Faculty of Health Sciences

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ASSESSMENT OF OVERSEAS-QUALIFIED NURSES

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ABSTRACT

Policies underpinning the processes used by nurse regulatory authorities to assess overseas-qualified nurses (OQNs) vary from country to country. Some countries' policies are to undertake paper-based assessments of nurses' initial and post registration education and experience, while others require all nurses to undertake a generic examination. How these policies were developed and why, were pivotal questions in this study. The aim of the study was, to critically analyse the policy development and policies relating to assessment of overseas-qualified nurses in thirteen nurse regulatory authorities from Australia and overseas. Using Critical Social Theory as the theoretical underpinning a critical policy analysis was undertaken. Data was obtained from policies and procedures, interviews, organisational websites, annual reports and Nurses Acts. The process of development of these policies and procedures was analysed using Bridgman and Davis' policy cycle. The study revealed that only one organisation used a framework to develop policies on the assessment of OQNs. Policy analysis in most organisations was based on anecdotal evidence and experiential knowledge of Board staff. No organisation had conducted research on whether overseas-qualified nurses were competent to practice following a paper-based assessment or an examination. This study demonstrated that policies used to assess OQNs were not developed from an evidence-based perspective. This highlights the need to undertake internationally collaborative research on the evaluation of current policies, in order to develop future policies that determine the competence of a nurse to practice in another country.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the university library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Diane Wickett

Date:

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Competence

The combination of skills, knowledge, attitudes, values and abilities that underpin effective and/or superior performance in a profession/occupational area.

Competent

The person has competence across all domains of competencies applicable to the nurse, at a standard judged to be appropriate for the level of nurse being assessed.

Enrolled Nurse

A person licensed to practice nursing under an Australian State or Territory Nurses Act under the supervision of a registered nurse.

Migrant Bridging Program

A program, which consists of theory and clinical components and provides an avenue for migrant nurses to demonstrate the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council competency standards for registered or enrolled nurses in Australia.

Overseas-Qualified Nurse

A nurse and/or midwife who holds registration in a country, which is different to the country in which they are applying to register in order to practice.

Registered Midwife

A person licensed to practice midwifery under an Australian State/Territory or overseas country's Nurses Act.

Registered Nurse

A person licensed to practice nursing under an Australian State/Territory or overseas country's Nurses Act.

(Australian Nursing Council Inc 2002).

ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	Australian Nursing Council
ANCI	Australian Nursing Council Inc
ANMC	Australian Nursing and Midwifery Council
ASLPR	Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating
BRNC	Board of Registered Nursing California
CAP	Collaborative Advisory Panel
CNO	College of Nurses Ontario
DEST	Department of Education Science and Training
DIMIA	Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs
EN	Enrolled Nurse
EU	European Union
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
ICN	International Council of Nurses
ISLPR	International Second Language Proficiency Rating
NBACT	Nurses Board of the Australian Capital Territory
NBNT	Nurses Board of the Northern Territory
NBSA	Nurses Board of South Australia
NBT	Nurses Board of Tasmania
NBV	Nurses Board of Victoria
NBWA	Nurses Board of Western Australia
NCNZ	Nursing Council of New Zealand
NESB	Non English Speaking Background
NLFR	Nursing Labour Force Report

NMBNSW	Nurses and Midwives Board of New South Wales
NMC	National Midwifery Council
NMRA	Nurse and Midwife Regulatory Authority
NOOSR	National Office Overseas Skills Recognition
NRBNSW	Nurses Registration Board of New South Wales
OET	Occupational English Test
PBN	Philippine Board of Nursing
QNC	Queensland Nursing Council
RM	Registered Midwife
RN	Registered Nurse
SATAC	South Australian Tertiary Admissions Centre
TER	Tertiary Entrance Rating
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

PUBLICATIONS

Wickett, D, McCutcheon, H 2002, 'Issues of qualification assessment for nurses in a global market', *Nursing Education Today*, vol. 22, pp. 44-52.

Wickett, D, McCutcheon, H & Long, L 2003, 'Commentary: an Australian perspective', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 343-345.

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*Wickett, D 2005, A critical analysis of the policies and processes used to assess overseas-qualified nurses for registration, *International Regulation Conference 2005*,Taiwan. * Abstract accepted but not presented due to non-completion of thesis.

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