



Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of The University of Sydney - Master of Dental Public Health

April 2021

Updated May 2022

Summary Report

Program provider	The University of Sydney
Program/qualification name	Master of Dental Public Health
Program/qualification abbreviation	MDentPH
Program/qualification code	MADEPUBH-01
Head office address, including State	The University of Sydney School of Dentistry Faculty of Medicine and Health, 2-18 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills, NSW2010
Campus	The University of Sydney School of Dentistry, Nepean Oral Health Centre, Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Centre for Education and Research for Aging (CERA)
Program length	1-year full time
Registration division	Public Health Dentistry – Specialist Dentist
Registration specialty	Public Health Dentistry (Community Dentistry)
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework level	Level 9
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs (Approved Dec 2014)
Date of site evaluation	22 April 2021
Date of ADC decision	13 August 2021

Type of accreditation	Initial Accreditation
Accreditation start date	1 January 2021
Accreditation end date	31 December 2025

Background

The University of Sydney's School of Dentistry identified a need within the Australian context for a Master of Dental Public Health program (MDentPH). The Sydney Dental School requested the Australian Dental Council (ADC) to review the program for the purpose of accreditation. The program is the only Public Health specialty program within Australia. Completion of the program by students eligible for general registration as dentists (and who meet all other registration standards) will enable graduates to apply for registration as specialists in Public Health Dentistry (Community Dentistry).

Prospective students must have completed a Master of Public Health (MPH) or equivalent degree. As a non-clinical program, it will challenge students to think critically about oral health at a population level and presents a valuable opportunity to champion public/community health for vulnerable and minority groups to ensure equitable and fair access to oral health services across Australia.

Overview of evaluation

This assessment was undertaken in accordance with the *ADC's protocol to monitor the impacts on accredited programs of the COVID-19 pandemic*.

An ADC Site Evaluation Team (SET) completed a paper-based review of the Sydney Dental School's 41-page self-assessment against the Standards, associated attachments and appendices in September 2020.

A follow up site visit was undertaken on 22 April 2021 to verify the information assessed in the paper-based review. During the site visit, the SET interviewed key stakeholders including:

- Head of School
- Program Director
- Academic staff
- Current students

At the time of the site visit, the MDentPH program has been running for almost two months. The findings in this report are based on the SET's assessment of the material outlined above.

Key findings

The SET evaluation concluded that the provider is well placed to deliver the program. With access to experts within the dental public health field and experienced academics and clinicians, the program provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop the entry-level competencies expected of a specialist dentist in Public Health Dentistry (Community Dentistry). As the first program of its kind in Australia, the SET recognised that the program would provide a welcome opportunity to address the gaps in provision of oral health care services to minority and disadvantaged groups who are often overlooked in public health policy. The program is commended for providing a positive example of cross disciplinary teaching and the outcomes this can achieve.

The site visit confirmed that there are robust academic governance structures in place at both the University, Faculty and School level, as well as personal and academic support services for students. There is also the opportunity for students in this program to provide feedback into the School's deliberative processes. Whilst this is a non-clinical program, the SET was satisfied that appropriate protocols and processes are in place should students enter clinical settings.

A strong staffing profile supports the program with all academic staff active in the field of dental public health. The program is further enhanced by robust relationships with several key stakeholders and industry partners including Sydney Local Health Districts (LHDs) and NSW Health, who fund the Program Director's role. The MDentPH program facilitates opportunities to develop strategic partnerships that not only support students' research, but which can also influence large scale change. The cohesiveness of the program staff and the positive response to the program from service delivery partners was noted during the site visit.

Six students are enrolled in the program, all studying part-time. As a result of COVID-19, there are no international students and all teaching is currently being delivered online. Recruiting International students will be important to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the program. The program will equip graduates with a solid foundation in research practice should they wish to pursue doctoral studies.

The SET retained the view that there were insufficient details regarding the assessment methodologies to be used. Whilst it is a new program, all the units are existing units already offered in other programs and as such, assessment details and marking/assessment rubrics should be available. The condition imposed on the program following the paper-based review will ensure that the assessment is appropriate to the program. An additional condition and monitoring requirement relating to these concerns has been imposed on the program.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that The University of Sydney's Master of Dental Public Health program is accredited for a period of five (5) years from **1 January 2021** until **31 December 2025**, subject to the conditions previously applied following the paper-based review and the following additional condition:

In order to fully meet Standard 5 - Assessment, the provider is required to submit a report to the ADC by **4 October 2021** detailing:

1. evidence of the milestones set for student research reports and how they are used to monitor student progress including examples of feedback and evaluation.

The ADC has determined that this condition has now been met.

The ADC has determined that as a monitoring requirement for the program:

1. The provider is requested to provide by **30 April 2022**, the results of the University Unit of Study surveys for the Master of Dental Public Health program including details of any changes implemented in response to student and staff feedback.

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