

## **Australian Dental Council report of an evaluation of The University of Melbourne Doctor of Clinical Dentistry programs in:**

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

Virtual Site Visit – March 2021

*Updated August 2022*

## Executive summary

<b>Program provider</b>	The University of Melbourne
<b>Program/qualification names, Program/qualification abbreviation, Program/qualification code</b>	<p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics, DCLinDent, 661AA</p> <p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Oral Medicine, DCLinDent, 661AA</p> <p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics, DCLinDent, 661AA</p> <p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Paediatric Dentistry, DCLinDent, 661AA</p> <p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Periodontics, DCLinDent, 661AA</p> <p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Prosthodontics, DCLinDent, 661AA</p> <p>Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Special Needs Dentistry, DCLinDent, 661AA</p>
<b>Head office address, including State</b>	The University of Melbourne, 720 Swanston Street, Carlton VIC 3053
<b>Campuses</b>	<p>720 Swanston Street, Carlton VIC 3053</p> <p>Melbourne Dental Clinic, 723 Swanston Street, Carlton VIC 3053</p>
<b>Program length</b>	3 years
<b>Registration division</b>	Specialist Dentist
<b>Registration specialty</b>	Endodontics, Oral Medicine, Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry, Periodontics, Prosthodontics, Special Needs Dentistry
<b>Qualification type</b>	HE
<b>Australian Qualifications Framework level</b>	9
<b>Accreditation standards version</b>	Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programs (Approved Dec 2014)
<b>Date of site evaluation</b>	2 – 4 March 2021
<b>Date of ADC decision</b>	9 December 2021

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

## Background

The University of Melbourne'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. Several Standards were identified as being 'Substantially met' resulting in conditions imposed on the Orthodontics, Paediatric Dentistry and Periodontics programs. The conditions for these three programs were subsequently met and all seven DClinDent programs offered by the Melbourne Dental School (MDS) have operated since 2016 with no further conditions having been imposed.

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

A paper-based review of the programs was undertaken in 2020 as a site visit was not feasible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. All seven programs were reaccredited for a period of five years, noting that a visit would be organised in 2021 to verify the information considered as part of the paper-based review.

The outcome of the 2020 paper-based review was that the DClinDent programs in Oral Medicine, Paediatric Dentistry, Orthodontics and Periodontics were assessed as meeting all Standards. The Doctor of Clinical Dentistry programs in Endodontics, Prosthodontics and Special Needs Dentistry programs were assessed as meeting all standards except for Standard 3.

Conditions were imposed on the programs which have now been addressed.

## Overview of evaluation

A Site Evaluation Team (SET) conducted a paper-based review based on The University of Melbourne's submission, associated appendices and additional information requested in 2020. A site visit was scheduled to be undertaken in March 2021 to verify the information gathered during 2020 paper-based review.

The was scheduled to be undertaken on 2 and 3 March 2021, however to COVID-19 travel restrictions the review was undertaken as a virtual visit, with the SET interviewing a range of stakeholders related to these programs online.

Virtual interviews were held with the following participants:

- Head of School
- Director of Postgraduate Studies
- Deputy Director of Research
- Director of Teaching and Learning
- Research Design Convener
- Academic Lead for Assessment
- MDS Professional staff
- Staff from Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV)
- Staff from the Melbourne Dental Clinic (MDC)
- 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 AT's assessment of the material outlined above and the interview evidence gathered.

## Key findings

The review provided opportunity to verify the information provided in the initial submission documentation, with the programs well supported by the MDS. The SET were provided with updates regarding staffing appointments, as well as further details as to how the School had navigated several challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, for which the staff are to be commended.

The SET confirmed that academic governance processes are robust, and that students are well supported by staff to complete program requirements across the specialisations. The clinical opportunities available between the MDC and RDHM overall provide the range and types of cases needed to develop the competencies expected for each of the specialisations. Collaboration with a variety of local specialists providing input into the DClinDent programs ensures students are exposed to a broad range of approaches and techniques throughout their training.

Regardless, the SET identified several areas that require review to ensure appropriate policies and processes are in place and adhered to. Across programs and placement partners, there appears to be variance as to whether patients are advised that treatment is being provided by specialists in training. The Accreditation Standards require that patients consent to care by students. It was not evident to the SET that patients are advised, where practicable prior to attending appointments, that care will be provided by specialists in training. The MDS will need to work with clinical placement providers to ensure this is clear.

For the Special Needs Dentistry and Orthodontics program, the SET heard evidence that indicates that supervisors are either not able to, or are not required to, review the patient clinical record, including the recorded treatment and care plan. This is either because supervision is not available on site as occurs for some Special Needs Dentistry rotations, or because policies or processes are not adhered to by supervisors with responsibility for oversight of the care provided by students. The MDS is encouraged to review the arrangements in place. The SET also identified the need to review the arrangements in place for paediatric dentistry students when undertaking out of hours work to ensure adequate breaks are rostered before students return to the clinic.

The SET was advised of the arrangements in place to ensure staff are providing instruction and guidance to Special Needs Dentistry students, however the arrangements in place do not appear to be optimal for student learning. Opportunities for direct feedback to students is limited based on the remote clinical supervision arrangements in place. It is vital for bridging the gaps in students' knowledge ensuring patient care and student well-being is not affected by inexperience and the provider is therefore encouraged to review the support available to SND students across rotations.

Curriculum sequencing was strong across most programs with evidence of scaffolding and didactic teaching closely aligned to clinical practice. However, the SET did note that this could be improved within the prosthodontics specialisation. The review process also highlighted a strong culture of independence between the various specialisations.

Whilst some collaboration was evident across individual programs, the need for closer integration, particularly with regards to the standardisation of assessment procedures and processes across programs was recognised. The variation in assessment mechanisms across programs meant the SET expressed some concerns around the lack of consistency in assessment moderation processes. The School has already identified this as an area for improvement, with work underway to review assessment practices.

Student experiences also differ significantly across the different specialisations as a result of each program working autonomously. Orthodontics students have access to international guest speakers, a buddying system and strong external input from the industry sector whilst students in other programs do not benefit from this level of input and support. For the Endodontics program, it was identified that students would benefit from greater exposure to endodontic surgeries. Limitations were identified with the equipment available within the RDHM and the time taken to introduce new equipment and materials. The MDS is aware of these limitations and looking at alternative ways in which students could gain this experience, including through partnerships with private practices. However, the concerns identified combined with the impact of clinic closures due to COVID-19, and the limitations this has placed on the endodontics program, will require further information to be provided to ensure students continue to gain the breadth of experience needed to meet the Competencies.

The provider is commended for its response to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic, particularly with regards to the level of student support both academically and personally including the implementation of a mental health and wellbeing plan. The provider has also recently implemented mandatory cultural awareness training for all DCLinDent students as part of their program orientation. Whilst the provider is commended for this, it is recommended that the training is further integrated throughout the individual specialisations to ensure student learning is reinforced and ongoing throughout their three years of study.

A number of further recommendations have been made where areas were identified for potential improvement. The provider is encouraged to review the sequencing of the Prosthodontics program seminars to ensure topics are aligned to students learning needs and level of experience as well as revising the seminar topics for the Prosthodontics program to ensure they remain contemporary and reflect changes to the specialty.

## ADC accreditation decision

The ADC has determined that accreditation of the following programs offered by The University of Melbourne is maintained until **31 December 2025**:

- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Endodontics
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Oral Medicine
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Paediatric Dentistry
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Periodontics
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Prosthodontics
- Doctor of Clinical Dentistry in Special Needs Dentistry

subject to the following conditions:

### **For all programs:**

1. To ensure Standard 1 – Public safety is met in full, the Melbourne Dental 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 Melbourne Dental School will need to ensure that appropriate steps are in place across all clinical placement providers. A report is to be provided by **28 February 2022** advising of how the provider has determined that appropriate consent policies and processes are in place.

### **For the DCLinDent in Paediatric Dentistry program:**

2. To ensure Standard 1 - Public safety is met in full, the Melbourne Dental School is required to submit evidence by **31 March 2022** demonstrating that students providing out of hours emergency care are provided with adequate rest breaks before being rostered to return to clinics.

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

### **For the DCLinDent in Orthodontics and DCLinDent in Special Needs Dentistry programs:**

3. To ensure Standard 1 – Public safety is met in full, the Melbourne Dental School must submit a report by **31 March 2022** advising of the supervisory arrangements in place, including in outplacement clinics, to ensure a suitably qualified dental practitioner is available to provide oversight and guidance to Special Needs Dentistry and Orthodontics students. The report should advise of the



protocols in place that ensure supervisors provide appropriate oversight of clinical records, sign off on treatment and care plans, and timely feedback to students.

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

**For the DClintDent in Special Needs Dentistry program:**

4. To ensure Standard 3 – Program of study and Standard 5 - Assessment are met in full, the Melbourne Dental school must submit evidence by **31 March 2022** of the opportunities for students to gain clinical exposure and experience in the appropriate use of sedation and anaesthetic techniques and how these skills are assessed.

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

**For the DClintDent in Endodontics program:**

To ensure students continue to have access to the breadth and range of cases required, the following monitoring requirement is imposed:

1. The provider is asked to submit reports by **29 April 2022** and **30 September 2022**, providing a summary of the range and case mix of patients seen by students. The provider is requested to include details of how patient case mix is managed to ensure students have access to the range of experience needed to demonstrate achievement of the required competencies.