Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Oral Health Therapist Graduate Year Program

Program Guidelines

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1.   Program Background

The Oral Health Therapist Graduate Year Program (OHTGYP) was announced in the 2012-13 Budget, providing funding of $45.2 million over four years from 2012-13 to 2015-16. The measure covers the development, implementation and evaluation of the OHTGYP with funding provided for program design, graduate and mentor positions and infrastructure, which is essential to support graduate places.

The OHTGYP will provide Oral Health Therapist (OHT) graduates with a structured program for enhanced practice experience and professional development opportunities, whilst increasing the OHT workforce capacity, particularly in the public sector.

The OHTGYP was developed in recognition of the limitations in the public dental sector, partly due to the maldistribution of the workforce, and to support the Government's commitments to address dental service delivery issues.

OHTs have skills to provide both dental therapy and dental hygiene services. However, approximately 93% of dental hygienists practise in the private sector and 58% of dental therapists work in school health services. In addition approximately 84% of hygienists and 61% of therapists practise in metropolitan areas[1]. This means the general public dental system is not fully benefiting from this workforce. There is scope to improve the utilisation of OHTs in the general public sector which will improve service delivery capacity, promote prevention and early intervention, encourage multidisciplinary approaches to care and enable dentists to focus on more complex dental service needs of the community.

In addition over 400,000[2] people are currently on public dental waiting lists and public dental patients have significantly worse oral health than the overall Australian population, including increased presence of decayed teeth, periodontal disease and the extraction of teeth. Dental conditions also account for around 60,000[3] potentially avoidable hospital admissions per annum.

The National Health and Hospitals Reform Commission Final Report 2009 recommended the introduction of a one year graduate scheme prior to full registration, so that clinical preparation of oral health practitioners (dentists, dental therapists and dental hygienists) would operate under a similar model to medical practitioners.

The National Advisory Council on Dental Health Final Report 2012 notes that HWA was reviewing the scope of practice of oral health therapists, dental therapists and dental hygienists. The Council suggests that the scope of practice of dental practitioners be considered, specifically that the scope of practice of oral health therapists, dental therapists and dental hygienists be expanded. Noting that any changes to the scope of practice for these professions would need to be formally endorsed by the Dental Board of Australia (DBA), which is an independent industry led body.

The program will encourage graduates to work in the public sector and will provide an opportunity to utilise their full range of skills in multidisciplinary teams, ongoing professional development and support, access to mentors and an incentive bonus to complete the 12 month program. Stakeholder

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[1] Chrisopolous S & Nguyen T 2012. *Trends in the Australian dental labour force, 2000 to 2009: Dental labour force collection, 2009.* Dental statistics and research series no 61. Cat. No. DEN 218. Canberra: AIHW

[2] *Report of the National Advisory Council on Dental Health, 23 February 2012*

[3] *Source: AIHW Australian Hospital Statistics 2009-10, Table S7.10*

support through organisations such as the Australian Council of Dental Schools and the Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapists' Association will assist in promoting the scheme.

2.   Objectives and Outcomes

The objective of the OHTGYP is to provide OHT graduates with a structured program for enhanced practice experience and professional development opportunities, whilst increasing workforce and service delivery capacity, particularly in the public sector.

The OHTGYP aims to facilitate recruitment into the public sector, or other recognised areas of need, and possibly enhance these sectors as longer term career options. This will enable OHT graduates to gain a broader range of experience and skills, with the service delivery benefits largely concentrated on those who depend on the public system for access to dental services.

Expected outcomes for the program include:

- An increased dental workforce and service delivery capacity in the public sector including rural and remote areas, vulnerable population groups;
- More competent, confident first year graduates;
- Increased attractiveness of the public sector as a career for graduates;
- Increased recruitment of graduates into the public sector and other areas of need;
- Greater retention of dentists in the public sector;
- Increased access to dental services for people who depend on the public sector and in rural and remote areas;
- Reduced waiting times for public dental services;
- Reduced preventable procedures and avoidable hospitalisations; and
- Better oral health outcomes for vulnerable sub-groups.

The distribution of OHTGYP placements throughout Australia will be influenced by a variety of factors including jurisdictional and local capacity and resources, and advice from relevant stakeholders. There is a preference for providing services in areas of need, such as rural and regional areas, aged care settings, Indigenous settings and providing services to low socio-economic status communities, including children, which are experiencing long waiting times for public dental services.

Several jurisdictions already run or have developed some form of OHT graduate program. It is expected that the OHTGYP will build on these programs or complement them rather than replace or duplicate existing measures. Similarly, the OHTGYP is expected to support the employment of additional OHT graduates into the public sector rather than replace existing jurisdictional recruitment efforts.

The overall aim is to establish appropriate OHTGYP placements by 2014 to meet the objectives of the OHTGYP and achieve positive outcomes for participating OHT graduates, the oral health workforce and the broader community.

- Benefits for participating OHT graduates include:
    - building on the skills, knowledge and experience gained through their undergraduate (or equivalent) training and access to opportunities beyond those available to other graduates;

- o a curriculum specifically developed for the program which is expected to support the continuation of the graduate's professional development and offer continuing education and clinical opportunities, including potential rotations through a range of settings;

- o access to well-resourced placements, including through new infrastructure established specifically for the program;

- o additional support through oral health mentors and networks with other OHT graduate participants;

- o a certificate for the successful completion of the academic component of the program;

- o completing the program may be considered a valuable stepping stone in a range of career directions, including postgraduate study and hospital, public sector or private practice career structures (noting the OHTGYP is not a registration or future study or employment requirement); and

- o a $10,000 bonus payment on completion of their placement.

- Benefits for the workforce include:

  - o funding to enhance its infrastructure;

  - o recruitment of a Commonwealth subsidised OHT workforce;

  - o increased numbers of oral health graduates in the public sector, helping to increase workforce capacity and the provision of services and potentially helping address waiting lists and access to service issues; and

  - o possible longer term retention of OHTs in the public sector or other areas of need as a result of experiences and enhanced practice opportunities gained in these areas through the program.

- Benefits for the community include:

  - o a timely and cost effective way of improving oral health sector capacity with an additional fifty new graduates per annum entering the public sector and other areas of need, helping to meet community needs;

  - o individuals eligible for public dental services will benefit from increased access to services; and

  - o earlier treatment as a result of increasing service delivery capacity may potentially help address waiting times and the need for more complex and costly services in the future.

3.   Program Description

Fifty full time OHT graduate placements will be supported per annum from 2014. It is expected that placements will be distributed in public sector facilities and other areas of need across Australia, where adequate resources and support can be provided. Areas of need will include rural and regional areas, aged care settings, Indigenous settings and providing services to low socio-economic status communities, including children. The location of placements will be determined in consultation with the appointed OHTGYP administrator.

OHTGYP participants will be fully qualified and registered OHTs. The OHTGYP is a voluntary program and does not restrict existing employment options for graduating OHTs and is not linked to registration requirements.

Through the OHTGYP, participating OHT graduates will have access to theoretical and practical continuing education and training opportunities, including potential rotations through a range of settings and exposure to a broad range of clinical experiences. OHT graduates in the OHTGYP will have an opportunity to gain experiences not typically available to new OHT graduates, which could include broader, more complex and/or more unique experiences or practice settings.

Placements will be informed by the OHTGYP curriculum, which will set out the clinical, academic and professional development components of the program. The development of this overarching curriculum will assist in consistent implementation of the program and in achieving the OHTGYP objectives and desired outcomes.

Infrastructure funding is available to ensure participating service providers are appropriately equipped to offer an OHTGYP placement. It is anticipated that requests for infrastructure funding will be considered on merit and a competitive basis.

The OHTGYP will be implemented by an external administrator. The administrator will be required to form agreements with service providers to support OHT graduate placements and supply appropriate mentors.

Ideally, the administrator will establish agreements with providers across a range of clinical settings, such as rural and remote services, services in Indigenous communities, aged care services and services to low socio-economic clients and facilitate rotations for participants during their OHTGYP year. It is envisaged that the administrator will structure the program to enable at least two rotations within the OHTGYP year, with some degree of flexibility to tailor the experience to the individual needs/interests of the graduate. The length of individual rotations will be determined on the basis of the experiences that can be provided in the particular setting and in negotiation with the OHTGYP administrator.

Participation will be on a voluntary and competitive basis. Should the demand exceed available places, the administrator will be required to select and place OHT graduates from amongst the applications received. Further information on the roles and responsibilities of the administrator and participants is outlined in Section 7.

Areas within and outside of the scope of the OHTGYP are summarised in the following table.

Within scope	Outside scope
OHTGYP placements in public dental services and/or other areas of need (priorities to be determined in consultation with stakeholders in recognition of varying local needs and priorities)	OHTGYP placements in private dental services without a recognised need or opportunities to provide unique experiences Placements for dental professionals other than OHT graduates.
Funding for OHT graduate and pro rata mentor salaries Participating OHT graduates and mentors	Funding beyond state based awards Funding for one to one mentoring

	registered with the Dental Board of Australia	Funding for international OHT graduates
		Funding for travel, accommodation and associated costs of OHT graduates and mentors
		Funding to support service provider administration costs.
	Bonus payments to participants on completion of program	Payment of bonuses for pro rata completion of program
		Incentive payments for mentors
	Infrastructure funding to establish additional dental chairs, refurbishments and/or new equipment to support OHTGYP placements	Infrastructure funding not directly used to support OHTGYP placements or major new capital buildings
	Building on existing resources or infrastructure projects currently underway	Resources such as office supplies and overhead costs that would already apply to the practice
		Infrastructure projects that cannot be completed in time to support OHTGYP placements from 2014
		Major capital builds (unless a strong case is made, there are no alternative options and it can be completed in time to support OHTGYP placements as scheduled under the program)
	Development of a national curriculum for a voluntary OHT graduate year, including mechanisms to enable suitable rotations, exposure to a broad range of experiences and continuing professional development	Implementation of OHT graduate placements without consideration of the curriculum or overall OHTGYP objectives and desired outcomes (noting enough flexibility is needed to ensure the OHTGYP can be tailored to the specific needs of communities or placement settings)
	Building on existing programs and resources where possible	Duplicating or replacing existing efforts, including new graduate recruitment and support efforts
	Communication and marketing activities for the OHTGYP	Activities and associated funding not directly used to promote the OHTGYP
	Evaluation of the OHTGYP, including effectiveness of the program to meet objectives and outcomes and recommendations for the future	Evaluation of issues beyond the OHTGYP objectives and outcomes
	Implementation of the OHTGYP curriculum	Funding activities/curricular that are not associated with the OHTGYP.

4.   Governance Arrangements

The Commonwealth will provide funding to a national administrator for the OHTGYP. Consortium or partnership arrangements that would support the establishment of OHTGYP placements across different areas or clinical settings could also be supported.

The administrator will be responsible for establishing and administering the OHTGYP in accordance with these guidelines, the OHTGYP curriculum and the funding agreement between the administrator and the Commonwealth. The Funding Agreement will specify requirements and the total funding paid to the administrator which can be used for administrative purposes.

The appointed administrator will enter into separate, direct agreements with participating service providers that would also outline expectations and requirements for services providing OHTGYP placements.

The administrator is responsible for determining priority areas for dental services. Priorities may vary dependent on the needs and/or opportunities in particular areas which may be influenced by factors such as existing resources, locations, settings and population groups.

A Selection Advisory Group (SAG) will be established by the administrator to assess and rank applications for OHT graduate placements and infrastructure projects. Expert groups may be established by the administrator to assist in priority setting and selection processes if required.

The administrator will be required to ensure there is consistency and equity in the processes used to select OHT graduates and infrastructure projects.

The processes used by the administrator must align with the roles and responsibilities (outlined in Section 7) and the eligibility and selection criteria (outlined in Section 8) whilst enabling the administrator to target priority areas, as applicable.

The Governance arrangements will be established through several selection processes and formal agreements, consisting of:

- an open Invitation to Apply for the administration of the program, conducted by the Department of Health and Ageing to select the administrator;

- a Funding Agreement between the Commonwealth and the selected administrator outlining the requirements and funding;

- a selection process conducted by the administrator to select services to provide OHTGYP placements and appropriate infrastructure projects proposed by the service providers to support the placement;

- an agreement between the administrator and the service providers outlining the requirements and funding;

- a selection process conducted by the administrator to select OHT graduates to participate in the program, based on the number of placements to be funded specified in the agreement with the Commonwealth;

- agreements between participating OHT graduates and the administrator outlining requirements and responsibilities;

- a selection process conducted by the service providers to select appropriate mentors;

- agreements between the mentors and the service providers outlining requirements and responsibilities;

- a Project Implementation Plan and Risk Management Plan will be required along with regular progress reports to the Department on a six monthly basis to provide updates on implementation of the program including:
    o whether the outcomes and objectives of the project are being met to the date of the progress report;
    o information about what progress or achievements have been made in the performance of the as proposed in the project implementation plan;
    o what difficulties (if any) have been experienced in performing the project and action proposed or undertaken to overcome these difficulties; and any consequent revisions required to the risk management plan;
    o where applicable, an explanation as to why any of the outcomes and objectives of the project were not achieved and recommendation as to how they could be achieved in the future;
    o an update of graduate progress in achieving the requirements of the OHTGYP curriculum; and
    o itemised statement of income and expenditure.
- an infrastructure report to the Department on recommendations of appropriate infrastructure projects to be supported by the OHTGYP, including
    o name and address of the requesting service provider;
    o whether the dentals service is in the public or private sector and the type of setting;
    o what the dental service has requested regarding infrastructure; and
    o the budget requested.

5. Infrastructure Projects

Infrastructure funding is available to ensure dental services can provide an appropriate clinical environment and opportunities for OHTGYP placements, commencing in 2014. Infrastructure projects must be directly related to supporting the placements. One of the roles of the administrator is to ensure only reasonable requests for infrastructure are considered.

Infrastructure projects may include refurbishments, establishing additional dental chairs or purchasing new equipment. It is not anticipated that major capital building projects would be supported, unless exceptional circumstances support the need and the project can be completed in time to support OHTGYP placements as scheduled under the program. Innovative projects using information technology to support the successful operation of the program in areas of need may also be considered.

OHTGYP infrastructure projects that build on existing resources or other infrastructure projects currently underway would be encouraged.

The infrastructure requirements may vary between individual service providers depending on factors such as existing needs and/or resources, potential opportunities that could be provided, locations, settings and population groups and identified priority areas.

The type and cost of infrastructure projects may vary depending on what the individual projects aims to achieve. As a result there is no minimum or maximum value that will be applied to infrastructure project proposals, noting that of the $45.2 million available, there is an overall limit of infrastructure funding for the program of $22,465,000 over two years. The Department's

expectation is that infrastructure activities would include thing like dental chairs, equipment and refurbishment, to support graduate placements in 2013-14 and 2014-15. The administrator may negotiate the scope and estimated cost of project proposals with the relevant service providers prior to the final selection and funding of infrastructure projects.

All infrastructure proposals will be assessed by the administrator through a competitive and merit based process (further information on relevant responsibilities and selection criteria are outlined in Section 7 and Section 8).

Services receiving infrastructure funding will be required to commit to being able to provide OHTGYP placements for the duration of the program (until 2016). The agreement between the administrator and the service provider will outline the requirements and funding for the supported infrastructure projects, including associated reporting requirements. If a service provider has received infrastructure funding and can longer support a graduate placement, there may be a requirement to repay a proportion of funding to the Commonwealth.

Additional infrastructure may not be required by all participating service providers to support OHTGYP placements.

6.   Anticipated Key Dates

The following table provides an overview of the anticipated timelines for the program. Further detail about implementation requirements is outlined at Section 7.

Milestone	Anticipated Dates
Commonwealth to undertake an open Invitation to Apply process to select and administrator to administer the program	By March 2013
Funding agreements between the Commonwealth and the administrator signed	By April 2013
Administrator to develop a national implementation model and conduct a selection process to select appropriate dental services to take a OHTGYP placement(s), which will include the assessment of infrastructure projects proposed by the service providers to support the placement(s)	By July 2013
Funding agreements between the administrator and the service providers signed	By August 2013
Administrator to establish an application and assessment processes for interested OHT graduates and conduct a selection process to select OHTGYP participants, including: - Advertise for OHT graduates and assess applications - Rank applicants and select participants - Match graduates to appropriate service providers - Formalising agreements with participating graduates - Notify unsuccessful applicants	By October each year for the following academic year
Facilitate and support annual OHTGYP placements	February – December (or recognised academic year)

7. Roles and Responsibilities

a. The Department of Health and Ageing

The Department's responsibilities include:

- funding the development and implementation of the OHTGYP;
- funding the development of OHTGYP curriculum and making the final product available to administrator;
- advertising for the program administrator and assessing applications;
- constructing the OHTGYP Funding Agreement and Schedule for the selected administrator;
- monitoring the performance and reporting of the OHTGYP to ensure that the program is being implemented in accordance with these guidelines and conditions of the Funding Agreement;
- providing strategic direction for the OHTGYP;
- identifying and providing advice on emerging strategic issues, including through participation in meetings/forums as required;
- proactive action to address issues and undertaking follow-up activity as necessary;
- acquitting funding at the completion of the program;
- providing advice to the Australian Government on relevant issues; and
- funding and managing a formal evaluation of the OHTGYP.

The Program Manager for the OHTGYP can be contacted via email at dwp@health.gov.au or mail to:

Program Manager
Oral Health Therapist Graduate Year Program
Department of Health and Ageing
MDP 16
GPO Box 9848
CANBERRA ACT 2906

b. Administrator

To be considered for the administration of the OHTGYP, potential administrators are required to demonstrate:

- program management experience and previous experience in implementation of education or professional development based Commonwealth funded programs;
- an understanding and/or experience, or the ability to access those with knowledge and experience in the dental workforce and professional development environment; and
- the organisation's existing quality management systems and indicate whether they hold ISO 9001 certification; and
- an understanding of the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry and the Australian Government Implementation Guidelines, August 2009.

The role of the administrator is to develop, implement and manage the OHTGYP, on behalf of the department. The administrator's responsibilities include ensuring that the terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement are met and that the program is managed in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Principles

In managing the OHTGYP, the administrator will be guided by the following principles:

- The OHTGYP must be administered in accordance with the Funding Agreement, these guidelines and the OHTGYP curriculum.

- A range of opportunities should be available to OHTGYP participants that provide broader, more complex and/or more unique experiences than typically available to recently graduated dentists.

- Public dental services and/or services delivering to areas of need, including prioritising providers in rural and remote areas, services in Indigenous communities, aged care services and areas servicing low socio economic clients, including children, should be prioritised when selecting dental services for participation in the scheme.

- Infrastructure proposals that support the above principles and OHTGYP objectives and outcomes should be prioritised.

- Selection of OHT graduates for participation in the program will be conducted on a competitive and merit basis.

- Administration should be efficient and effective, including consistent and equitable approaches to implementation and transparent and accountable management.

- Evidence will be gathered to enable the OHTGYP to be monitored and evaluated.

Activities

Consistent with the objectives and outcomes of the OHTGYP, and in accordance with the Funding Agreement, curriculum and these guidelines, the administrator must undertake the following activities:

- develop a project plan for the implementing the OHTGYP.

- develop a statement outlining 'areas of need' which will include prioritising providers in rural and remote areas, services in Indigenous communities, aged care services and areas servicing low socio economic clients, including children.

- establish a suitable assessment process to select dental services to support OHTGYP placements:

  o the process must include a capacity to assess and rank proposals for infrastructure funding to support the OHTGYP placements.

- enter into agreements with successful dental services:

  o specify the requirements of the service providers to ensure appropriate OHTGYP placements are provided and reporting requirements are met;

  o include infrastructure funding and deliverables; and

  o multi-year agreements being entered into where possible to provide ongoing support for OHTGYP placements over academic years (2014 to 2016).

- develop and implement a marketing/communication strategy targeted at oral health therapist students and graduates.

- develop and administer an application process to select OHT graduates to fill OHTGYP placements:

- o develop processes to ensure that potential participants meet core eligibility requirements;

- o develop a process to rank applicants against section criteria and develop an order of merit;

- o establish expert groups to assist in setting priorities and selecting participants, if necessary;

- o select participants and notify successful and unsuccessful applicants; and

- o manage complaint processes.

- provide funding for OHT graduate and pro rata mentor salaries (remunerated in accordance with the appropriate public sector awards) and establish mechanisms to ensure continuation of salaries for OHTGYP participants rotating through a number of settings and/or sectors.

- implement and manage OHTGYP placements:

  - o match participating graduates to suitable OHTGYP placements;

  - o organise an appropriate mix of rotations to achieve curriculum requirements and OHTGYP outcomes;

  - o ensure services have engaged appropriate mentor support for OHTGYP participants;

  - o establish a program of professional development activities, in line with the OHTGYP curriculum;

  - o develop an effective professional relationship with the OHTGYP curriculum developer and ensure continued liaison to guarantee all issues involved in the development and implementation of the curriculum are resolved prior to graduates commencing in the program;

  - o deliver the OHTGYP curriculum utilising the most appropriate delivery method which may include developing a Learning Management System and engaging a host server provider if electronic access for graduates is required;

  - o facilitate the completion of any formally recognised professional development activities by the OHTGYP participants, if applicable to the curriculum;

  - o develop and implement individual performance monitoring mechanisms;

  - o facilitate signing of employment agreements between the OHT graduate and the service provider and ensure correct salary and bonus payments are made to participants; and

  - o establish professional support and networking opportunities for OHTGYP participants.

- maintain appropriate engagement and support with participating dental services, graduates and mentors;

- maintain contact with the Department and advise of any actual and emerging issues as early as possible;

- ensure that all appropriate professional indemnities and insurance are in place;

- ensure that infrastructure projects comply with Commonwealth requirements in relation to the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme (Accreditation Scheme) and the Australian Government Implementation Guidelines for the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry (Code and Guidelines); and

- ensure participating dental services, graduates and mentors undertake the data collection/reporting activities required to meet the reporting requirements specified in the funding agreement and to inform the formal evaluation.

c.   Participating dental services

Responsibilities of participating service providers include:

- ensuring participating OHT graduates have access to a range of appropriate experiences at the placement in line with the curriculum and OHTGYP objectives and outcomes;

- providing a supported and appropriately resourced working environment;

- establishing additional infrastructure if needed and agreed to by the administrator;

- ensure that infrastructure projects comply with Commonwealth requirements in relation to the Australian Government Building and Construction OHS Accreditation Scheme (Accreditation Scheme) and the Australian Government Implementation Guidelines for the National Code of Practice for the Construction Industry (Code and Guidelines)

- engaging suitable mentors and establishing mentoring arrangements with participating graduates;

- releasing the participating graduates from service delivery tasks to undertake professional development activities as part of their curriculum requirements;

- ensuring the graduates and mentors have suitable professional indemnity insurance in place, or providing this insurance where appropriate;

- complying with the terms of any agreements entered into with the administrator, including data and reporting requirements; and

- maintaining regular contact with the OHTGYP administrator and advising of emerging issues as soon as possible.

d.   Participating Oral Health Therapist graduates

Responsibilities of participating OHT graduates include:

- signing and abiding by a formal agreement with the administrator to accept a OHTGYP placement and the requirements involved;

- completing all activities required in the OHTGYP curriculum and OHTGYP agreement, including theoretical, professional development and clinical activities as specified;

- accessing opportunities to ensure a broad and advanced range of experiences are achieved by the completion of the OHTGYP placement (in consultation with the administrator and/or service provider and/or mentor);

- undertaking one or more rotational placements, where possible, to further access broader and/or unique development experiences;

- participating in OHTGYP placement activities in a professional manner and in line with their employment agreement;

- only undertaking activities that are within their registered scope of practice;

- not undertaking employment outside the OHTGYP without the prior permission of the administrator;

- advising the service provider and/or administrator as soon as possible if it is envisaged the requirements under the OHTGYP may not be satisfactorily achieved;

- addressing any performance or participation concerns raised by mentors or employers in a mutually agreed manner with the administrator;

- providing written documentation required by the administrator, including documentation to determine participation and completion of activities and documentation to inform OHTGYP monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities; and

- maintaining ongoing unrestricted registration with the Dental Board of Australia whilst participating in the OHTGYP.

e.   Mentors

The role of the mentor under the OHTGYP is to provide overarching support and facilitation of professional development of the OHT graduate throughout the OHTGYP year. The mentor will perform a separate role to that of a day-to-day direct supervisor. If necessary for a particular placement, a mentor may also be the OHT graduate's day-to-day supervisor if they can provide suitably dedicated time to mentor and support the OHTGYP participant outside of their usual supervising role.

The responsibilities of participating mentors include:

- signing and abiding by a formal agreement with the service provider/s to accept a mentor position for the OHTGYP and the requirements involved;

- maintaining an understanding of the current scope of practice and competencies of OHTs and the ability to provide adult learning methodologies;

- maintaining ongoing unrestricted general registration with the Dental Board of Australia whilst providing mentoring support under the OHTGYP;

- supporting OHT graduates to meet the requirements of the OHTGYP curriculum and their individual OHTGYP agreement, including theoretical, professional development and clinical activities as appropriate;

- identifying and accessing and/or providing opportunities for OHT graduates to enable them to gain a range of development experiences;

- providing advice and guidance on professional and clinical matters as appropriate;

- working with other mentors to implement development opportunities, including supporting graduates rotating through a range of settings and/or sectors, as appropriate;

- ensuring adequate time and support mechanisms are made available to each OHT graduate being mentored, noting mentor support is not provided on a one-to-one full time basis;

- advising the administrator as soon as possible if it is envisaged requirements under the OHTGYP may not be met satisfactorily by any of the OHT graduates being mentored;

- addressing any concerns with the OHT graduate's participation in the OHTGYP, in a mutually agreed manner with the graduate, dental service and/or the administrator; and

- providing written documentation required by the administrator, including to inform OHTGYP monitoring, reporting and evaluation activities.

8.   Eligibility and Selection Criteria

a.   OHT graduates

The administrator will undertake a formal application and assessment process annually to select OHT graduates to participate in the program. Applications received outside of the formal application process will not be considered.

The application documentation will be developed, and may be amended from time to time, in consultation with the Department. Applications will be assessed each year on the following core eligibility and selection criteria, at a minimum.

Eligibility

OHT graduates need to meet the following core eligibility criteria to be considered for an OHTGYP placement:

- applicants must be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Australia;

- applicants must have successfully completed an Australian accredited three year bachelor program of study in the dual streams of dental hygiene and dental therapy in the academic year prior to the year of the OHTGYP placement; and

- applicants must have general registration as an Oral Health Therapist with the Dental Board of Australia with no restrictions, or ability to gain this registration prior to a placement.

Applications which do not satisfy the core eligibility criteria will not be assessed further.

Selection criteria

Applicants must address the following selection criteria and any additional criteria included in the formal application form:

- the ability to commence a full time OHTGYP placement and undertake development activities in accordance with program timelines;

- achievements in oral health studies;

- the ability to undertake a OHTGYP placement in an area of need (location, setting and/or client based need), and an indication of preferred placement options;

- the ability to undertake a range of rotations, which may involve travel, and an indication of preferred rotation options;

- the goals the applicant aims to achieve from participating in the OHTGYP, including the benefits of proposed placement options, where applicable; and

- longer term career goals and/or plans.

Additional criteria may be added to the application form in recognition of pressures in specific areas of need (location, settings and/or client based needs) or other emerging issues.

Order of merit

Based on the information provided by applicants, the Selection Advisory Group (SAG) will assess and score applications against the criteria and develop an order of merit (ranking). The SAG may seek referee reports or interview applicants in finalising the order of merit. Expert groups may also be established to assist in the assessment of applications.

The SAG will make recommendations to the administrator regarding the assessment outcomes and order of merit.

Selection of Oral Health Therapist graduates

OHTGYP placements will be offered to applicants ranked highest on the order of merit. The offer of a placement cannot be deferred to a future year. Should an applicant decline the offer of an OHTGYP placement, an offer will be made to the next person on the order of merit, and so forth, until all available placements are filled. The order of merit is applicable for one academic year only.

Unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application. The order of merit will not be disclosed and applicants will not be informed about their ranking.

Unsuccessful applicants can not appeal the selection decisions of the administrator.

b.   Service providers

The administrator will also undertake an application process to identify and assess service providers wishing to host OHTGYP placements, based on the following eligibility and selection criteria, as a minimum.

Assessment of infrastructure projects relating the OHTGYP will also be assessed as part of this process.

Eligibility

Service providers will need to meet the following core eligibility criteria to be able to host OHTGYP placements:

- must have appropriate insurances in place that would cover OHTGYP participants; and
- must provide, or have the ability to provide, dental services to its clientele.

Service providers that cannot meet the core eligibility criteria will not be considered further.

Selection criteria

The administrator will consider a service provider's ability to meet the following criteria in assessing its suitability to host an OHTGYP placement (including for rotational experiences).

- Provision of public sector services;
- Provision of service to areas of need (location, setting and/or client based need);
- The ability to provide broad, advanced and/or unique experiences to OHT graduates, in line with the curriculum and OHTGYP objectives and outcomes;

- Appropriate resources to support a OHTGYP placement (or the ability and a plan to establish this prior to commencement of placements);

- The ability to partner or network with other service providers to facilitate a broad range of experiences for OHT graduates;

- The ability to host more than one OHT graduate at a time or host graduates on a continuing basis throughout the academic year; and

- The ability to support OHTGYP placements over three academic years (2014-2016).

Applications seeking infrastructure funding will be assessed against the following additional criteria:

- the extent to which the proposed infrastructure project will improve the service's capacity to host one or more OHT graduates;

- the extent to which the project will be targeted at and directly support OHTGYP placements;

- the extent to which the oral health service could facilitate broader, more advanced or unique experiences to OHT graduates, including in areas of need (location, setting and/or client based need);

- the scale and complexity of the proposed project;

- the length of time required to complete the project;

- whether the project builds on existing resources or other infrastructure projects currently underway; and

- the cost and value for money.

Criteria may be amended annually in recognition of pressures in specific areas of need (location, settings and/or client based needs) or other emerging issues.

Selection of service providers

Applications will be assessed and ranked on the above criteria, with the aim of selecting service providers that can provide suitable and worthwhile OHTGYP placements in line with the curriculum, these guidelines and the OHTGYP objectives and desired outcomes. Consideration may also be given to distributional factors (location and settings) when ranking applications. Further information may also be sought from the applicant or other bodies in determining the ranking of service providers.

The administrator may establish a Selection Advisory Group (SAG) to assess service provider and infrastructure proposals. Expert groups may also be established to assist in the assessment of applications.

The administrator will need to match participating OHT graduates with service providers each year. It is possible that not all successful applicants will host a OHTGYP placement at any given time or continuously over the three academic years (2014–16).

Applicants do not need to reapply each year. Services receiving infrastructure funding will be required to commit to being able to provide OHTGYP placements for the duration of the program (until 2016. If a service provider can longer support a graduate placement, there may be a requirement to repay a proportion of funding to the Commonwealth.

The ranking of service providers may be adjusted in future years based on applications from new services or due to changes in OHTGYP priorities and selection criteria. Service providers may choose to submit a new application against the amended priorities or criteria.

9.   Funding

The Oral Health Therapist Graduate Year Program (OHTGYP) was announced in the 2012-13 Budget, providing funding of $45.2 million over four years from 2012-13 to 2015-16. The total funding available for the program over the next three financial years is as follows:

2012-13 (m)	2013-14 (m)	2014-15 (m)	2015-16 (m)	Total over4 years (m)
$13.2m	$15.9m	$8.4m	$7.7m	$45.2m

It should be noted that the available funding covers the administration of the program, including program design, graduate and mentor positions and infrastructure; the development of a specific OHTGYP curriculum; and the conduct of an evaluation. Of this funding a total of up to $2.288 million has been allocated for the development of the OHTGYP curriculum and up to $0.521 has been allocated to undertake the evaluation of the OHTGYP and is not included as part of the administration of the OHTGYP.

10.   Evaluation

The Department will be conducting a formal evaluation of the OHTGYP. The administrator will be required to contribute to the evaluation of the OHTGYP by providing qualitative or quantitative data as required by the evaluator of the program. It is anticipated that the evaluation will consider a number of factors to be determined once an evaluator has been appointed including:

- Number of OHTGYP graduates placed and completing the program;
- Number of OHTGYP graduate days available for service delivery;
- Average number and type of rotation the graduate has experienced;
- Number and profile of graduate application (academic grades and background);
- Number of applicants compared to places available;
- Percentage of graduates accepting placements;
- Graduate application rates in subsequent years;
- Number and profile of mentors participating in the program;
- Graduate satisfaction with mentors;
- Percentage of graduates reporting the program met or exceeded expectations;
- Graduate drop-out rates;
- Percentage of graduates offered full-time position in public sector or other areas of need;
- Number of patients, number of services and patient type, number of procedures per graduate and overall;
- Graduate views on public dental sector as a career choice;
- Impact of the program on services provided and patients seen; and
- Did the program provide enhanced opportunities for graduates?

The Department will engage an evaluator through a procurement process to develop an evaluation framework and conduct the evaluation of the program. It is anticipated that the evaluation will commence in 2014 when the first cohort of graduates commence the program.

11.   Conflicts of Interest

The administrator, members of Selection Advisory Groups, dental services and graduates and mentors applying to participate in the program must provide a statement declaring any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and how these will be managed to ensure that no individual or organisational applicant or awardee is shown any form of favouritism or bias.

12.   Complaints Handling

The Department of Health and Ageing has the final decision in relation to selecting and funding organisations to administer the program. This decision will have been based on range of considerations and information provided by organisations applying through the open Invitation to Apply process for the administration role. Organisations which have been unsuccessful in this selection process may seek a reasoning behind the decision from the Department. Should the organisation consider the reasoning provided is inappropriate, they may choose to lodge a complaint, in line with the Department of Health and Ageing funding and procurement complaints procedures available at www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/pfps-complaintsprocedures

Complaints from OHT graduate, mentor or service provider applicants and/or awardees should be directed to the administrator. The issue will be addressed through a complaint management mechanism established by the administrator as part of their role and responsibilities. The process will be made available on the administrator website and/or in application and/or agreement materials. The Department of Health an Ageing will not intervene in these complaint processes. However, the administrator may seek information or advice from the Department, where appropriate, in relation to a complaint issue.

13.   Reporting of Grants

The Department of Health and Ageing will publish, on its website information on grants for the administration of the program no later than seven working days after the relevant funding agreement takes effect.

14.   Further Information

Further information on the OHTGYP, including information regarding application and assessment processes, will be made publicly available by the appointed OHTGYP administrator. Applications will need to address the relevant eligibility and selection criteria outline in Section 8. It is anticipated the application processes will be electronic, with assistance available for applicants that are unable to submit an electronic application.

Applications to apply for the OHTGYP, and relevant contact details, will be available from the administrator websites.

Links to the administrator's website and contact details will be made available from the Department of Health and Ageing website.

The Department of Health and Ageing will provide any relevant updates on the OHTGYP on its website at: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/work-pr-dent