

Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs

Effective from 1 January 2027



Preamble

The Australian Dental Council (ADC)/Dental Council (New Zealand) (DC(NZ)) accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs (the Standards) are endorsed by the ADC and approved by the DC(NZ) and the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) – pursuant to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act – New Zealand) and Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (National Law – Australia).

The Standards help to ensure that education programs meet criteria for the education of newly qualified dental practitioners who are safe to practise in Australia and New Zealand and apply to all dental programs that lead to registration as dental practitioners in Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, the Standards also apply to programs that enable graduates to apply for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation.

Domain 1



Public safety

Domain 2



Academic governance
and quality assurance

Domain 3



Program
of study

Domain 4



The student
experience

Domain 5



Assessment

Domain 6



Cultural responsiveness
(for programs seeking
accreditation in Australia).

Each Domain includes a Standard that articulates the key purpose of the Domain. This is the threshold that the program will be assessed against. Each Standard is supported by multiple criteria, which outline what is expected of an ADC/DC(NZ) accredited program to meet each Standard. The criteria are not sub-standards that will be individually assessed. When assessing a program the ADC/DC(NZ) will have regard for whether each criterion is met but will take an on-balance view of whether the evidence presented by a program provider clearly demonstrates that a particular Standard is met.

New programs and established programs are assessed against the same Accreditation Standards, although the assessment may be varied according to the circumstances of the program provider.

The Accreditation Standards model





Domain 1

Public safety

Standard: Public safety is assured.

Domain 1



Public safety

Standard: Public safety is assured.

Criteria

1.1

Public protection and patient care are key principles guiding the program, clinical education, and learning outcomes.

1.2

Student impairment screening and management processes are effective.

1.3

Students achieve the relevant competencies before providing patient care as part of the program.

1.4

Students are supervised by suitably qualified and registered dental and/or health practitioners during clinical education.

1.5

Health services and dental practices providing clinical placements have robust health and safety, patient safety, and quality and care policies and processes, and meet all relevant regulations and standards.

1.6

Patients consent to care by students.

1.7

Students understand the legal, ethical and professional responsibilities of a registered oral health practitioner.

1.8

Students and staff act ethically and professionally to contribute to a safe environment, with breaches managed appropriately by the program provider.

1.9

All students are registered with the relevant regulatory authority/ies. (applicable in Australia only)



Domain 2

Academic governance
and quality assurance

Standard: Academic governance and
quality assurance processes are effective.

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Standard: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective.



**Academic governance
and quality assurance**

Criteria

2.1

Academic governance for the program includes systematic review and monitoring, risk management and improvement.

2.2

Students, consumers, internal and external academics, and professional peers contribute to the program's design, management and quality improvement.

2.3

Mechanisms are in place for responding within the curriculum to contemporary developments in clinical practice and health professional education.

2.4

Admission and progression requirements and processes are fair, transparent and informed by program staff.



Domain 3

Program of study

Standard: Program design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required professional competencies.

Domain 3



Program of study

Standard: Program design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required professional competencies.

Criteria

3.1

A coherent educational philosophy aligned with contemporary education principles informs the program's design and delivery.

3.2

Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes.

3.3

Program learning outcomes address all the required professional competencies.

3.4

The complexity, quantity, duration and variety of clinical education is sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practise.

3.5

Program design, delivery, and assessment enable an understanding of cultural diversity, and the development of skills that promote inclusive and responsive person-centred care.

3.6

The program design develops research literacy appropriate to the level and type of qualification.

3.7

Students engage with and learn from oral health and other health professions to support the development of collaborative practice.

3.8

Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver their educational responsibilities.

3.9

Learning environments and clinical facilities and equipment are accessible, well-maintained, fit for purpose and support the achievement of learning outcomes.

3.10

The program has the resources to sustain the education required for students to achieve the professional competencies.

3.11

Access to clinical training is assured, through formal agreements as required, for students to achieve the professional competencies.



Domain 4

The student experience

Standard: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support.

Domain 4



The student experience

Standard: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support.

Criteria

4.1

Program information is clear and accessible to both prospective and current students.

4.2

Students are informed of and have access to effective grievance and appeals processes.

4.3

Mechanisms are in place to identify and support the academic learning needs of students.

4.4

Students are informed of and have access to support services provided by qualified personnel.

4.5

Students are formally represented within decision-making committees for the program, with mechanisms to enable active participation.

4.6

Equity and diversity principles are observed and promoted in the student experience.



Domain 5

Assessment

Standard: Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure graduates are competent to practise.

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Assessment

Standard: Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure graduates are competent to practise.

Criteria

5.1

Assessments conform to the principles of validity, reliability and fairness.

5.2

Mechanisms are in place for recognising and responding to emerging developments and risks in assessment.

5.3

There is a clear relationship between learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

5.4

All required professional competencies are mapped to learning outcomes and are assessed.

5.5

Multiple assessment methods are used including direct observation in the clinical setting.

5.6

Students receive timely feedback to support their learning.

5.7

Students are assessed throughout the program by qualified and experienced educators, including external experts. External examiners assess students for final year exit examinations.



Domain 6 (AUS)

Cultural responsiveness

Standard: The program ensures students are able to provide culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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Cultural responsiveness

Standard: The program ensures students are able to provide culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Criteria

6.1

Staff and students work and learn in a culturally responsive, safe and anti-racist environment.

6.2

Students and staff have access to appropriate resources and personnel with specialist knowledge, expertise and cultural capabilities, to facilitate learning about providing culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

6.3

The program provider continuously seeks input from local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities external to the provider into the design and implementation of the program.

6.4

Delivery of Country- and Community-appropriate culturally responsive healthcare is scaffolded and integrated throughout the program, clearly articulated in learning outcomes, and assessed.

6.5

All students undertake culturally responsive clinical placements to provide culturally safe and anti-racist care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

6.6

The program provider proactively promotes and supports the recruitment, admission, participation, retention and successful completion of the program by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.



Domain 6 (NZ)

Cultural competence

Standard: The program ensures students are able to provide culturally competent engagement and appropriate care for Māori and Pacific peoples.

This domain remains unchanged from 2021.

This Domain is applicable only to assessments conducted in New Zealand and is included in this document for reference. Only the Australian Domain 6 should be considered when assessing programs in Australia.

Domain 6 (NZ)



Cultural competence

Standard: The program ensures students are able to provide culturally competent engagement and appropriate care for Māori and Pacific peoples.

Criteria

6.1

The program demonstrates its commitment to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation document of New Zealand.

6.2

The program upholds both the Articles and Principles of the Treaty through its educational philosophy and delivery.

6.3

The program, staff and students understand the Māori perspective of health and wellbeing, their beliefs and cultural practices as it pertains to oral health in particular.

6.4

Cultural understanding of Māori and Pacific peoples are integrated throughout the program, clearly articulated in required learning outcomes (including competencies that will enable effective and respectful interaction with Māori).

6.5

Clinical experiences provide students with experience of providing culturally competent care for Māori and Pacific peoples, and clinical application of cultural competence is appropriately assessed.

6.6

There is a partnership in the design and management of the program from Māori and Pacific peoples.

6.7

The program provider promotes and supports the recruitment, admission, participation, retention and completion of the program by Māori and Pacific peoples.

6.8

The program provider ensures students are provided with access to appropriate resources, and to staff and the community with specialist knowledge, expertise and cultural capabilities, to facilitate learning about Māori health.

6.9

The program recognises the important role of Māori Te Reo, Ngā Mokai o Ngā Whetu (Māori Dental Students' Association) and Te Aō Marama (The New Zealand Maori Dental Association) in achieving cultural competence to oral health practitioners.

6.10

Staff and students work and learn in a culturally appropriate environment.



AUSTRALIAN
DENTAL COUNCIL

Dental Council

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