

Code of conduct

Assessors, examiners and item writers

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1. Introduction

The vision and strategic aims of the Australian Dental Council (ADC) are underpinned by the organisation's corporate values. These values – being ethical, respectful, fair, transparent, independent and supportive - provide guidance to the organisation in its strategic planning and in its day-to-day interactions with all stakeholders. The ADC is equally committed to supporting ADC assessors, examiners and item writers to uphold these values.

In line with the ADC Board's *Duties, Responsibilities and Code of conduct*, the *Code of conduct for assessors, examiners and item writers* (the code) identifies the responsibilities of an assessor, examiner and item writer when acting as, or when perceived to be as acting as, a representative of the ADC.

2. Purpose

The code serves three main purposes. The code:

1. outlines the expected conduct of all ADC assessors, examiners and item writers and how the ADC can support them in meeting these expectations
2. provides a framework by which conduct can be assessed
3. provides guidance on actions that the ADC may take if conduct falls short of expected behaviour.

The code cannot prescribe behaviour for each and every circumstance, but rather aims to promote a culture where representatives of the ADC understand their responsibilities and are supported to act in accordance with the ADC's values.

3. Workplace safety

The ADC is committed to promoting a safe and healthy workplace. Assessors, examiners and item writers can expect that the ADC will:

- provide assessors, examiners and item writers with a safe working and comfortable working environment
- provide assessors, examiners and item writers with the training and materials needed to prepare for and undertake their role
- provide assessors, examiners and item writers with one-on-one support or mentorship where appropriate
- provide a safe and confidential space for assessors, examiners and item writers to report behaviours of concern
- support assessors, examiners and item writers to gain access to counselling and support services if required.

4. Standards and behaviour

ADC assessors, examiners and item writers are expected to be familiar with the ADC's values and exhibit the professional standards and behaviours (outlined in this section) which support these values. ADC assessors, examiners and item writers are also expected to report any breaches of the code.

4.1 Ethical

Ethical conduct should underpin all assessor, examiner and item writer decisions and behaviours.

The ADC sets standards, policies and guidelines and provides instructions which assist and guide assessors, examiners and item writers in the performance of their roles. Ethical considerations when performing roles include:

- maintaining confidentiality regarding all documentation reviewed, discussions held and interviews/examinations undertaken
- avoiding using information gained in confidence for personal benefit or the benefit of others
- being aware of and acting in accordance with the ADC standards, policies, guidelines and instructions that apply to their role and undertaking any training required to satisfactorily meet these requirements.

4.2 Respectful

Assessors, examiners and item writers are expected to:

- treat colleagues, providers, candidates and the public with courtesy and respect at all times
- demonstrate cultural awareness
- respect diversity and individual differences and
- respect the property of the ADC and others.

4.3 Fair

Assessors, examiners and item writers are expected to make decisions and behave in a manner, which:

- is free from discrimination
- is impartial and unbiased and
- is in the interest of public safety.

4.4 Transparent

Assessors, examiners and item writers must be transparent in their dealings with the ADC by:

- notifying the manager of the relevant department of changes to the declaration made by the individual as part of their application for the role, or changes of circumstance which are likely to impact their ability to carry out the duties specified as part of the role
- being open to giving and receiving constructive feedback
- being open and honest in decision-making and willing to explain decisions
- raising concerns when necessary and relevant.

4.5 Independent

Assessors, examiners and item writers are expected to:

- work independently where required, using their time and that of others, effectively
- maintain focus on key priorities and stay resilient in the face of pressure
- recognise and declare any conflicts of interest (actual or perceived)
- not offer or accept payment, bribes, gifts or other items from providers which may be perceived as having the potential to compromise impartiality or create a conflict of interest
- not use their position to gain personal advantage
- not make public statements on behalf of the ADC without authorisation.

Examiners and item writers are not permitted to engage with any courses that prepare candidates for ADC assessments, or guide candidates through the assessment process.

Assessors of education programs must not have informal meetings, attend social functions or other business meetings with interviewees during site visits.

4.6 Supportive

Assessors, examiners and item writers are expected to:

- encourage and support others to be familiar with the values of the ADC
- ensure interactions with all stakeholders are free from bullying (repeated, unreasonable behaviour towards an individual or group of individuals), harassment (unwanted behaviour that offends, humiliates or intimidates an individual or group of individuals), sexual harassment and discrimination.
- demonstrate safe behaviours in relation to their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of others
- act responsibly and not allow alcohol, drugs or illness to affect their conduct when performing their duties or in situations where they are representing the ADC.

5. Privacy and confidentiality

The ADC handles sensitive and confidential information relating to providers, students, candidates, assessment processes, examinations and other assessors, examiners and item writers. Assessors, examiners and item writers are required to:

- understand and sign an ADC confidentiality agreement
- maintain awareness of the principles and requirements of the ADC confidentiality agreement
- maintain the privacy of all personal and private information collected of any individuals and providers whilst engaging with the ADC, including any provisional or actual provider outcomes or performance and provisional or actual candidate result or performance
- maintain the security and confidentiality of all accreditation and examination material
- refrain from providing any accreditation or examination material to providers, candidates or any third party that prepares providers or candidates for ADC assessments
- only seek information and access ADC databases if appropriately trained and authorised to do so, including searching provider and candidate records
- use ADC resources only for the purposes of the ADC.

6. Intellectual property

Materials, information and services generated throughout the course of activities with the ADC are owned by the ADC and can only be used with the ADC's express written permission. Publically available materials may be referred to (with appropriate attribution), for non-commercial, educational and scientific purposes only.

Assessors, examiners and item writers are not permitted to use ADC materials that are not already in the public domain:

- to gain any benefit or unfair advantage
- in publications or
- in training courses external to the ADC.

7. Breaches of the code

The ADC is committed to attempting informal resolution of issues where they occur, i.e. through open discussion, and expects that most issues can be satisfactorily resolved in this manner. Assessors, examiners and item writers should be familiar with the framework by which conduct can be assessed and the actions that the ADC may take if conduct falls short of expected behaviour

7.1 Reporting a breach

Should an assessor, examiner or item writer have any concerns that they or another assessor, examiner or item writer has breached this code, the individual should speak to the appropriate ADC manager in the first instance. Should the individual for any reason feel that they cannot raise a concern with the manager, they may speak to the appropriate ADC director.

7.2 Misconduct

Misconduct refers to conduct that is in breach of this code. Serious misconduct refers to misconduct of a serious nature and includes, but is not limited to, conduct that causes serious risk to the health and safety of a person or the reputation or viability of the ADC.

The ADC may contact an assessor, examiner or item writer in the case of a candidate or provider appeal or complaint. The individual is expected to respond to such contact in an honest, open and timely manner.

In the case an assessor, examiner or item writer is alleged to have breached the code, the ADC will determine whether misconduct, including serious misconduct has occurred by making an assessment of the intent and severity of the breach. Allegations of a breach may result in:

- an investigation into the matter
- a discussion and management between the assessor, examiner or item writer and the appropriate ADC staff member
- the requirement to undertake further training
- disciplinary action including formal warning or termination of engagement with the ADC
- notification to the appropriate authorities.

7.3 Support

The ADC will ensure that any assessor, examiner or item writer who is alleged to have breached this code will be treated fairly, including with the provision of support throughout the process and the opportunity to respond to any allegations made against them.

Any assessor or examiner who reports a breach of the code will equally be provided with support and anonymity, where possible, throughout the process.

8. Resources

Assessors, examiners and item writers are encouraged to read the ADC strategic plan 2018-2020, which includes the organisation's vision, strategic aims and values.

Assessors are encouraged to review the following additional resources:

- The ADC policy on assessor criteria and appointment of Site Evaluation Teams
- The ADC/DC(NZ) accreditation manual for assessors
- The ADC meeting remuneration guidelines
- The ADC travel guidelines

Examiners are encouraged to review the following additional resources:

- The ADC Appointment of examiners policy
- The ADC practical examination examiner handbook
- The ADC examiner remuneration guidelines

Item writers are encouraged to review the following additional resources:

- The ADC Appointment of item writers policy
- The ADC examiner remuneration guidelines