



**Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of
The University of Western Australia's
Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics,
Endodontics & Paediatric Dentistry**

May 2021

Updated May 2022

Executive summary

Program provider	The University of Western Australia
Program/qualification name	Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics, DCLinDent, 90840 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics, DCLinDent, 90840 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Paediatric Dentistry, DCLinDent, 90840
Program/qualification abbreviation	DCLinDent
Program/qualification code	90840
Head office address, including State	UWA Dental School, Oral Health Centre of WA The University of Western Australia 17 Monash Avenue Nedlands WA 6009
Program length	3 Years
Registration division	Endodontics, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry
Registration speciality	Endodontics, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework level	9
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs (Approved August 2020)
Date of site evaluation	25 – 26 May 2021
Date of ADC decision	9 December 2021
Type of accreditation	Re-Accreditation
Accreditation start date	1 January 2022

Accreditation end date

31 December 2026

Background

The University of Western Australia's Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (DClinDent) programs were last reviewed for the purposes of accreditation by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) in 2015. The programs were reviewed against the accreditation standards in effect at the time. One condition was imposed on the DClinDent programs overall, with two further specific conditions imposed on the Paediatric Dentistry program due to the AT's concerns about the staffing profile and extent of clinical experience. These conditions were subsequently met, and all three programs have operated since that time with no further conditions being imposed.

All clinical and a significant proportion of didactic activities take place at the Oral Health Centre of Western Australia (OHCWA) and at other approved hospital sites including the Perth Children's Hospital (PCH), Fiona Stanley Hospital and Queen Elizabeth II Hospital.

Depending on the discipline undertaken, the DClinDent programs enable graduates to apply to the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) to register as specialist dentists in:

- Endodontics
- Orthodontics
- Paediatric Dentistry.

Overview of evaluation

An ADC AT conducted a site visit on 25 and 26 May 2021 to review The University of Western Australia's (UWA's) DClindent programs in Endodontics, Orthodontics and Paediatric Dentistry. Due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions one of the assessors had to attend via virtual means. During both days of the visit the AT inspected clinical and learning and teaching facilities at OHCWA as well as the facilities available at the Perth Children's Hospital (PCH). The AT reviewed the UWA Dental School's self-review against the Standards, attached appendices and additional information requested following the AT's teleconference of 4 May 2021. The review was undertaken against the revised Accreditation Standards that came into effect on 1 January 2021.

The site visit on 25 May 2021 included specialists reviewing the DClindent programs in Endodontics and Orthodontics, while on 26 May 2021 specialists reviewed the DClindent program in Paediatric Dentistry.

During the visit the AT interviewed a range of individuals, including:

- Dean and Head, UWA Dental School
- Postgraduate program coordinator
- Chair, DClindent Sub-Committee and Chair, School Learning and Teaching Committee
- Discipline Leads for each specialist program
- General Manager, OHCWA
- Clinical Operations Manager, OHCWA
- Academic staff and clinical supervisors for each specialist program
- Professional staff supporting the DClindent programs
- Students and recent graduates from each specialisation
- Three employers of graduates from the program.

The findings of this report are based on the AT's assessment of the material outlined above and interview evidence.

Key findings

The UWA Dental School's DClinDent programs in Endodontics, Orthodontics and Paediatric Dentistry continue to attract a strong cohort of engaged students. Research output across the programs is strong. Each program is led by an experienced and well qualified program lead. The AT notes that the Program Convenor for Endodontics plays a significant role in program delivery and is responsible for teaching most of the didactic content. The AT suggests the distribution of teaching amongst Endodontics staff to expose students to a range of teaching styles and different philosophies.

The provider is well placed to deliver the program. The program is financially well resourced and there is an appropriate staffing profile to support each specialisation. The clinical facilities are excellent, with all students undertaking clinical activities at OHCWA, as well as other sites. These include the PCH for Paediatric Dentistry and Orthodontics students and Fiona Stanley Hospital and Queen Elizabeth II Hospital for Endodontics and Orthodontics students. There are comprehensive policies and processes in place for patient and public safety. Staff are appropriately qualified and their enthusiasm and commitment to the program was evident throughout the review. An insufficiency in staffing identified by the AT is the limited number of professional staff within the School, resulting in a significant administrative workload, which may not be sustainable longer term.

The OHCWA clinics are operated by UWA under a contractual agreement with the State Government's Department of Health, which assures ongoing clinical access and a broad range of patients. At the site visit the AT was advised that the current contract is up for renewal with the WA Department of Health in 2022. Negotiations are about to commence for a new contract.

Whilst evidence was provided of mechanisms for student and staff feedback into the programs, there is no formalised means of seeking input from a broader range of stakeholders including industry and dental consumers. The School recognises the need for this and is planning to integrate such feedback into the governance structure.

All three programs are clearly structured, and each has a clear philosophy and objectives. However, there is limited evidence of a coordinated governance structure for the overall program, with inter-specialisation dialogue only occurring at the DClinDent Committee. Each individual discipline appears to operate in isolation, as reflected in the diversity of documentation provided by each discipline. There is a disparity in curricula and assessment practices and the AT encourages a more coordinated approach to program monitoring, review, and improvement with a view to achieving greater commonality across the specialisations.

For the Endodontics program mapping provided did not include sufficient detail about how the program learning outcomes provide graduates with the necessary professional competencies for speciality practice as an entry level Endodontist. There was also a lack of mapping for the Endodontics and Orthodontics programs as to how this is assessed.

Whilst the site visit indicated a respect for and understanding of the specific needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the barriers faced in accessing and receiving dental care and cultural safety requirements there is limited integration of cultural safety across the programs other than the specific induction students receive at some, but not all, placement sites. Indigenous input into the program is also still in its infancy, although the provider is liaising with the University's Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health (CAMDH) on delivery of cultural

safety training. Whilst students do potentially have access to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients via OHCWA and the other hospitals where placements occur, there is no assurance that every student will have the opportunity to demonstrate culturally safe clinical care to Indigenous patients. The AT heard that the provider is exploring the potential for clinical rotations at Aboriginal Medical Centres.

A number of further recommendations have been made where areas were identified for potential improvement.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that the following programs offered by The University of Western Australia are reaccredited for a period of five (5) years from **1 January 2022 to 31 December 2026**:

- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Paediatric Dentistry

subject to the following conditions:

1. To meet Standard 2 – Academic Governance and Quality Assurance, the provider is requested to review the governance structures for the DClinDent programs to ensure a coordinated approach to external input relevant to each specialisation, including from dental consumers, external academic, and professional peers is included in quality assurance processes. A report is to be submitted to the ADC by **30 April 2022** advising of changes made to ensure programs remain contemporary and providing evidence that external input is incorporated into quality improvement processes.
2. To meet Standard 6 – Cultural safety, the provider is required to submit a report to the ADC by **15 June 2022** demonstrating how external input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples is used to inform program design and management to ensure cultural safety is integrated throughout the program and learning outcomes.

For the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics program:

3. To meet Standard 3 – Program of Study and Standard 5 – Assessment, the provider is requested to provide by **25 February 2022** a mapping of program learning outcomes against the DBA competencies for an entry level specialist in Endodontics and provide clear evidence that the program addresses all competencies. In doing so, the provider is requested to demonstrate how the learning outcomes are assessed both clinically and academically to ensure that the entry-level competencies are being met.

The ADC has determined that this condition is now met.

For the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics program:

4. To meet Standard 5 – Assessment, the provider is requested to demonstrate by **25 February 2022** how the learning outcomes for the program are assessed both clinically and academically to ensure that the entry-level competencies for an entry level specialist in Orthodontics are being met.

The ADC has determined that this condition is now met.

The AT recommends the following monitoring requirement be imposed on the program:

1. The provider is requested to provide advice on the outcome of contract renegotiations with the State Government's Department of Health once completed and provide details to the ADC of the new contract.