

Policy Statement 5.9 – Dental Accreditation Authority

Position Summary

An apolitical dental accreditation authority is essential in ensuring independent and robust accreditation of dental practitioner programs leading to registration with the Dental Board of Australia and the assessment of overseas qualified practitioners wishing to practise in Australia. The Australian Dental Council should continue to be the dental accreditation authority.

1. Background

- 1.1. A Dental Accreditation Authority is an essential part of ensuring appropriate regulation of the practice of dentistry
- 1.2. The Australian Dental Council (ADC) was formed in 1993 by the state and territory dental boards and by the Australian Dental Association (ADA). Even though it had no statutory authority other dental practitioners, governments and university dental schools supported its accreditation and examination functions.
- 1.3. The ADC was registered as a company limited by guarantee in 1996 with organisational and individual members.
- 1.4. The National Registration and Accreditation Scheme was established by the National Law on 1 July 2010 where accreditation functions were to be independent and separate from registration functions,
- 1.5. The ADC has been assigned the Board's accreditation functions, to accredit courses leading to registrable dental qualifications and to assess overseas qualified dental practitioners for eligibility for registration by the Board.
- 1.6. The ADC has a governing board, an assessment committee, a people and culture committee and an accreditation committee to deal with operational matters and individual and organisational members.
- 1.7. Under the assignment the functions delegated to the ADC by the Board include:
 - accreditation of Australian dental practitioner courses;
 - assessment and examination of overseas qualified dental practitioners; and
 - establishment of mutual recognition arrangements.
- 1.8. The ADC has no role in determining:
 - the scope of practice for dental practitioners;
 - whether to establish new dental practitioner programs; and
 - which occupations are on the Skilled Occupation List.

Definitions

- 1.9. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.10. DENTAL ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY is a body responsible for evaluating and approving courses leading to formal dental qualifications and assessing and examining overseas qualified dental practitioners.
- 1.11. DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency via the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.12. NATIONAL LAW is the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 as in force in each state and territory.

2. Position

- 2.1. The ADC should continue to be the independent Dental Accreditation Authority in Australia.
- 2.2. The Dental Accreditation Authority's functions should be reflected in the National Law and associated regulations.
- 2.3. The role of a Dental Accreditation Authority should include advising and making recommendations to the Board in relation to:
 - Accreditation of Australian university and vocational programs leading to registration as a:
 - » dentist;
 - » specialist dentist;
 - » dental hygienist;
 - » dental or oral health therapist; or
 - » dental prosthetist.
 - Assessment and examination of persons with overseas dental qualifications seeking registration in Australia; and
 - Overseas courses/processes suitable for mutual recognition.
- 2.4. The board of a Dental Accreditation Authority should be composed of persons with appropriate skill set to carry out its function. It should include dental practitioners (a diverse mix of academics and clinicians) and lay persons but only include one Head of School who must not be the President or Chair.
- 2.5. The examination committee and accreditation committee should be composed of persons with the correct skill mix including dental practitioners (a mix of academics and clinicians) and lay persons.
- 2.6. Both the examination and the accreditation committees must include dentists as members.
- 2.7. The Organisational Members of the ADC should be restricted to the national dental practitioners' associations (one for each dental practitioner group), The Australasian Council of Dental Schools (ACODS) and Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons (RACDS).
- 2.8. There should be no more than 20 Individual Members of the ADC, who are persons committed to the objects of the Dental Accreditation Authority.
- 2.9. No further educational assessment shall be required for any student graduating from a course accredited by the Dental Accreditation Authority to gain registration with the Board.
- 2.10. The Dental Accreditation Authority accreditation documentation and processes should be publicly accessible.
- 2.11. The Dental Accreditation Authority should employ measures to improve its accreditation processes, such as:
 - appropriate training for site evaluation team members;
 - only exclusive use of experienced persons as site evaluation team leaders; and
 - the inclusion of accreditation staff on site evaluation teams.
- 2.12. The Dental Accreditation Authority must be apolitical and neutral on issues such as dental practitioner scope of practice, workforce numbers and establishment of new dental courses.
- 2.13. The Dental Accreditation Authority should ensure its processes are cost- effective, efficient and avoid duplication of its own processes with other accreditation processes.

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Adopted by ADA Federal Council, May 30, 2007.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, November 13/14, 2008.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 16/17, 2009.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, April 14/15, 2011.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, November 13/14, 2014.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, August 25/26, 2016.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, November 22, 2019.

Amended by ADA Federal Council, November 18, 2022