increased graduating dentist numbers and the combined output of dentist graduates now exceeds Australia's workforce requirements.
- 1.3. If the current level of recruitment of overseas qualified dentists [OQDs] is maintained, the oversupply of dentists will worsen.
- 1.4. There are strong ethical considerations why a developed country such as Australia should not be recruiting dentists from countries which have a greater need for local dentists.
- 1.5. It is in the interests of public safety that appropriate, clearly defined and transparent standards and appropriate workforce requirements should be in place to govern the assessment, recruitment and training of OQDs.

Definitions

- 1.6. ALLIED DENTAL PRACTITIONER are those dental practitioners other than dentists.
- 1.7. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.8. OVERSEAS QUALIFIED DENTISTS are dentists whose primary dental degree was gained outside of Australia.
- 1.9. TRANS-TASMAN MUTUAL RECOGNITION ARRANGEMENT is a non-treaty agreement between the Australian Government, State and Territory Governments and the Government of New Zealand with the objective of removing regulatory barriers to the movement of goods and service providers between Australia and New Zealand.

2. Principles

- 2.1. Australia should train sufficient dentists to meet Australian requirements.
- 2.2. OQDs are not a long-term solution to the provision of a dental workforce in regional and remote areas.
- 2.3. Migration for professional, economic or personal reasons is a human right, but is dependent on opportunity.
- 2.4. There is a need for precise and reliable data to aid workforce planning.
- 2.5. The Australian dental workforce future requirements should be nationally coordinated.

3. Policy

- 3.1. Australia should only train sufficient dentists to meet Australian requirements.
- 3.2. In the absence of chronic workforce shortages, the recruitment of OQDs should cease except for research and academic positions.
- 3.3. The Department of Immigration and Border Protection should not include dentists on the Skilled Occupation List.
- 3.4. Dentists should be an exempt occupation under the Trans-Tasman Mutual Recognition Arrangement.
- 3.5. The Board must ensure that the skills and knowledge of OQDs are equivalent to those of Australian-trained dentists.

¹ This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statements: 3.1 *Dental Workforce*, 3.3 *Allied Dental Personnel* & 5.9 *Dental Accreditation Authority*

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- 3.6. The statements in this Policy Statement relating to dentists should also apply to allied dental practitioners.

Policy Statement 3.8

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