

Program Accreditation Appeals Policy

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1. Purpose

To define the Australian Dental Council's policy for handling appeals from education providers against Australian Dental Council (ADC) accreditation decisions.

2. Overview

The Australian Dental Council is committed to the delivery of high-quality services and follows strict and standardised accreditation processes to ensure accreditation decisions are fair, equitable and consistent. From time to time, an education provider may seek to appeal an ADC decision.

Where there is a disagreement between an education provider and the ADC regarding a decision made by the ADC, then the education provider may ask for an appeal to be considered by a Review Panel under the process outlined in this policy.

3. Scope

3.1. In scope

This policy applies to all education providers with programs accredited by the ADC. An education provider may appeal the following accreditation decisions:

- the content of a site visit report, paper-based review report and consideration of a material change report
- a decision to revoke accreditation, to refuse to accredit or to accredit subject to conditions
- program monitoring.

There are two grounds for an appeal:

- The accreditation process conducted has been procedurally unfair. This may include, for example, an allegation that due process has not been followed.
- The outcome of the accreditation process is unjustified or unreasonable on the basis of the available evidence.

3.2. Out of scope

This policy does not cover complaints about the ADC. A complaint raised by a stakeholder which expresses concern about, or dissatisfaction with, how the ADC has carried out its work is covered under the ADC Complaints policy, available on the ADC website. This may include, for example, complaints about an ADC policy or process, communication with stakeholders, or the customer service provided.

4. Guiding Principles

Principles of natural justice and procedural fairness will be applied in the implementation of this policy.

All ADC employees and ADC Review Panel members will behave according to the ADC values and make decisions on the merits of each case and have regard to all relevant information available.

Education providers will be treated fairly and without bias. The ADC will advise the education provider of the outcome of their appeal as soon as possible.

5. Process

5.1. Application for appeal

Appeals must be made in writing within 30 days of the date when the education provider is notified in writing of an ADC accreditation decision. Appeals must set out the decision being appealed against and the reasons why, in accordance with 3.1 of this policy

If an appeal is made, the decision appealed against will not take effect until the outcome of the appeal (unless otherwise agreed with the education provider).

5.2. Informal review

The ADC Chief Executive Officer will discuss the matter with the education provider which has made the appeal in the first instance. In most cases, concerns arising out of accreditation processes can be resolved informally. This is the most convenient, efficient and cost neutral method of conflict resolution.

5.3. Formal appeal

Where there continues to be an unresolved disagreement regarding a decision made by the ADC, then the education provider may ask for an appeal to be considered by a Review Panel.

5.3.1. Review Panel composition

A Review Panel will be set up by the ADC. The panel must include:

- at least one head of an ADC accredited program (normally in the same discipline as the program being reviewed)
- one senior academic from another ADC accredited program
- one other person with experience in accreditation from another accreditation authority.

The members of the Review Panel must not have been involved in the accreditation of the program that is the subject of the review.

5.3.2. Review process

The Review Panel will review the education provider's submission, relevant reports and documentation. The education provider will be invited to make oral submissions to the Review Panel. The Review Panel 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 judgement.

5.3.3. Report

The Review Panel will prepare a report based on its investigation. The report will be provided to the education provider, which will have an opportunity to respond to any issues raised in the report before it is presented to the ADC Board of Directors to make its decision.

5.3.4. Outcome

The ADC Board of Directors will make the final decision on the outcome of the appeal.

If the ADC Board of Directors determines that the accreditation decision is upheld, the decision appealed against will take effect in line with the [ADC Accreditation Guidelines for Dental Practitioner Programs](#).

5.3.5. Cost

The cost of the review must be met by the education provider prior to the establishment of the Review Panel. Please refer to the Fee Schedule – 'review fee' available on the ADC website www.adc.org.au

In the case where an appeal decision is made in favour of the education provider, the ADC Board of Directors may, with any conditions it considers appropriate, direct that the appeal review fee be refunded to the education provider in whole or in part.

6. Timelines

The ADC aims to:

- acknowledge all appeals within five working days of receipt, and
- keep education providers informed about likely timescales and updated at regular intervals about the progress of the appeals process.

The assessment of an appeal will consider whether the original accreditation decision indicates a high potential risk to public safety. In this circumstance, the CEO and Director, Accreditation, Policy and Research may decide to expedite the appeal process and escalate the decision to an out-of-session meeting of the ADC Board of Directors.

The education provider will be advised of the outcome of the appeal process in writing within five business days of the ADC Board of Directors ratifying its decision.

7. Notifications

The ADC will report any appeals received about its accreditation decision making processes to the Dental Board Australia (DBA) or the relevant regulator within the jurisdiction the accreditation decision has taken place. The DBA reviews the ADC's appeals processes and monitors the number of appeals as part of the accreditation agreement.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1. Education Provider

Education providers are required to:

- Submit an appeal within the required timeframes
- Demonstrate the grounds for appeal are met
- Accept the decision of the ADC review panel as final

8.2. ADC Staff

All ADC employees are required to:

- Act in accordance with the ADC values
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality are maintained
- Observe the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
- Be compliant with this policy in the performance of their duties
- Keep the education provider informed of the process as appropriate

8.3. Review Panel

ADC Review Panel members are required to:

- Act in accordance with the ADC values
- Ensure privacy and confidentiality are maintained
- Observe the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness
- Make decisions in line with this policy
- Recommend to the ADC Board of Directors actions to be undertaken, in line with this policy, as a result of their deliberations.

9. Related documents

- [ADC Complaints Policy](#)
- [ADC Complaints Management Framework](#)
- [Australian Dental Council/Dental Council \(New Zealand\) Accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs \(the Standards\)](#)
- [ADC accreditation guidelines for dental practitioner programs](#)
- [ADC Privacy Policy](#)

10. Document information

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*unless otherwise indicated, this policy will continue to apply beyond the review date

