



Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of University of Adelaide – Bachelor of Dental Surgery

August 2024

[Updated November 2025]

Executive summary

Program provider	University of Adelaide
Program/qualification name	Bachelor of Dental Surgery
Program/qualification abbreviation	BDS
Program/qualification code	BDS
Head office address, including State	Adelaide Dental School, Level 10, Health & Medical Sciences Building. Corner of North Terrace & George Street Adelaide SA 5000
Campus	North Terrace Campus
Program length	5 years
Registration division	Dentist
Registration specialty	N/A
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework level	7
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs (Approved August 2020)
Date of site evaluation	20 August 2024
Date of ADC decision	11 October 2024
Type of accreditation	Targeted review
Accreditation start date	1 January 2024
Accreditation end date	31 December 2030

Background

The University of Adelaide's Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) program is a long-standing program that was last reviewed by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) for the purposes of reaccreditation in August 2023. Following the review, the ADC accredited the program for seven years with six conditions. Four of the conditions have since been met.

This monitoring visit formed part of Condition 6: As a condition of reaccreditation, a targeted review in the form of a site visit is to be undertaken in 2024 against Standards 1, 4 and 6, to triangulate the evidence in the School's response to the conditions imposed on the program. This targeted review also considered the School's response to Condition 2, which required that in order to meet Standard 1 – Public safety; Standard 4 – The student experience; and Standard 6 – Cultural safety, the School must provide by 14 June 2024 evidence in its submission for this review that it has implemented each of the following at the School level:

- a thorough and cohesive complaints management process based on the review undertaken to meet Condition 1 that includes mandatory communication to complainants to follow up on concerns raised
- systems to track and monitor complaints, including final resolutions, that include timelines, reporting and trend identification, and ongoing education
- training of staff and students on using the enhanced complaints handling procedures.

The Accreditation Team also focused on the professional and ethical conduct of staff and the continued integration of cultural safety practices with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

From 1 January 2026 the University of Adelaide programs have been approved to be delivered by Adelaide University following the merger of the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia (report updated November 2025).

Overview of evaluation

An ADC Accreditation Team (AT) received the Adelaide Dental School's submission and various appendices against the Accreditation Standards. The AT requested additional information and clarification prior to the visit following its teleconference held on 28 June 2024.

A site visit was undertaken on 20 August 2024 which included a tour of the clinical facilities at the Adelaide Health and Medical Sciences Building in Adelaide, South Australia.

Interviews were held with the following participants:

- Senior Executive
- Dean and Head of School
- Deputy Head of School/ Learning and Teaching Committee Chair
- Program Coordinators
- Undergraduate Learning and Teaching Lead
- Year level coordinators
- Academic staff
- Current students
- Student representatives
- Representatives contributing to staff professional development regarding cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- South Australian Dental Service (SADS) staff
- Integrity Unit

Key findings

The AT found the University of Adelaide's Bachelor of Dental Surgery program to have made significant progress in the establishment of a thorough and comprehensive school-based complaints management process. The University has established an Integrity Unit that has collaborated closely with the School to enhance the existing complaints process. The School's efforts focused on making the process more accessible, with multiple entry points and robust tracking and monitoring of complaints, resolutions, and trends. Students can also raise anonymous concerns directly with the Integrity Unit, which may mean that no direct action can be taken, however it still enables the Integrity Unit to keep a record of anonymous reports to help identify risk areas. While the School has made significant improvements with its complaints process, the AT suggests there are further opportunities to formalise these processes with clinical placement providers.

As these improvements have been recently implemented the School has demonstrated its dedication to providing continuous training for staff on the updated procedures. Regular communication with students has been initiated and a range of information is available on the complaints process, including flow charts detailing the options available, diagrams and several examples for reference were provided for review by the AT.

The AT noted that all staff are in the process of completing a suite of mandatory training provided by the University, including cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Further, all staff who work in the clinic are also required to complete the SA Dental Service mandatory training modules, which includes cultural safety. The School has also provided tutors with training on giving feedback to students in a manner that is timely, professional, and leads to the opportunity for reflection.

The AT also heard about plans for a bespoke training program for Dental School staff that is being developed by the Yaitya Purruna, Indigenous Health Unit in collaboration with the Dental School. The AT commends the Indigenous Health Unit and the School for this initiative and encourages the University to allocate additional resources to support the implementation of the Cultural Safety Curriculum for staff and students.

Overall, the University of Adelaide's Bachelor of Dental Surgery program demonstrates a strong commitment to excellence in education and patient care. Significant improvements have been made to ensure students are aware of where and how to raise concerns regarding the program. Staff and student training for cultural safety is ongoing with strong support from the Yaitya Purruna, Indigenous Health Unit. The University is committed to ensuring its staff uphold a high standard of ethical and professional conduct.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that accreditation is maintained for the University of Adelaide's Bachelor of Dental Surgery program without conditions. However, the following monitoring requirements have been applied:

1. The School is to provide an evaluation by **31 August 2025** of how the complaints management process, including the system to track and monitor complaints, resolutions and trends, and the education and training of staff and students in how to use the complaints management process, has been effective.

The ADC has determined that this monitoring requirement has now been met

2. The School is to provide by **31 August 2025** a report on the implementation of training for staff to ensure they have the cultural capabilities to facilitate learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The ADC has determined that this monitoring requirement has now been met