



Australian Dental Council International report of an evaluation of Gulf Medical University's Bachelor of Dental Surgery

May 2023

Executive summary

Program provider	Gulf Medical University
Program/qualification name	Bachelor of Dental Surgery
Program/qualification abbreviation	BDS
Program/qualification code	NA
Head office address, including State	AL JURF, 1 Rashid Al-Khadar St, Al Jerf 1, Ajman, United Arab Emirates
Campus	Ajman
Program length	5 years
Registration division	Dentist
Registration specialty	NA
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework level	NA
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs (Approved August 2020)
Date of site evaluation	15 - 18 May 2023
Date of ADCI decision	15 September 2023
Type of accreditation	Initial Accreditation
Accreditation start date	1 January 2024
Accreditation end date	31 December 2028

Background

Gulf Medical University (GMU) was established in 1998 and is a leading medical university in the Gulf region offering 27 programs across its six colleges of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Nursing, Health Sciences, and Healthcare Management and Economics. The College of Dentistry was established in 2008 and offers three programs including the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS), Master of Dental Surgery in Periodontics, and Master of Dental Surgery in Endodontics. The BDS is a five-year undergraduate competency-based program. The Program competencies are aligned with the [*Professional Competence Standards of Graduates of Baccalaureate Dental Initial Training and Education Programs in the United Arab Emirates*](#). The college also provides a one-year internship program for GMU and non-GMU graduates. The College of Dentistry has two training sites, the Thumbay Dental Hospital in Ajman and the Thumbay Medical and Dental Specialty Centre in Sharjah.

The BDS was initially accredited in 2008 by the United Arab Emirates' Federal Government Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), and was reaccredited by the CAA in 2018. On 23 February 2021 the Australian Dental Council International (ADCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the CAA. Under the MoU, the CAA has accepted the ADCI as a preferred agency for international accreditation of college and university dental programs within the UAE. As part of this agreement, dental practitioner programs based in the UAE can apply to be accredited by the ADCI and the CAA simultaneously.

This accreditation cycle, GMU applied for joint CAA and ADCI accreditation of the BDS program. For the Higher Education Institution (HEI) to be accredited by both organisations, the HEI must demonstrate that the program meets the Standards as published by the ADCI and the Standards published by the CAA. This is the initial accreditation for GMU's BDS program with the ADCI and the first international program to be accredited by the ADCI.

Overview of evaluation

A joint ADCI and CAA Accreditation Team (AT) conducted a site visit between 15 and 18 May 2023 to Gulf Medical University's Ajman campus. The AT consisted of three highly experienced ADCI assessors, the Commissioner from the CAA and the Director of Accreditation, Policy and Research from the ADCI.

The AT reviewed the College of Dentistry's self-review against the ADCI and CAA Standards, attached appendices and additional information requested following the AT's teleconference of 24 January 2023.

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

- Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor of Gulf Medical University
- Dean of College of Dentistry
- Program Director – Bachelor of Dental Surgery
- Department Chairs and discipline leads
- Lecturers and clinical instructors
- Administrative/Professional staff
- Current students from all years of the program
- Alumni/Program graduates
- Chairs of the curriculum, assessment, quality assurance and program evaluation, community engagement, and inter-professional education committees
- Student Services/Student support staff
- Employers and the College Advisory Board, an external advisory group
- IT Manager

The AT toured the facilities at the Gulf Medical University and the Thumbay Dental Hospital and observed students in the clinic.

During the visit, the AT was provided with additional information including a demonstration of the learning management system and a review of the qualifications and CV's of the clinic staff and research reports.

Key findings

Gulf Medical University's (GMU) Bachelor of Dental Surgery program provides a range of experiences for students to develop the competencies expected for a dentist and the provider is well placed to deliver the program. The University and College of Dentistry is well resourced, and the clinical facilities are excellent.

The Accreditation Team (AT) commend the leadership at GMU. The Chancellor has a clear vision and plan for excellence for the institution and this flows down to the College of Dentistry. The strategic plan shows insightful leadership. These leadership qualities are evident in the College of Dentistry Dean and faculty, particularly those involved in leadership roles.

Another key asset for the program is the staffing and faculty profile. The College has excellent resources to deliver the program and faculty are well experienced, and all dental specialties are covered. The high number and quality of faculty reassures that:

- Students and patients can access clinical expertise as required.
- Safe practice within the clinic can be achieved.
- The knowledge base and varied expertise can contribute to curriculum development, teaching and assessment.
- The student mentoring system can fulfill its function successfully.
- There are sufficient academic staff to engage in academic governance and quality assurance activities.

There is a clear governance structure within the institution and College of Dentistry and quality assurance processes are evident. The AT did observe that the External Advisory Board members who were appointed in March 2022 are mainly academics and recommends that GMU establish a more diverse membership with consumers and employers.

Access to the clinical facilities and a ready supply of patients is assured through the formal agreement between GMU and the Thumbay Dental Hospital Ajman and the Thumbay Medical and Dental Specialty Centre Sharjah, both hospitals and GMU are owned by the Thumbay Group.

The program is clearly structured and has a clear philosophy and objectives. In terms of assessment, the AT saw evidence that a range of both formative and summative assessment tools are used and the assessments are clearly mapped to the learning outcomes.

The AT commends GMU and the College for its student support services, in particular the Happiness Centre and the student mentorship program. The evidence provided also demonstrates that students have input into the program through a variety of mechanisms including surveys and membership on committees.

The AT notes the School's plans for continued development, particularly the areas of digital dentistry, interprofessional education and research and looks forward to seeing this progress.

ADCI Accreditation Decision

The ADCI has determined that the Bachelor of Dental Surgery program offered by Gulf Medical University is accredited for a period of five (5) years from **1 January 2024** to **31 December 2028**. There are no conditions on this program.