

From: Holroyd, Brigid
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2010 5:30 PM
To: Kathleen Almond
Subject: English Language requirements

My concerns relate to nursing students who are resident in Australia prior to undertaking Diploma/Degree studies in Nursing.

They reside here but received their secondary education overseas.

This is quite a separate issue from overseas qualified health professionals seeking employment and the monetary grab by some Institutions for international student dollars.

Resident students may have lived here for a number of years, have families or partners, and have completed various tertiary courses or VET courses at post secondary level.

English becomes their first language in some cases.

I have four students who were educated overseas and have just completed the Diploma in Nursing (Enrolled/Div2) Nursing course at Ultimo College. One student has lived here for 10 years.

They have been caught up in the changes to English language requirements over the past two years.

When students commenced the course, the head of the nursing education department was able to make a statement on course completion, attesting to the student's language capabilities in the workforce.

It was understood however that any student could be asked to undertake IELTS or OET.

All four students have lived in Australia for at least 3 years and all four have studied at post secondary level. They all have Certificate III qualifications in Nursing and English language qualifications. None come from a primarily English speaking country.

All students undertook a Literacy and numeracy test as part of the course entry requirements as well as a one on one interview with educational staff. They were selected from over 200 applicants based on the quality of their application, literacy and numeracy testing and interview. Only 16 students were taken into the course and it was a competitive cull.

All students were diligent and professional throughout their course and met all requirements.

Each student has received outstanding/excellent feedback from nursing staff during their clinical rotations at various health facilities.

Positive feedback was received about their initiative, communication, maturity, clinical skills and rapport with staff and patients..

On recent completion of their course they sat for the IELTS but did not achieve a mark of 7 in each area. They are devastated.

I believe these people have been disadvantaged by the application of inappropriate and to me discriminatory practices.

Students who were educated in Australia can complete a Certificate III course as mature age students with only 3 years of secondary education.

Many lack the advanced academic and critical reflective skills required for Diploma level study. Yet they may gain entry into the Diploma program.

At Ultimo we have a rigorous, fair and equitable selection process for students and these 4 students performed as well if not better than those educated in Australia.

I believe there should be allocation of professional responsibility to educational establishments for appropriate selection and education of nurses who are living as citizens within this country and who have completed tertiary/VET studies at appropriate AQF levels.

They should be entitled to the same English language requirement as those educated in Australia ie they meet the educational entry requirements of the course leading to enrolment.

Currently there are four competent, ethical, educated potential enrolled nurses who are working in aged care as Certificate III workers.

They deserve better.

The nervous factor is often apparent with IELTS results and students often perform poorly with increased stressors as their confidence fades.

Where is the equity for these students?

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