



Video transcript

Commencing your dental studies? What you need to know

May 2018

Welcome to this presentation.

I am going to talk to you about what you need to know about being a student in an approved dental program of study.

If you're a dental student in Australia undertaking a program of study that qualifies you for registration in the dental profession; your education provider has registered you with the Dental Board of Australia.

This is a short presentation to explain your obligations as a registered dental student.

As part of this we need to cover:

- who we are
- what the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme is
- what we do, and
- what you need to know and do as a registered dental student, both now and before you complete your studies.

The Dental Board sits within what is known as the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme or NRAS.

The National Scheme brought about national regulation for a number of health professions, where previously these health professions had state and territory-based regulation.

We now have 14 health professions regulated under NRAS and the dental profession is one of them.

In late 2018 Paramedicine will be regulated under the scheme making it the fifteenth profession to join.

There are a number of advantages to the National Scheme which include:

- The Setting of national standards, so health practitioners have consistent standards to follow, no matter where they're practising.
- The online *Register of practitioners* provides an up-to-date list of all health practitioners registered to practise in Australia, and we encourage everyone visiting a health professional to check their registration on this national register.
- Facilitating workforce mobility so once registered, health practitioners can practise anywhere in Australia instead of needing to be registered in every state where they work.
- Accreditation of training and education programs, such as your dental course you're involved in now.
- And at the heart of all this is public safety.

It is also worth noting that in the scheme, complaints are managed nationally by AHPRA, except in NSW and QLD, where this is managed by the Health Professional Councils Authority and the 14 health professional councils, and the Office of the Ombudsman, respectively.

Each health profession in the National Scheme is represented by a National Board.

While the primary role of the Board is to protect the public, the Boards are also responsible for registering practitioners and students, as well as other functions for their professions.

The Dental Board regulates dental practitioners in Australia and its functions include:

- registering dentists, students, dental specialists, dental therapists, dental hygienists, oral health therapists and dental prosthetists
- developing standards, codes and guidelines for the dental profession
- handling complaints against practitioners and students
- assessing overseas-trained practitioners who wish to practise in Australia, and
- approving accreditation standards and accredited courses of study.

Our functions are set out in the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (Act) - which we call the 'National Law'.

AHPRA is the agency that supports National Boards, like the Dental Board of Australia, to implement their duties in the National Scheme.

Here's a snapshot of the dental profession in 2016:

- We have just under 22,000 dental practitioners across Australia.
- Just under 5% of practitioners had a complaint made about them in the 2015 – 2016 financial year.
- There are about 1700 specialists nationally and about one third of these are orthodontists.
- Of all dental practitioners about 50 per cent are female and 50 per cent are male.

If you're enrolled in what we call an 'approved program of study' for any of the professions in the National Scheme, you must be registered as a student with your respective National Board.

You don't need to apply for registration, your education provider does it on your behalf and there are no fees for registration as a student.

The Dental Board may take action in relation to dental students in response to:

- impairment matters, or
- when there is a conviction of a serious nature that may impact on public safety.

Anyone can make a complaint or raise a concern about a student regarding their health or a criminal matter.

Notifications may be received by AHPRA from:

- an education provider who is required under the National Law to report students whose health is impaired to such a degree that they may be a substantial risk of harm to the public or,
- a person or organisation who voluntarily reports a student for a health impairment or criminal matter or a contravention of an existing condition or undertaking that a student may have on their registration.

For example if you injured yourself during your course of study which affected your ability to undertake clinical training, your education provider or anyone, may raise a concern with us.

It is mandatory for education providers and practitioners to report student impairment, if the risk of harm to the public during clinical training is substantial.

The Board may decide to take action on a student in relation to health impairment or a criminal matter by:

- imposing conditions, or
- accepting an undertaking on your registration.

When we say 'impairment' in relation to a student it means, according to the National Law, that this person has a physical or mental impairment, disability, condition or disorder, including substance abuse or dependence that detrimentally affects or is likely to detrimentally affect, a student's capacity to undertake clinical training.

It is important to note that if you do have impairment, the threshold for reporting is high.

You should only be reported if you or another person thinks that you are placing the public at risk of substantial harm when you are undertaking your clinical training.

We are all human; anyone of us could get sick or develop a significant mental or physical illness.

We need to look after ourselves as well as others. So it's important to seek help and support when you need it and to support others in seeking help.

If you do have an impairment, you will need to notify AHPRA and include the following information:

- a description of impairment, including its severity, and
- advice on how you manage this impairment, with a letter from your treating physician.

If you are unsure of any of the terms we use, please look at the AHPRA website to look at our glossary.

You must notify AHPRA within seven days of becoming aware that:

- you have been charged with an offence punishable by 12 months imprisonment or more, or
- you have been convicted of, or are the subject of, a finding of guilt for an offence punishable by imprisonment, or
- your registration under the law of another country that provides for the registration of students has been suspended or cancelled.

Please read the Board's *Criminal History Registration Standard* carefully; it can easily be found on the Board's website.

The Board publishes an *English Language standard* – you must meet this standard when you register as a dental practitioner at the end of your course.

Your education provider may have different English language requirements to that of the Board, so it's really important that you understand if there are differences and how they may apply to you.

So please make sure you read the standard carefully and understand how it might affect you when you complete your studies.

A great deal of information can be found on the dental board of australia's website at: www.dentalboard.gov.au.

And on the AHPRA website at: www.ahpra.gov.au.

The Dental Board of Australia also regularly publishes communiqués on its website so you can keep up to date with what's going on.

You may also want to follow AHPRA on social media on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn.

And if you have questions you can always us on 1300 419 495.

Thank you for your time today and good luck with your studies.