



Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of James Cook University's Bachelor of Dental Surgery

July 2022

1. Executive summary

Program provider	James Cook University
Program/qualification name	Bachelor of Dental Surgery
Program/qualification abbreviation	BDS
Program/qualification code	73010
Head office address, including State	James Cook University, 1 James Cook Drive, Douglas, QLD 4811
Campus	Cairns
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	26 - 27 July 2022
Date of ADC decision	21 October 2022
Type of accreditation	Reaccreditation
Accreditation start date	1 January 2023
Accreditation end date	31 December 2029

Background

The Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) program at James Cook University (JCU) commenced in 2009, with the first cohort of students graduating at the end of 2013. At the initial accreditation the ADC imposed several conditions around staffing, curriculum and facilities. A monitoring visit was undertaken in 2010 prior to the commencement of student clinical experience.

Subsequent to the report of the 2010 monitoring visit, accreditation of the program was extended until 31 December 2015 subject to a condition to report on the further rollout of the program and a monitoring visit to be conducted in 2012 to review the Year 5 clinical facilities.

A further monitoring visit was undertaken in 2013 to review Year 5 student clinical placements and covered four outplacement sites across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

A reaccreditation site visit was undertaken in 2015, with the program being reaccredited for a period of seven years subject to three conditions around School administration and budget, staff and student development, and curriculum. These Standards were subsequently met, and the program has operated without further conditions since 2016 with no further conditions being imposed.

The BDS is a five-year full-time program that enables graduates to register with the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) as dentists. A key philosophy of the program is to prepare graduates who have an understanding of the special issues and needs of rural, remote, Indigenous and tropical settings, and the social justice implications for these settings and other groups or populations at risk of harm or poor oral health.

Overview of evaluation

An Accreditation Team (AT) received the College of Medicine and Dentistry's submission against the Accreditation Standards and various appendices. The AT requested additional information and clarification prior to the visit following its teleconferences held on 8 June 2022.

A site visit was undertaken on 26-27 July 2022 at JCU's Nguma-bada campus in Cairns, Queensland. Interviews were held with the following participants:

- Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry
- Head of Dentistry/Course Coordinator
- Dentistry Executive Committee
- Members of the Learning and Teaching Committee, Assessment Committee, and Dentistry, Board of Studies
- Academic and clinical staff
- Current students
- Recent graduates
- Employers
- Academic staff coordinating research teaching within the BDS program
- Professional staff
- Student support staff

The AT also viewed clinical facilities within both JCU and an external clinic.

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

Key findings

The evidence considered by the AT indicates that JCU's BDS program produces graduates competent to practice as dentists. The AT heard that many graduates have taken up roles in rural and remote communities, in line with the philosophy of the program.

The provider is well placed to deliver the program. There is a strong commitment from the University to support the program and it is well resourced. There are robust governance and quality assurance processes in place.

The quality of simulation and clinical facilities at the Cairns campus is excellent. In addition to clinical experience gained at the JCU dental clinic at the Cairns campus, students undertake a range of external placements, including in remote and rural locations. Students are exposed to a wide variety of patient types, both in terms of treatment requirements and diversity of background. This includes access to patients of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

In terms of assessment, the AT saw evidence that a range of both formative and summative assessment tools are used in the program and external examiners are used in final year viva voce examinations.

The College of Medicine and Dentistry is to be commended for embedding cultural safety across the BDS program and for providing a culturally safe learning and teaching and working environment. Interviews with a wide range of stakeholders indicated an openness, acceptance and respect of First Nations People, as well as people from across other diverse cultural groups. The College has established an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Committee, which is Indigenous-led and provides input into the design and management of the BDS program, as well as student recruitment and retention, and research.

Whilst there is no fixed quota for Indigenous students, the selection process ensures that all students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent are carefully considered, either through the mainstream selection process, or via the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander alternate entry pathway.

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

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that JCU's Bachelor of Dental Surgery program is reaccredited for a period of seven (7) years from **1 January 2023** until **31 December 2029**.