

10 November 2023

Professor Ron Paterson

Chairperson, Independent review of the regulation of podiatric surgeons

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Professor Paterson

I am aware of the **Independent Review of the regulation of Podiatric Surgeons** and feel am qualified to offer comment.

My observations pertain the professional capabilities for Podiatric Surgeons and the capacity for the University of Western Australia's Podiatric Surgery program to meet the Ahpra Professional capabilities for Podiatric Surgeons.

I am an Academic Surgeon (Upper Gastrointestinal and Bariatric) based in Western Australia. I direct the Clinical Training at Evaluation Centre (CTEC), a skills training centre and am the UWA Professor of Surgical Education. I head the Division of Surgery for the Medical School at UWA. Podiatric Medicine and Surgery were previously under the School of Surgery, and for much of that time I was the Head of that school.

I maintain a position on the Doctor of Podiatric Surgery Advisory Board and have previously advised on matters pertinent to curriculum, procedural skills delivery, assessment and evaluation.

I am confident that the UWA Podiatric Surgery program offers a most robust academic approach to ensuring the professional capabilities of its graduates.

I commend the format and mapping of the curriculum.

The joint programming with students of podiatric medicine should be seen as a positive experience.

I understand there reasonable amount of public hospital exposure to outpatient and some inpatient opportunities, and occasional operating theatre exposure. This is especially relating to vascular surgery, and naturally, therefore, the foot complications of patients living with diabetes and vascular disease.

The opportunity for students to participate in the medical and surgical care of patients through the UWA clinic is, I suspect, unique in Australia. The fact that the students have an opportunity to actually participate as proceduralists on patients coming through the day surgery unit is most beneficial; they certainly appear to perform as more than just assistants as they would were they limited to the private sector for learning.

The simulation opportunities available through CTEC are of a special benefit to the students. CTEC is a cadaver based surgical skills facility purpose-built for procedural training and allows participants to perform in a safe, reproducible environment. In particular, they are able to undertake their first procedures on the cadaver material, rather than on a patient. This experience complements and does not replace clinical attachment exposure.

I am confident that the graduates of the UWA Podiatric Surgeons program have sufficient academic and clinical exposure to meet the professional needs of the profession.

I remain firmly of the opinion that Podiatric Surgery as a craft group needs to work hard to find its place in the health care sector. Having a very well defined scope of practice is of paramount importance. The potential to drift from an agreed for practice is where I feel much of the criticism for this craft group is found.

I am fervently aware of the potential conflict between two major bodies – the UWA program and the Australasian College of Podiatric Surgeons. I have been involved twice in lengthy discussions relating to the potential to bring the two groups together. I remain firmly of the belief that the future of Podiatric Surgery will be far more likely to be guaranteed should the two groups find a way to come together in a mutually agreeable fashion.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Jeffrey M Hamdorf AM

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Head of the Discipline of Surgery
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