

Diploma in Applied Science (Anaesthetic Technology) report to the NZATS, July 2011

Semester I has 24 trainees enrolled in Anaesthesia I and Anaesthetic Technology I, a much smaller number than the previous 3 years. This will have implications in the third year of the programme in that there will need to be only one AMERAT course. It has meant the organisation of only 3 National Machine Check assessments this year.

For most trainees the first semester of the first year has been a smooth transition into the course and all trainees passed the paper. Very good results ranging from C+ to A+. Feedback from the marker on the Microbiology assignment was very complimentary – trainees had done a lot of research into the topic.

The Anaesthesia I and Anaesthetic Technology I block course ran very smoothly and received very good feedback. Even though the academic standard of work received was high, feedback indicated that they would like more information on essay writing and referencing.

The Anaesthetic Technology I manual was checked at the block course by National Assessors and feedback given. It is currently being submitted for a second formative assessment prior to submission in late October. The Anaesthetic Technology I manual is due for review for 2012.

43 students are enrolled in the final year papers, Anaesthesia III, IV and Anaesthetic Technology II.

Anaesthesia III has been slightly problematic this semester with regards to the grading of worksheets and plagiarism.

The feedback from markers for worksheets has varied in consistency in terms of the awarding of a final grade. AUT checked the grades of worksheets over a selection of weeks when concerns were raised by some trainees. It was confirmed that some markers were less generous than others in the awarding of worksheets grades and there were no indications that students who would normally pass failed, or that particular cohorts of trainees were being marked more harshly.

The virtual block course ran uneventfully this year, thanks to much forward preparation by Kirsten and Brenda and the AUTonline team at AUT. The only hitch this year was the lack of access to AUT services at the time of the virtual block course (May) due to some trainees having not paid their fees. AUT is only able to invoice the trainee who is enrolled in the paper, and they are responsible for paying or having their fees paid. AUT contacts the trainee (via the address they have provided and via their AUT e-mail address) on four occasions to let them know that their fees are overdue, and finally suspends services if not paid. Three trainees were seriously affected which was quite unnecessary. One suggestion I would make on behalf of AUT is that the trainees pay the fee and is reimbursed by the training hospital. This would then make the payment of fees the responsibility of the trainee, not the hospital.

There were a significant number of incidences of plagiarism in this paper this year, despite this group of students having received instruction at the first block course and referenced well in the first two years of papers. This could be due to the step up to a level 6 paper. Trainees were given a warning on the first occasion of plagiarised work being submitted and if an assessed piece of work, the opportunity to re-submit within a short timeframe. A repeat occurrence has had to be dealt with by the Disciplinary Committee at AUT, the outcome of which is yet to be decided.

Plagiarism and referencing is the most difficult message to impart to a significant number of trainees. Information is always provided online, and marking of worksheets acknowledges the extent of referencing, but some do not appreciate the significance of acknowledging their sources of information.

As a means of simplifying the access to referencing information AUT is providing course handbook to each student enrolled in semester 2 papers. This handbook is a collation of all the material pertaining to the course that has been and is available on AUTonline.

In addition, there have been three trainees who have regularly had problems submitting their work to AUT on time. As soon as the worksheet is received by AUT it is recorded on AUTonline, which the trainee should check, and if there is an issue, contact AUT. At this point in time, work which is e-mailed will be accepted only under rare special circumstances.

For the great majority of trainees, the semester went very smoothly, and there was a very good (and high grade) pass rate, with only one re-sit required due to a marginal fail.

The revised Anaesthetic Technology II manual is receiving very good feedback and to date there are no known issues. Reducing the number of case studies to 15, which is approximately one every second week on average, is making the assessment the manual more manageable. Thank you very much to Sian Mitchell et al for the revision of this manual. Again, they are currently being collected for formative assessment.

The AMERAT course ran very well this year (and is to be repeated in August) and received good feedback.

There were major changes to Anaesthesia III in 2010 which improved the satisfaction rating of the paper.

Overall there is always poor feedback (but the response rate is always less than 10%) on the Anaesthesia, HAP and Biophysics papers, essentially due to the fact that they are studied by distance. Distance learning is always 'more work' for the student as they have to source the information from reference material themselves (and sources which are provided) using the learning outcomes as a guide to their note taking. The worksheets are then a means of assessing formatively as you whether they have sourced sufficient and suitable information on selected topics each week. In addition this year, there have been weekly quizzes available online to provide immediate feedback.

It is expected that the training hospital has available the common resource material for students to use. AUT will update this information annually and provide it to the Educator/SoT

AUT is endeavouring to trial methods of gaining more feedback on the theory papers.

A Workplace Assessors course was held in June at AUT and was attended by 35 new Workplace Assessors. Refresher courses are starting to be run this year, starting in Auckland and will be scheduled for the 2011 conference and subsequently main centres around New Zealand on an annual basis. This year AUT will be keeping a record of which Workplace Assessors are being utilised in the role, and if there are assessors not being used on a regular basis, they will have to complete the refresher course before continuing to assess.

The accreditation meeting for registration which was held in early June has produced a report to AUT which contains requirements and recommendations. AUT will consult with NZATS via the Education Officer on most of these (those which are relevant) prior to making any changes.

Thankyou to all that are involved in helping deliver the papers for the Diploma – any opinions and suggestions for improvement are always welcomed and investigated and considered thoroughly.

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