

11 February 2021

Helen Craig
CEO
Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand

By email: consult@medicaldeans.org.au

Inclusive Medical Education

Dear Helen

Thank you for inviting the New Zealand Medical Association (NZMA) to provide feedback on the above consultation. The NZMA is New Zealand's largest medical organisation, with about 5,000 members from all areas of medicine. The NZMA aims to provide leadership of the medical profession, and to promote professional unity and values, and the health of all New Zealanders. Our submission has been informed by feedback from our Board and Advisory Councils.

We welcome the development of this resource to support equitable access to medical school programmes for applicants and students with a disability where this is possible. We believe the guidance document provides a useful framework as well as practical tools for medical schools to consider in their work to engage with, and where possible, support students with a disability to study medicine. The document is comprehensive and addresses all the aspects which need to be included. We provide a few suggestions below for your consideration where we believe that minor amendments / additions could further improve the document.

There is an apparent contradiction between the sentence in section 4b on page 5, paragraph 2 which states "*Declaration of a disability.....should not adversely affect a student's progression in the medical program*" and the first sentence in section 4e on page 8 which states "*In some instances, the adjustments necessary to enable a student to commence or continue in the program are not feasible or authentic to clinical practice.*" If a student declares a disability where the necessary adjustments are not feasible or authentic to clinical practice, then clearly that will adversely affect their progression in the medical programme. We suggest that the guidance should be clear that whilst best efforts will be made to ensure a student's progression through the medical programme is not disrupted, there may be circumstances where this is not possible. And in these circumstances, that appropriate safeguards are in place to ensure the student's progress to date in the programme will be transferrable to another course of study.

We suggest it would be useful for the document to include guidance stating that medical schools should consider involving students' associations (whether they be medical or general) in discussions regarding options available to students with disabilities, providing the student consents. Students' associations are uniquely positioned to offer academic support and pastoral care in ways that may be more approachable and comfortable for students than support from the medical faculty. While section 4d on page 7 alludes to students' associations as a support network for students, such associations are also useful resources for medical schools.

Finally, while page 2 states that medical school accreditation standards align with the Australian Medical Council's Graduate Outcomes Statements, we suggest that it would be useful to make it clear that any graduate from an accredited medical school is able to meet the required standards to gain registration. It would be devastating for a student who graduates from medical school to then experience issues with registration / completing their internship as a result of issues that arose from medical school.

We hope our feedback is helpful and look forward to seeing the finalised guidance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. Baddock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Dr Kate Baddock
NZMA Chair