

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **New collaboration between Deakin University and OET to improve English language skills of international healthcare students**

Patient safety and quality of care are at the heart of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by Deakin University and owner of the healthcare-specific Occupational English Test (OET), to ensure international healthcare students and professionals become proficient in English before entering the workforce.

Deakin University's Centre for Organisational Change in Person-Centred Healthcare provides education and training to healthcare professionals and consumers. The Centre uses translational research to transform the culture of the healthcare sector and influence change in policy to enable high quality person-centred care and outcomes.

OET has been providing healthcare-specific English language testing for the past 30 years, and the test is recognised by healthcare regulators in Australia as proof of English language proficiency for registration in 12 healthcare professions. Available in over 80 venues in 35 countries, OET is owned by Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment (CBLA), a venture between Cambridge English and Box Hill Institute, Australia.

As the Australian population increases and ages, it has been predicted<sup>1</sup> that the shortfall of nurses in the workforce will reach 109,490 by 2025. As the Australian health system strives to fill the shortfall with foreign-trained nurses, a significant factor affecting patient safety and quality of care continues to be errors caused by language skills and miscommunication<sup>2</sup>.

Together, the work of Deakin University and CBLA benefits the Australian economy by helping to fill the workforce shortfall with nurses and other health professionals who are proficient in English and able to communicate effectively and ensure patient safety and quality of care.

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<sup>1</sup> In Health Workforce Australia, 2012, <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/australias-future-health-workforce-nurses> which is cited in many news articles

<sup>2</sup> For example, <http://www.jointcommissioninternational.org/human-factors-analysis-in-patient-safety-systems/>

The MOU was officially signed by both parties on 17 August 2017 to cement a working relationship that encourages research collaboration and seeks to develop joint projects to improve healthcare communication.

Professor Peter Martin, Director, Centre for Organisational Change in Person-Centred Healthcare at Deakin University's School of Medicine says: "It is great to work with another team so committed to healthcare communication."

CBLA CEO, Sujata Stead says: "Signing this memorandum of understanding demonstrates our commitment to working with organisations who share the common vision of supporting healthcare professionals to successfully contribute within the Australian healthcare system."

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## About OET

OET is an international English language test that assesses the language communication skills of healthcare professionals who seek to register and practise in an English-speaking environment.

OET results are accepted by healthcare boards and councils in Australia, New Zealand, Namibia, Singapore and Dubai as proof of English language proficiency. It is also recognised by the Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection and Immigration New Zealand for all visa categories where an English test may be required.

Available in over 80 venues in 35 countries, OET is owned by Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment (CBLA), a venture between Cambridge English and Box Hill Institute, Australia. For more information visit <http://www.occupationalenglishtest.org>

<http://www.occupationalenglishtest.com.au/about>

## About Deakin University

Deakin, named after Australia's second Prime Minister, is a young contemporary university with a reputation for being innovative, nimble and friendly. We aspire every day to combine excellent research and outstanding teaching with a strong focus on the communities we serve. Deakin is ranked in the top 2 per cent of the world's universities in each of the major rankings, including 213th in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). Deakin researchers are making a difference through world-class research and innovation. Deakin has a strong sense of community and serves as an economic, social and cultural catalyst enriching each of the communities it serves.