



Oral Health Graduate Program

Dr Elizabeth Milford BDS Sc MBA

Oral Health Therapist – Graduate Program

Are you a new oral health graduate in 2010?

Our Oral Health Graduate Program provides a fantastic and unique opportunity for first year graduates of a Bachelor of Oral Health (Science).

Benefits of the program

As a first year graduate, you will have the opportunity to:

- gain mentored experience in a community health setting.
- broaden your skill set by working with the diverse range of patients who access public dental care.
- work in a multi-disciplinary and supportive environment.
- access continuing professional development tailored to your requirements.

What does the program involve?

As a first year graduate, you will be able to choose from a range of community dental clinics, especially selected for their commitment to mentoring and training you.

Where would I be located?

The community agencies will be from a range of metropolitan and rural sites.

What are the requirements:

You will need to demonstrate the ability to work effectively in a team environment, display well-developed interpersonal skills and a strong commitment to clinical excellence.

Qualifications recognised by the Dental Practice Board of Victoria for registration to practice oral health therapy (Therapy and Hygiene) are essential.

The OHGP:

- Aim: to develop leaders in public sector dental
- For graduates of a Bachelor of Oral Health (Science)
- First intake January 2010
- Recruit 10 new graduates per year

Components:

- 12 month program
- Program consists of
 - Internal clinical support
 - Daily guidance
 - Mentoring
 - External professional development
 - Develop leadership skills
 - Lecture program
 - Project work
 - Provide clinical education
 - Clinical experience
 - Lectures

Factors of success:

- Met the needs of the graduates
- Changed their attitude on working and living rurally

“I had a few other offers which I turned down at the last minute as I saw the potential benefits and experience a new graduate could gain from this supportive program.”

Factors of success:

- Aimed to place the grads anywhere in Victoria
- Placed the graduates in 5 rural clinics
 - some of which had been advertising for up to 2 years

Selection criteria:

- Understanding of the philosophy of the public sector
- High academic achievers
- Synergy with one of the participating clinics

Reasons for choosing public sector:

1. Clinical mentoring
2. Consolidating clinical skills
3. Work environment

Silva et al, ADJ, 2006

Reasons for choosing rural practice:

1. broad range of clinical experience
2. remuneration

Silva et all, ADJ, 2006

- Program open to any new grad able to register as therapist and hygienist in Victoria/ Australia on graduation
- Two intakes per year match the graduation dates of the two Victorian universities
- Graduates are employed directly by their clinic

Key recruitment lessons:

- Mentoring is important
- Limitations of this program
 - Not attractive to experienced clinicians
 - To participate clinics require
 - experienced clinicians, willing to supervise and mentor
 - full time chair
 - capacity for an oral health therapist

“While a high proportion of new graduates worked initially in the public sector, the majority had left after 2 years to work in the private sector.” (Silva et al, ADJ, 2006)

Retention success will depend upon a positive experience

- In the clinic
- Through the formal program

Reasons for changing from public to private sector in order of importance are:

1. Range of clinical experience
2. Familiarise with private practice management
3. Remuneration

Silva et al, ADJ, 2006

Internships:

- A graduate program as a recruitment strategy would be redundant
- Lessons
 - capacity
 - identify chairs in the public sector that are suitable for graduates
 - professional development tailored to graduates
 - strategies to increase retention

Strategies to increase retention:

1. Broad range of clinical experience
2. Experience in management
3. Remuneration

- What we know is that this program will only work when:
 - Clinics want to be involved
 - Clinics will mentor and support
 - And have senior staff
 - And the graduate wants to work at the clinic

What we offered met the needs of the graduates, and was enough to change their attitude on working and living rurally.

Question time

