

# DENTAL BOARD OF QUEENSLAND GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISED PRACTICE

## References:

*Dental Practitioners Registration Act 2001*

*Health Practitioners (Professional Standards) Act 1999*

## Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to supervisors and to registrants who are required to practise under supervision for other than health reasons or for the purpose of complying with Code of Practice #1, Practice of Dentistry by Dental Therapists and Dental Hygienists.<sup>1</sup>

## Preamble:

Supervision requirements may apply to registrants in the following circumstances.

1. Undergraduates of Australian Dental Schools who are being supervised in public sector clinics. The nature of this supervision is prescribed in the agreement between Queensland Health and the Universities and is not dealt with in these guidelines.
2. Registrants who have given an undertaking to the Board that they will practise only under supervision.
3. Registrants who are required as a condition of their registration to practise under supervision. This may occur in a number of circumstances:
  - a. Overseas trained dentists who have not completed the Australian Dental Council examinations.
  - b. Registrants who are required to work under supervision as a consequence of disciplinary action or action by the Board under Section 59.

## Levels of supervision:

### ***Level 1 Direct supervision***

With Level 1 supervision the supervisor takes direct and principal responsibility for the patient. The supervisor must be available in the work place at all times when clinical care is being provided. This occurs mostly with students but may also be utilised to register an individual who has not completed all registration requirements but for whom supervised practice may still be appropriate.

### ***Level 2 Contemporaneous supervision***

With Level 2 supervision the supervisor shares responsibility for the individual patient with the registrant. Thus the supervisor should be in the workplace at all times. The supervised registrant is responsible for ensuring that practice is within the confines determined by the supervisor and that the supervisor is informed of the management of individual patients.

Level 2 supervision is most likely to occur in the circumstances on initial employment in the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> For supervision requirements for impaired registrants see "Board Policy #11 Impaired Dentists entering Supervised Practice and Board Guidelines Impaired Registrants Requirements for Supervised Practice for Registrants on the HAM Program"

This level of supervision does not include solo practice nor should it include on-call, weekend or residential care facilities work unless on return to work a supervisor is present.

The supervisor should enter into an agreement with the registrant regarding the scope of practice and should ensure there are mechanisms in place in the workplace to monitor the work of the registrant.

The work environment must be such that there is at least general oversight of the registrant's practice by other registered dental practitioners who can give guidance or recognise and initiate action if a threat to patient safety is emerging.

The Board accepts that on rare occasions there may be an exception to the requirement that another colleague be present at all times. For instance, where a registrant is permitted to work on weekends and the only other colleague who is rostered on is unable to work due to unexpected personal reasons such as illness. The Board does not expect the registrant to withhold treatment to patients. However the registrant must notify the principal supervisor as soon as possible of the circumstances which led to unsupervised practice and also of the services provided.

### ***Level 3 Broad supervision***

With level 3 supervision the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the practice of the registrant is in accordance with acceptable standards and that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that the registrant is practising at a safe standard. The registrant takes responsibility for individual patient care. The supervisor maintains an indirect responsibility for the patient through ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place for monitoring performance and referral as required.

Level 3 supervision is appropriate for practitioners employed in the Public Sector Dental Workforce Scheme after they have been assessed to move from level 2 by their level 2 supervisors.

The registrant is permitted to work alone from time to time. The registrant can conduct residential care facility visits and periods of duty that include on-call and after hours. The registrant must have telephone access to a supervisor when practising alone.

Upon commencing a new position the supervisor and registrant must formulate an agreement in regard to the scope and limits of practice and should meet regularly to monitor practice performance including workload and any significant clinical issues. This agreement may alter over time as the supervisor is satisfied with the progress and performance of the registrant. Thus the extent of supervision will vary over time as the registrant becomes more confident.

### ***Level 4 Distant supervision (mentoring)***

With level 4 supervision the registrant takes full responsibility for individual patients. The role of the supervisor is to provide broad overview of the practice of the registrant (mentoring). The supervisors should put in place mechanisms whereby they may be consulted on an individual patient should the registrant require assistance. In addition the registrant and supervisor should put in place mechanisms whereby an overview of the registrant's practice may be conducted periodically.

This level of supervision may apply to physically remote supervision by telecommunication.

**Selection of an appropriate position and supervisor:**

Prior to accepting a position or changing circumstances it is important that the registrant who is subject to supervisory arrangements obtains the approval of the Board in regard to the appropriateness of the position. In addition, if there are any proposed changes to the approved work arrangements (e.g. hours of work, on-call, nature of practice) at the current or proposed place of practice, these also must be approved by the Board prior to the new arrangements being implemented.

The registrant will also need to identify an appropriate Principal Supervisor acceptable to the Board and who will be responsible for providing supervision or for ensuring that appropriate supervisory arrangements are in place.

In the circumstances of public sector/university dentists, dental therapists and dental hygienists the Principal Supervisor will generally be the Director, Principal Dentist or the Director of Clinical Training.

In the circumstances of private practice the Principal Supervisor must be an experienced practitioner practising in the same type of practice as the registrant.

Human and physical resources must be appropriate for the determined level of supervision.

The Principal Supervisor may delegate day to day supervision to another dental practitioner(s) provided that the other practitioner is not subject to supervisory conditions.

**The Role of the Board:**

It is the responsibility of the Board to determine the level of supervisory requirements of the registrant and to approve the supervisory arrangements. It is also the role of the Board to make appropriate decisions on the basis of periodic reports.

The Board will provide a Checklist which must be completed by the registrant when considering a new position or a change in work arrangements, and returned to the Board for approval. The registrant should allow at least 5 days following the Board's receipt of the Checklist to arrange for any new position or change in work arrangements to be considered for approval. Failure to comply with this requirement may render the registrant in breach of their undertaking/condition.

**Role and Responsibilities of the Supervisor:**

The supervisor should be a person who has consented to act as a supervisor and should be approved by the Board. The supervisor should be able to comply with the requirements of the level of supervision required. The relationship between supervisor and registrant should be professional. Thus persons who are directly related to the individual will not be approved as supervisors. Supervisors should not themselves be subject to supervisory arrangements.

The Board recognises that any registered dentists who are not personally subject to conditions may supervise students once they meet the requirements of Queensland Health and the relevant Universities.

The supervisor will be made aware of the reasons for supervision by the Board and provided with a list of undertakings/conditions.

The supervisor should take reasonable steps to ensure that the registrant is practising safely by such measures as direct observation (where it is relevant to the level of supervision), individual case review, periodic performance review and remediation of identified problems.

The supervisor should notify the Board immediately if there are concerns in relation to the registrant's clinical performance, health or non-compliance with conditions or undertakings. The supervisor must ensure that the registrant is practising in accordance with the approved work arrangements and must notify the Board of non-compliance with or of any proposed changes to those arrangements.

The Board should be informed if the supervisor is no longer able to provide the level of supervision that is required.

The supervisor should provide reports as required by the registrant's conditions or undertakings and comply with the Board's requirements as to format and frequency.<sup>2</sup> These reports should be timely, objective and as accurate as possible. They should identify both strengths and weaknesses including any problems (if applicable) and what has been done in terms of follow-up or remediation. Supervisors have legal protection when reports are made to the Board.

**Role and Responsibilities of the Registrant:**

The registrant must take reasonable steps to ensure safe practice by such measures as seeking assistance from other practitioners, cooperation in individual case review, periodic performance review with the supervisor and seeking remediation of identified problems.

The registrant must seek assistance if there are concerns in relation to the registrant's health, clinical performance or compliance with any conditions/undertakings.

Practice in accordance with the approved work arrangements must be ensured by the registrant.

**Management of breaches of supervisory arrangements:**

Should it be identified that the supervisory arrangements have not been complied with then the Board reserves the right to take appropriate action in regard to the registrant.

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<sup>2</sup> The supervisor is provided with a report proforma which is individually tailored to the particular clinical setting and level of supervision. The purpose of the proforma is to provide meaningful information which will assist the Board make decisions with respect to monitoring.