

Policy Statement 3.9 – Recency of Practice

Position Summary

The Dental Board of Australia should establish appropriate standards for the recency of practice for dental practitioners which are simple to administer and address real risk, to ensure that professional standards are maintained.

1. Background

- 1.1. The Australian Dental Association (ADA) provides information, continuing professional development and other services to assist its members to meet professional standards.
- 1.2. The Board is responsible under the National Law for establishing registration standards on such matters as recency of practice. The Board issued its recency of practice registration standard on 1 July 2010.
- 1.3. The National Law requires that applicants for registration must be suitably qualified and fit to practise.
- 1.4. The practice of dentistry includes any role in which the individual uses their skills and knowledge as a dental practitioner such as clinical dentistry, clinical specialist practice, administration in the field of dentistry, study, teaching and research in the field of dentistry.

Definitions

- 1.5. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.6. DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.7. NATIONAL LAW is the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Acts 2009 as in force in each state and territory.
- 1.8. RECENCY OF PRACTICE means that a practitioner has maintained an adequate connection with, and recent practise in dentistry since qualifying or obtaining registration.
- 1.9. RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION is the process of re-registering a person already registered.

2. Position

Requirements must address real risks

- 2.1. There should be unequivocal evidence that any measure being introduced as a requirement for recency of practice must be effective in protecting the public.
- 2.2. The recency of practice requirements for renewal of registration should not be more onerous than the fitness to practise requirements for registration.
- 2.3. Recency of practice assessment should include consideration of the following:
 - 2.3.1. the nature, extent and period of practice;
 - 2.3.2. any continuing professional development undertaken;
 - 2.3.3. any research, study or teaching relating to dentistry;
 - 2.3.4. administrative work relating to dentistry, including management, regulatory or policy development roles, and
 - 2.3.5. absences from practice
 - 2.3.6. connection with the profession

Simple to administer

- 2.4. Registration authorities should avoid requirements that necessitate complex, unfeasible, or unreasonably expensive administration to monitor recency of practice or to follow up breaches.
- 2.5. Non-practising registrants should have a special category of registration and be entitled to use protected titles, provided the words “non-practicing” or “retired” are included. These registrants should not practise dentistry at all while registered in this category.

This arrangement should not permit a non-practising registrant who has exceeded the time limits for recency of practice to regain registration through practice in research, administration or teaching only, without assessment by the Board.

- 2.6. There is no unequivocal evidence for time frames. Therefore, the Board should only set guidelines for time frames. Each individual case should be assessed on its merits. Only applicants for registration where there is clearly a risk to public safety should be subject to examination or conditions on registration.
- 2.7. Dental Practitioners should be aware of the Board’s registration standard on recency of practice.

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