

Statement in response to comments in Submission 96

University of Sydney statement

We're aware of concerns raised about matters related to Professor Spallek's employment at the University. After careful examination we remain satisfied Professor Spallek's educational qualifications and prior experience make him well qualified for his position at the University.

Further information

Professor Spallek commenced at the University in the position of Pro-Dean, Academic Development, in the Faculty of Dentistry in February 2016. The Faculty of Dentistry was dissolved in 2018 and became a school (Sydney Dental School) in the newly formed Faculty of Medicine and Health. In November 2018 Professor Spallek was appointed the Head of School and Dean of the Sydney Dental School. In both his positions at the University, he has been referred to as Professor Spallek.

Professor Spallek qualified as Doctor of Medical Dentistry from the School of Dentistry, at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, where he was the valedictorian of his class of 60. In 1997, Professor Spallek was provided with confirmation that the thesis that he submitted to the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin in June 1992 held PhD equivalence in the United States. He has relied on this in good faith throughout his career.

In June 2021, the University undertook an extensive process to consider concerns raised, which Professor Spallek fully cooperated in. As part of this process, Professor Spallek's thesis was considered within the context in which it was submitted; over 30 years ago, in the newly unified Germany. It was determined to be equivalent to a Master of Surgery (MS). The decision to appoint Professor Spallek was reviewed and upheld.

When Professor Spallek applied for the position of Pro-Dean of the Sydney Dental School, a PhD in a relevant area of Health or Health Education was one part of the overall criteria considered by the University. Professor Spallek was appointed to the role after he was unanimously assessed to be the best candidate in a range of areas, in particular his research trajectory and his expected contribution to the University.

The 2007 grant was allocated to both dentistry and medicine, and contributed to the development of the Westmead health precinct where the University of Sydney is the key university partner and has significant space for dental and medical education, training and research.

We are not aware of the submission referred to, however the submission made by our Sydney Dental School has been published by the Select Committee.

In accordance with University's recruitment policy, a waiver on advertising was approved by the required delegates of the University, ahead of a full selection committee process that found Professor Spahr appointable to his initial role at the University as Head of Discipline, Discipline of Restorative and Reconstructive Dentistry. The position of Deputy to the Head of School was filled in line with the University's Academic Leaders Procedure 2022.