



Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons

25 October 2018

Ms Marie Warner
Chief Executive Officer
Dental Council
NEW ZEALAND

By email: recertification@dcnz.org.nz

Dear Ms Warner

Re: Dental Council discussion document on recertifying our oral health practitioners: considering the draft proposals

The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (RACDS) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Dental Council New Zealand discussion document on “recertifying our oral health practitioners: considering the draft proposals”.

The RACDS promotes professional excellence in dentistry through the provision of evidenced based dental education, professional development and examination. The RACDS provide a broad range of activities to enhance the development of dentists through individually mediated studies, examinations and continued professional development. The RACDS has an interest in the ongoing professional development of practitioners and it is from this perspective that our submission is made.

The RACDS compliments the Dental Council on the consultation process undertaken and, in particular, the written material and resources made available, and the opportunity for the Dental Council recertification project team to interact with the profession through the extensive roadshow and webinar presence.

The RACDS notes that the consultation currently lacks specific detail with regard to how various potential proposals would be implemented, the resources required, and the impact on oral health practitioners and the wider profession.

As discussed at our meeting in August 2018 in Auckland, the document would benefit from including mention of key stakeholders such as ‘Colleges’ in a number of sections in addition to the already mentioned “professional associations, specialist bodies or interest groups”.

The focus in the discussion document on individual practitioner ‘self-reflection’ is supported by the RACDS. An essential underpinning principle of effective personal professional development and arguably competence is ‘self-reflection’. Translating this self-reflection into practical and applicable professional development is key and the development of a performance development plan or strategy as outlined is one approach to this. The challenge continues to be the availability and accessibility of quality continuing professional development and educational activities.

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The concept of peer interaction is important and good peer interaction provides a vehicle and mechanism to support practitioner professional development. The concept of peer 'attestation' is one of several mechanisms available to apply rigor to the peer interaction and performance development process. The draft proposal lacked detail as how peer interactions would be structured and operate, what the responsibilities and accountabilities for each peer in the relationship and how this would be developed and sustained across the profession in New Zealand. The Dental Council may wish to consider other mechanisms for formalising peer interactions.

In regard to the Professional Development Plan (PDP) and in particular sign off by peers, the Dental Council may also wish to give further consideration about whether practitioners may be concerned about potential legal ramifications of identifying areas for further development (or even identify current deficiencies) with PDAs. Qualified Privilege Protection in particular in relation to reflective notes may also be of interest for practitioners.

The College acknowledges that new registrants can often require additional support as they enter practice for the first time or in a new jurisdiction. Mentors have been shown to be effective in such circumstances. The RACDS notes that there are a wide range of mentoring philosophies available across the professional, health and education sectors. The College has a strong emphasis on mentoring. The draft proposal lacked definitions and detail regarding mentoring in the context of this recertification process.

In summary, the RACDS is supportive of the principles of 'self-reflection', development of personal professional development plans, structured peer interactions and well defined and structured mentoring of new registrants.

We look forward to contributing further on these matters as the process continues.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K Luxford'.

Dr Karen Luxford
Chief Executive Officer