

Program Accreditation – Appeals and Complaints Policy

In most instances queries or concerns arising out of accreditation processes may be resolved by discussing the matter with the Director Accreditation, Chair Accreditation Committee, or the CEO. This is the most convenient, efficient, cost neutral method of conflict resolution. However, where there continues to be an unresolved disagreement regarding a decision made by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) then the complainant may ask for an appeal to go to a Review Panel or an Independent Complaints Panel under the processes outlined below.

Appeals Process

Program Providers – Accreditation, Conditions, Site Evaluation Reports

A program provider is routinely sent the Site Evaluation Team (SET) draft report without the decision and invited to correct errors of fact should they be present. It is possible, but unlikely, that a dispute may arise over the facts that then may lead to a dispute over the decision.

A program provider (the provider) may seek independent review of recommendations and decisions concerning accreditation of a dental program at two stages:

- within one month of receipt by the Head of School (or equivalent) of a notification that the Schools amendments to a draft SET report have not been accepted,
OR
- within one month of receipt by the Vice-Chancellor and Head of Discipline of a letter of notification of refusal to accredit, or conditions imposed upon accreditation.

A Review Panel will be set up by the ADC Accreditation Committee and agreed by the provider. It must include at least one head of an ADC accredited program in the same discipline as the program being reviewed, one senior academic from another ADC accredited program and one other person from another health profession with experience in accreditation.

The Review Panel will review the provider's submission, relevant reports and documentation. It will have the discretion to interview staff, students and other relevant people, and to inspect facilities where it concludes that such actions are necessary for it to make an informed judgment.

The cost of review must be met by the provider concerned prior to the establishment of the Review Panel. Please refer to the Fee Schedule shown on the ADC website www.adc.org.au.

A report prepared by the Review Panel will be forwarded to both the program provider and the ADC. The provider will be given the opportunity to respond to any issues raised in the report, before the ADC makes a final decision on the program accreditation status and/or conditions.

The members of the Review Panel must not have been involved in the accreditation of the program that is the subject of the review. Each member will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement applicable to all outside of the review process.

NOTE: A program that has accreditation revoked

Should a provider and program continually fail to comply with the ADC Accreditation Standards (within an agreed period and/or following an Appeal Process) the ADC will

commence proceedings to revoke accreditation as outlined under the National Law¹. The program provider, Head of School (or equivalent) and Vice-Chancellor, Dental Board of Australia and professional dental practitioner groups will be notified that the program no longer meets ADC Standards and therefore no longer holds accreditation status.

The school must then undertake the following process for students currently enrolled:

- Make arrangements with another provider to transfer students into an accredited program
- Ensure that the alternative provider is able to satisfy the ADC that it has adequate resources, sufficient academic staff and clinical facilities to incorporate the extra students; enable them to graduate under the banner of the alternative accredited provider and thus be eligible to apply for registration to the Dental Board of Australia
OR
- Allocates resource, engage contract staff, or whatever is necessary to enable a 'teach out' of the program with a short term accreditation period agreed by the ADC. This option would usually only be appropriate where there are two or less years for the program to be completed for a student cohort.

Complaints Process

Individuals -

The ADC may receive complaints from the public or other stakeholders about accredited programs for the dental profession. The complaints process is as follows:

- Only complaints in writing will be considered by the ADC
- Complaints should be addressed to the CEO 'in confidence'
- Only complaints pertaining to accreditation matters will be considered
- The accreditation matter(s) outlined in the complaint will be discussed between the CEO, Director Accreditation, Chair of the Accreditation Committee, and the necessary body or persons to agree on a course of action

Should the course of action resolve the matter, or find the complaint unsustainable, the matter will be deemed resolved and all parties to the complaint notified

Should the complainant not accept the outcome of the decision then they may ask for an Independent Complaints Panel (ICP) hearing.

An Independent Complaints Panel will be nominated by the ADC and agreed by the complainant. It must include three people two of whom are external to the profession and none of whom have been involved with the original complaint.

The cost of the ICP review must be met by the complainant prior to establishing the ICP. Please refer to the Fee Schedule shown on the ADC website www.adc.org.au .

A report prepared by the ICP will be forwarded to both the ADC and the complainant. The complainant will be given an opportunity to respond to any errors of fact in the report, before the ADC makes a final decision on the complaint.

Approved by: ADC Governing Board
Date: 14 February 2013

¹ Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009