

4/14/2011

Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



RE: INQUIRY INTO THE ADMINISTRATION OF HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGISTRATION, INCLUDING NURSING AND MIDWIFERY REGISTRATION, BY THE AUSTRALIAN HEALTH PRACTITIONER REGULATION AGENCY (“AHPRA”).

I wish to make a submission to the above inquiry based on my recent experiences in attempting to gain registration with the Nursing and Midwifery board of Australia.

- Born and received secondary education in Lebanon in three languages: Arabic, French and English.
- I migrated to Australia in 1984 have lived here ever since.
- After arrival here I undertook a business skill course at TAFE Brisbane.
- For many years I have worked in our family retail business.
- In 2010 I completed the degree of Bachelor of Nursing at Griffith University, Queensland; throughout the course I consistently achieved high results in most subjects.
- Upon seeking professional registration following my graduation I have encountered major obstacles based on the requirement to sit for either the IELTS or the OET test before registration can be granted.

I submit that the requirement to undertake an English language test should not apply to applicants who have been taught and assessed in English in their qualification to practice in nursing/ midwifery. The fact that I have successfully completed my professional nursing degree in an Australian university should be sufficient proof of my competency in the English language, particularly English in the nursing practice context.

Am I to conclude that the requirement for persons such as myself, with an Australian tertiary nursing degree, to do a further English language test, means that Australian tertiary education fails to meet required English language standards? Is the fact of success in completing tertiary education in the English language skill insufficient proof of competency in the English language? If so, students should be compelled to undergo English language proficiency tests before commencing tertiary courses, rather than being faced

with this requirement upon seeking professional registration.

The need for nurses and other health professionals in Australia is great. Unless anomalies such as the requirement for graduates of Australian tertiary courses to sit for English tests in order to gain professional registration are addressed and corrected, this country will never benefit from the skills these graduates can contribute to the health system. Instead graduates, through frustration and disillusionment, will choose alternative pathways and professions. Therefore, Australia should not discriminate against people simply because they do not have secondary education in English, particularly when they do have Australian tertiary degree.

In conclusion, I hope that serious consideration will be given to the request that graduates of Australian tertiary nursing courses not be required to undergo additional and unnecessary English language testing as a condition for professional registration. I am now a qualified nurse with competency not only in English, but also in Arabic and French, with a strong passion to practise my profession here in Australia. I hope that reason will prevail in relation to this aspect of your deliberations.

Yours sincerely

