

## How to raise a concern about an ADC accredited program

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## How to raise a concern about an ADC accredited program

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides information for people considering raising a concern about a dental practitioner program accredited by the Australian Dental Council (ADC). It explains the types of concern we are able to consider and the process that we will follow when we consider a concern about a program.
- 1.2. We welcome concerns about accredited programs as one source of information which can help us ensure that accredited programs continue to meet the ADC / Dental Council (New Zealand) Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs ('the Accreditation Standards'). This helps ensure that only dental practitioners who are suitably trained and qualified to practise in a competent and ethical manner are registered in Australia.
- 1.3. This document is based on the ADC 'Concerns about accredited programs policy' which is published on our website.
- 1.4. In this document 'we' and 'our' refers to the ADC. 'You' refers to someone raising a concern about an accredited program.

### 2. About accreditation

- 2.1. The ADC is appointed by the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) to accredit education and training programs enabling a graduate to apply for registration as a dental practitioner or dental specialist. The ADC also accredits programs leading to endorsement of registration for dental practitioners.
- 2.2. A program that is accredited by the ADC must meet the Accreditation Standards. An accredited program has shown that graduating students have met the professional competencies necessary for registration in Australia.
- 2.3. Once accredited, programs are subject to regular monitoring to make sure that they continue to meet the Accreditation Standards.

### 3. What concerns are we able to consider?

- 3.1. We are able to consider concerns that an ADC accredited program may not meet one or more of the Accreditation Standards. We consider the concerns we receive to decide whether we need to take any action to ensure that the Accreditation Standards continue to be met.
- 3.2. We are unable to:
  - resolve disputes between education providers and students, or between education providers and employees;
  - award financial compensation; or
  - ask education providers to change student assessments or grades.
- 3.3. Education providers will have their own appeals and complaints procedures for students and others to follow. There are also other organisations who are able to consider some types of concern about education providers. We have provided an inexhaustive list of some of the available concerns procedures in an appendix. You may find that they are more appropriate for your concerns.

- 3.4. If you do raise a concern with us, we will ask whether you have raised your concerns with other organisations and the outcome. We would normally expect you to have raised your concerns with the education provider before raising a concern with us. This is because education providers are required to have effective processes in place to handle and learn from complaints. Raising your concern with the education provider can often be the quickest and simplest way to resolve an issue. However, we recognise that there may be some cases where it is not possible or appropriate to go through other concerns procedures.

## 4. How to raise a concern

- 4.1. You can raise a concern by emailing or writing to us and including information about the education provider and program and details about your concern. We have produced a form that you can complete and send to us. You can find this on our website. If you are unable to put your concerns in writing because of a disability, please contact us so that we can discuss any reasonable adjustments we can put in place to help you.
- 4.2. If you are unsure whether to raise a concern, or if we are the correct organisation to raise your concern with, please call us for an informal discussion. We would be happy to discuss the issue with you and provide advice.
- 4.3. We ask that concerns are put in writing so that we can understand the issues raised and request any further information from you if we need to. As a result, in most cases, we will be limited in our ability to progress concerns raised with us anonymously. However, if we receive anonymous information about a program (particularly if we receive the same or similar information from multiple sources) we will consider carefully whether we have enough information to investigate further.

## 5. What happens when we receive your concern?

- 5.1. Once we have received your concern, we will do the following.
- We will acknowledge receipt of your concern and explain what will happen next. We aim to do this within five working days. We may ask you for further information if we need to.
  - We will consider whether the concern brings into doubt whether the program continues to meet the Accreditation Standards. If it does not, we will write to you to explain why we are unable to consider your concern any further.
  - If we decide to investigate your concern, we may contact you again to request further information. If other organisations or individuals are able to assist in our investigation, we may also ask them to provide us with further information. We will keep you informed about likely timescales and updated at regular intervals about the progress of our investigation.
  - We will contact the education provider to discuss the concerns. We will write to the education provider summarising the concerns we have received and asking them to respond.
  - We will ask the ADC/ Dental Council (New Zealand) Accreditation Committee to consider all the information received and decide what action we should take. There are three possible outcomes at this stage:
    - **Take no action.** This means that we are satisfied that no further action is required to make sure that the Accreditation Standards are met. This concludes our investigation.

- **Put in place a monitoring requirement.** This means that we are satisfied that the Accreditation Standards continue to be met but want to use our arrangements for program monitoring to make sure that the issues raised in the concern are addressed. This might include, for example, making sure any changes the education provider plans to their program as a result of the concern have been made and are working.
- **Decide to undertake a targeted review of the program.** If we have concerns that a program may be failing to meet the Accreditation Standards, we may decide to carry out a 'targeted review'. A targeted review means that we will ask ADC assessors to carry out either a paper-based review or a site visit to the education provider to look in more detail at the program's performance against the particular areas of the Accreditation Standards which may not be met. If a site visit to the program is already planned, the Committee might decide to consider the issue then.
- If, when you raise your concern, a site visit to the program is already planned, we may decide to consider your concern at that site visit. We would explore your concern at the site visit and use it, alongside other evidence we gather, to inform our judgement about the program and its compliance with our Standards.
- We will write to you to let you know what action we have taken.

## 6. More information

- 6.1. You can raise a concern about an accredited program by:
- filling in our concerns about accredited programs form and emailing it to [accreditation@adc.org.au](mailto:accreditation@adc.org.au);
  - emailing us at [accreditation@adc.org.au](mailto:accreditation@adc.org.au); or
  - writing to us at:  
Australian Dental Council, PO Box 13278, Law Courts Vic 8010
- 6.2. You can contact us by calling +61 (0) 3 9657 1777. Our opening hours are 9am-5pm (AEST), Monday to Friday.
- 6.3. You can find out more about accreditation and accredited programs by visiting our website: [www.adc.org.au](http://www.adc.org.au)

## 7. Appendix – Other concerns procedures

7.1. In addition to education providers' own procedures, the following is an in-exhaustive list of other processes for raising concerns about dental education providers.

Organisation	Responsibilities	Web links
Australian Standards and Quality Authority (ASQA)	Regulates Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers. Complaints are used as intelligence to inform regulation of providers.	<a href="https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints">https://www.asqa.gov.au/complaints</a>
Ombudsman services in each state and territory	If you are studying with a public provider (i.e. a TAFE or public university) and your complaint relates to a perceived breach of your provider's policies and procedures, you can lodge an external appeal with the relevant Ombudsman where the provider is based.	Links to the Ombudsman services are available here:  <a href="https://www.studyassist.gov.au/helpful-resources/higher-education-student-complaints">https://www.studyassist.gov.au/helpful-resources/higher-education-student-complaints</a>
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Authority (TEQSA)	Regulates the higher education sector. Complaints are used as intelligence to inform regulation of providers.	<a href="https://www.teqsa.gov.au/complaints">https://www.teqsa.gov.au/complaints</a>