



NZATS AUT Liaison Report: Conference 2008 - 2009

2009 has been an extremely busy year with the introduction of Special Topic together with the usual day-to-day AUT business that arises over the months.

Special Topic

It was very exciting to introduce the new patient care paper Special Topic, into our training programme this year. The paper has received positive feedback to date – both from trainees who are sitting it and those who are involved in teaching, marking and assessing. As for any new paper, we will critically review its' first year and fine tune it as necessary for 2010. Due to the relatively swift introduction of this paper, we had no choice this year but to have a virtual Block Course. However, this is a very practical paper based on assessment and observation skills and so in 2010 we will be organising a block course that will require the attendance of the trainees so they get hands on experience. The date is yet to be set for this but will be advised in due course.

I would like to thank the group of writers who worked extremely hard to produce this paper for 2009. It took almost 4 months to put together with input and feedback being sought from NZ trained technicians, ODPs, nurses, OR managers and anaesthetists.

HAP I

The new Human Anatomy & Physiology paper also saw its first run this year. Again, AUT has received positive feedback from trainees and both AUT and NZATS are satisfied that the paper meets current training needs.

Anaesthesia Papers

Anaesthesia I will remain as it is this year but we are planning a review of Anaesthesia II and III. With regard to **Anaesthesia II** (equipment paper) AUT will be reducing the length of the worksheets this year. Trainees are reporting that they

often spend upwards of 10-15 hours per week completing these questions which is far outside the AUT recommendation of 2 hours per week!

Anaesthesia III is due for a detailed review this year, both of the Learning Outcomes and worksheet questions. In particular, we will be replacing the Surgical Specialties section with a section on major co-existing diseases relevant to anaesthesia. At Conference 2008 there was strong support from members for increasing the pharmacology component of our training scheme. In response to this we increased the length of the pharmacology section of Anaesthesia III from 3 to 4 weeks this year. AUT employed a new writer to revamp this section which included a large online component including weekly quizzes, as well as weekly submitted worksheets. Being the inaugural year, there were issues which have been and will be resolved for 2010. This section is still under discussion by NZATS and AUT and our goal this year is to clarify exactly what information is essential for the trainees to learn in relation to this vast topic. With regard to the changes proposed for Anaesthesia III, I would like to thank Daneby Ladell and Craig Love from Palmerston North for their offer of help with the review.

National Machine Assessments

The National Assessments have been running smoothly in their current format for the past 4 years. However this year some issues have been highlighted which need to be addressed. In the light of this, we will be reviewing the NA process in detail and are currently forming a committee of experienced technicians and NZATS Examiners to action this. Nicola Smith, Chief NZATS Registration Examiner will be chairing the group and will advise you of changes in due course.

AUT

Online learning has increased dramatically this year with AUT and is set to increase in following years. It is essential that those of us responsible for education ensure our trainees have easy access to computers and that we instil in them a good 'online work ethic' whereby they check the AUT emails every day. Many of you will already be using the Supervisor's page on AUTonline. This was introduced this year and has improved communication between AUT and the training hospitals dramatically. However, it is currently dependent on the Charge Technicians and Educators accessing the page regularly for updates. We are investigating the possibility of AUT sending out emails to us each time the page is updated by Wendy Emson and I will

keep you posted via the NZATS website and by email with regard to our progress on this.

Kirsten Hansen has now been employed by AUT on a part-time basis as an assistant for the Diploma for the duration of the academic year. Both AUT and I wish to thank Kirsten for the fantastic work she has done this year in organising all the block courses. It takes an enormous amount of energy and dedication to get these up and running and she has done a marvellous job in ensuring their efficient delivery. It is a real bonus to us that she also happens to be an experienced Anaesthetic Technician with a proven interest in education.

Education Meetings

NZATS held a mid-year Education Meeting in Wellington that was very well attended by representatives from Invercargill to Whangerei. A report from this meeting is available on the NZATS website. I would like to thank all the participants for their enthusiastic contribution to this meeting. We have some outstanding talent among our qualified technicians who year after year continue to support our training programme with new ideas and initiatives. I encourage all of our members to contribute their ideas and remind you that you can email any of the executive via the NZATS website with your feedback and ideas.

Finally, I wish to warmly thank all of you who have assisted with writing worksheet questions, teaching on block courses and marking papers. Your contribution is very much valued by both NZATS and AUT.

Sian Mitchell
AUT Liaison