

Recommendations for the National Professional Development Programme

- **Sharon Brackenridge**

Background

The National Professional Development Programme Review (NPDP) was implemented by the Board of Directors of the Australian Institute of Radiography (AIR) in 2008 with the aim of reviewing and redesigning the Professional Development Year (PDY). A discussion paper was released in February 2009 marking the commencement of five month consultation period. The professional community and other stakeholders contributed their feedback and comments through 163 discussion meetings involving more than 1500 professionals and through 50 written submissions to the NPDP. Feedback gathered during this period was collated and analysed and formed the basis of a preliminary report to the Board of Directors, *Review of the Professional Development Year: Initial Directions Report for the Board of Directors of the AIR (2009)*.

The Board of Directors formulated draft recommendations for the National Professional Development Programme (NPDP) and these were released to the professional community for comment. The draft recommendations were published in *Spectrum* and on the AIR website in September 2009. Subsequently, the Director NPDP forwarded the draft recommendations electronically to several hundred medical imaging and radiation therapy professional contacts. The NPDP was the subject of two paper presentations at the Combined Scientific Meeting in October 2009, and participants at these sessions were encouraged to review the draft recommendations and make comment.

Formal responses to the draft recommendations were received, specifically:

- A written submission from the Medical Radiation Technologists' Board Queensland
- Two teleconferenced feedback sessions with the radiation therapist staff at the Royal North Shore Hospital
- A written response from a radiation therapy professional

As noted in the preliminary report to the Board of the AIR:

"Engaging a professional community in genuine discussion and consultation is challenging, particularly when that community is geographically very dispersed, where particular locations are experiencing significant workplace shortages, and where broad-based communication networks are developmental or simply do not exist. This is especially true of the clinical medical imaging community in Australia. Further, members of the clinical professional community experience critical and immediate workplace responsibilities that may prevent them from contributing to the NPDP. This is concerning considering that it is the clinical professional community that directly engages on a day-to-day basis with graduates undertaking the PDY."

Purpose of this Report

This document reports to the Board of Directors of the AIR a summary of key feedback regarding the draft recommendations and to propose final recommendations for the NPDP. All feedback should be directed to: npdr@air.asn.au

NPDP Final Draft

The Board of the AIR presents this final draft for members and stakeholders to make final comment.

Recommendation 1

That the Board of Directors endorse the following statement:

The National Professional Development Programme(NPDP) provides the mechanism for Australian medical imaging and radiation therapy graduates to attain recognition as an Accredited Practitioner by the Australian Institute of Radiography. The NPDP facilitates the consolidation of the skills, knowledge and professional attributes described in the Competency Based Standards for the Accredited Practitioner by providing a national structured framework for graduates to undergo professional peer assessment of their ability in a supervised clinical environment.

Recommendation 2

That the NPDP represents a structured programme of supervised practice. The structured programme is expected to include the fulltime equivalent of 48 weeks of supervised practice.

Recommendation 3

That the maximum period for completion of the NPDP is three years following completion of course requirements. Consideration will be given to applications for extensions to this period, based on the merit of individual cases.

Recommendation 4

Professional Attributes

That the NPDP will attain the following professional attributes and clinical experiences:

Professional attributes required relevant to medical imaging and radiation therapy include:

- Professional approach to patient care, including patient advocacy
- Effective and culturally sensitive communication with patients, carers and colleagues
- Conforms to the AIR Guidelines for Professional Conduct
- Self-directed and works independently within the context of supervised practice
- Understands medico-legal obligations
- Works effectively as a member of the team
- Commitment to lifelong learning

Clinical experience areas for medical imaging:

Core experiences

- General radiography, including the genitourinary, cardio respiratory, musculoskeletal and gastrointestinal systems
- Contrast media application and administration
- Fluoroscopic procedures
- CR/DR capability
- Image evaluation and interpretation
- Mobile radiography (including image intensification)
- Routine CT, specifically non/post-contrast brain CT, contrast chest/abdominal CT and excluding angiography.

Additional experiences (minimum requirement 2)

- Trauma radiography (including emergency)

- Radiography in the operating theatre
- Paediatric radiography

Clinical experience areas for radiation therapy:

Core experiences

- Simulation for external beam megavoltage treatment (including CT simulation)
- Routine patient immobilisation and stabilisation, including quality assurance of ancillary treatment accessories
- External beam megavoltage treatment planning
- External beam megavoltage treatment delivery

Additional experiences

- Brachytherapy treatment & planning
- Superficial radiation therapy treatment & planning
- Orthovoltage radiation therapy treatment & planning
- Stereotactic radiation therapy/radiosurgery

Recommendation 5

That these clinical experiences are the revised Scope of Practice for the accredited practitioner.

Recommendation 6

That the revised Scope of Practice is used as the foundation of the clinical experience programme for the NPDP.

Recommendation 7

That formalised feedback and assessment is part of the structured programme of supervised practice (12 weeks, 24 weeks, 36 weeks and a final report)

Recommendation 8

That assessment tools required for the NPDP are developed and consideration given to the role of moderation.

Recommendation 9

That the NPDP requires at clinical centres a minimum staffing ratio of two accredited practitioners for each graduate practitioner to eliminate the potential for sole practice situations.

Recommendation 10

That the AIR draft and administer a national process for accreditation of clinical centres.

That the requirements and process for accreditation of clinical centres to accept graduate practitioners undertaking the NPDP are a robust national process.

Recommendation 11

That the accreditation cycle for clinical centres is three years

Recommendation 12

That terms relating to supervision be clearly defined in the NPDP

Recommendation 13

That the NPDP support supervised shift work and supervised on-call work following the successful completion of the 24-week assessment point, providing a structured and defined process that ensures graduate practitioners are not placed in sole practice situations.

Recommendation 14

That the AIR develop a supervisor training programme (delivered face-to-face and on-line) to offer site clinical supervisors the skills and knowledge in clinical education and supervision deemed requisite to support the NPDP.

Recommendation 15

That an approved supervisor training programme is a mandatory element for centre accreditation but should be available optionally for all AIR members.

Recommendation 16

That the NPDP is coordinated at a national level

Recommendation 17

That the NPDP be designed to be, as much as possible, an electronic system for information distribution, assessment and administration.

The relevant aspects of the application for PSOA and VSOA are available for electronic lodgment and processing

Recommendation 18

That the format and content of the existing CBS for the Accredited Practitioner are reviewed and redeveloped.

From this intensive review and stakeholder involvement the Board recognises four key principles which are:

1. Support a National Professional Development Programme which facilitates the consolidation of the skills, knowledge and professional attributes described in the Competency Based Standards for the Accredited Practitioner by providing a national structured framework for graduates to undergo professional peer assessment of their ability in a supervised clinical environment,
2. Draft and administer a national process for accreditation of clinical centres,
3. Develop a supervisor training programme (delivered face-to-face and on-line) to offer site clinical supervisors the skills and knowledge in clinical education and supervision deemed requisite to support the NPDP,
4. Coordinate the NPDP at a national level.

If you wish to make further comment please send you email to npdr@air.asn.au