

**Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of
The University of Sydney Dental Specialist programs in:**

- **Oral Medicine**
- **Orthodontics**
- **Paediatric Dentistry**
- **Periodontics**
- **Prosthodontics**
- **Special Needs Dentistry**

April 2021

Updated August 2022

Executive summary

Program provider	University of Sydney
Program/qualification names, Program/qualification abbreviation, Program/qualification code	Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Oral Medicine), DCLinDent, TCCLDORM1000 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Orthodontics), DCLinDent, TCCLDORD1000 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Paediatric Dentistry), DCLinDent, TCCLDPAD1000 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Periodontics), DCLinDent, TCCLDPER1000 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Prosthodontics), DCLinDent, TCCLDPRO1000 Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Special Needs Dentistry), DCLinDent, TCCLDSCD1000
Head office address, including State	The University of Sydney, NSW 2006
Campus	Sydney Dental Hospital Westmead Centre for Oral Health
Program length	3 Years
Registration division	Specialist Dentist
Registration speciality	Oral Medicine, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Special Needs Dentistry
Qualification type	HE
Australian Qualifications Framework level	9
Accreditation standards version	Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs (Approved Dec 2014)
Date of site evaluation	20-21 April 2021
Date of ADC decision	4 March 2022
Type of accreditation	Re-accreditation

Accreditation start date

1 January 2021

Accreditation end date

31 December 2025

Background

The University of Sydney's Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (DClinDent) programs were scheduled to be reviewed in 2020, with the Australian Dental Council (ADC) initially planning for the visit to occur 2-3 June 2020. Due to the impacts of travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ADC completed a paper-based review of six of the specialty programs offered by the Sydney Dental School, in accordance with the ADC's *protocol to monitor the impacts on accredited programs of the COVID-19 pandemic* (the Protocol).

The Protocol outlines that following completion of the paper-based review, a site visit would be organised to verify the information submitted by the provider, view facilities and talk with a wide variety of stakeholders. The outcome of the 2020 paper-based review was that the six programs were reaccredited for a period of five years without conditions, noting that a visit would be undertaken in 2021.

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:

- Oral Medicine
- Orthodontics
- Paediatric Dentistry
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Special Needs Dentistry

The ADC also undertook reviews of the University Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Oral Surgery) and Master of Dental Public Health programs. The review of these two programs are the subject of separate reports.

Overview of evaluation

A Site Evaluation Team (SET) conducted a paper-based review based on The University of Sydney's submission, associated appendices and additional information requested in 2020. A site visit was scheduled undertaken to verify the information gathered during 2020 paper-based review on 20 April 2021 to the Sydney Dental Hospital and 21 April 2021 to the Westmead Centre for Oral Health.

The findings in this report are based on the SET's assessment of the material outlined above, annual reports submitted for the programs and the COVID-19 monitoring reports submitted by the provider between March 2020 and February 2021.

Interviews were held with the following participants:

- Head of School
- Program Director
- Director of Academic Education
- Professional staff
- Educational support staff
- Staff supporting the research training
- Senior staff from the Sydney Local Health District (SLHD)
- Senior staff from the Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD)
- Discipline Leads for each program
- Academic and clinical staff teaching into each program
- Current students
- Recent graduates

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

Key findings

Overall, the DCLinDent programs are providing the range of experiences required for students to develop the competencies expected for each of the dental specialisations.

There are arrangements in place with each of the relevant local health districts to support student access to clinical facilities and to provide opportunities for students to develop the competencies expected of each discipline. The School has well developed policies and processes to support students, with significant work undertaken to revise assessment practices and harmonise the approach to research across disciplines. Students are provided with opportunities to work collaboratively with other dental specialities and health professionals, which enhances students' readiness to work in multi-disciplinary teams to provide care consistent with the expectations of dental specialist.

The evidence gathered indicates that staff are well qualified to deliver on their educational responsibilities. The SET was made aware of changes in the staffing profile for the Special Needs Dentistry program following the visit, prior to the report's finalisation. The School will need to provide further details to ensure the revised staffing profile is adequate for the program to deliver on its educational objectives.

The SET gathered evidence that indicates that not all patients may be aware that specialist in training are providing care. This appears to vary across specialisations and across placement locations. The School will need to work with LHD's to ensure that, where practical, those receiving care are consenting to care being provided by specialist dental practitioners in training to ensure the requirements of the ADC's accreditation standards are met in full. The School remains reliant on clinical facilities owned and operated by various LHD, with the SET exploring the contractual arrangements in place to support the programs between the University and LHDs to ensure continuity of access to clinical training for students. The formal MOU between the University and WCOH was still under negotiation at the time of the visit. The ADC looks forward to receiving updates from the School as to the progress made in future annual reports associated with these programs.

It is encouraging that comments provided during the paper-based review undertaken by the ADC in 2020 appear to have already been addressed or are under consideration. The SET was provided with updated unit outlines indicating the School is proactive in addressing opportunities for improvement. Evidence gathered by the SET indicates that the academic governance arrangements for these programs are effective.

There is opportunity to strengthen external input into the oral medicine program, which could further enhance program quality. The SET explored the improvements made in the teaching of orofacial pain within the oral medicine program, including assessment practices. The SET that students will have sufficient training and experience in this important aspect of specialist practice.

The paediatric dentistry program has introduced private practice rotations, which will enhance student's readiness for specialist practice. Paediatric dentistry students would benefit from a greater understanding of how the final marks are distributed based on the assessment tasks outlined. The SET heard evidence that only an overall mark is provided for all assessments within each unit of study, rather than identifying the outcome by assessment task completed. There is opportunity to provide greater transparency regarding the marking outcome.

The periodontics and orthodontics programs are both well established and operating well, with a good mix of experiences available to students to support their development of the expected professional competencies. The orthodontics program may be further enhanced by increasing students' exposure to clear aligners, but this will need to be done in consultation with the LHD's.

The prosthodontic program has recently recommenced, with this the first intake in several years. The program structure and design appear appropriate, but it will be important to ensure the program is able to provide the range and mix of experiences necessary to develop the competencies of specialist prosthodontist. Further information will be required to provide this reassurance.

ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that the following programs offered by The University of Sydney remain accredited until **31 December 2025**:

- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Oral Medicine)
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Orthodontics)
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Paediatric Dentistry)
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Periodontics)
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Prosthodontics)
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Special Needs Dentistry)

subject to the following conditions:

For all programs:

1. To ensure Standard 1 – Public safety is met in full, the School is required to review the arrangements for obtaining informed patient consent to ensure that those receiving care are aware of, and consent to, care being provided by specialists in training. In undertaking the review, the University will need to ensure that appropriate steps are in place across all clinical placement providers. A report is to be provided by **30 April 2022** advising of how the School has determined that appropriate consent policies and processes are in place.

The ADC has determined that this condition has been met.

For the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Special Needs Dentistry):

2. To ensure Standard 3 – Program of study and Standard 5 - Assessment are met in full, the School is required to provide an updated staffing profile, outlining teaching responsibilities, including clinical supervisory responsibilities and oversight of assessment practices. The report is to be submitted no less than three months before the next student commences in the program and by no later than **30 September 2022**. In providing the report, the School must outline how it has determined that the staffing profile is sufficiently qualified to deliver the program and its stated learning outcomes and assessed that these outcomes are being achieved.

For the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Prosthodontics):

1. As a monitoring requirement, a site visit is to be conducted when students next enter the final year of the Doctor of Clinical Dentistry (Prosthodontics) program to ensure it is rolling out as intended, with students provided the opportunities necessary to develop the required entry-level specialist competencies.