

Professional competencies of the newly qualified dental practitioner

Resources:

Interprofessional collaborative practice

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What is interprofessional collaborative practice?

The Competencies define interprofessional collaborative practice as follows: 'Interprofessional collaborative practice is when multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds work together with patients, families, carers, and communities to deliver the highest quality of care across settings'.

The World Health Organization (WHO) provides a similar definition, differentiating between 'interprofessional education' and the outcome such education aims to achieve – 'collaborative practice'.

'Interprofessional education' occurs when two or more professions learn about, from and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes.

Collaborative practice in healthcare occurs when multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds provide comprehensive services by working with patients, their families, carers and communities to deliver the highest quality of care across settings.'¹

Relevant professional competencies

The previous versions of the Competencies included competencies about 'understanding the importance of intra and interprofessional approaches to healthcare' and determining 'when and how to refer patients to the appropriate health professional'.

The newly revised Competencies have been strengthened to move beyond understanding, requiring instead that newly qualified dental practitioners are able to engage in interprofessional collaborative practice.

The Competencies now include the following:

Domain 2: Communication and leadership

Newly qualified dental practitioners must be able to:

- engage in interprofessional collaborative practice to provide person-centred care

Domain 6: Person-centred care

6.2 Diagnostic and management planning

Newly qualified dental practitioners must be able to:

- determine when and how to refer to the appropriate health and or care professional.

Why is interprofessional collaborative practice important?

There is robust evidence for the contribution of interprofessional and collaborative practice to positive health outcomes.²

As the understanding of the role oral health plays in overall health continues to increase, the need for dental practitioners to work with and learn from other health professions is also expanding.

There is increasing expectation placed on dental practitioners to be prepared to educate other health professionals as to the importance of maintaining oral health, as well as understanding that treatments being provided by other health professionals may impact on the oral health of patients.

The roles of health practitioners are constantly changing, and it is important for dental practitioners to keep abreast of new developments both in treatments and in emerging models of care, which incorporate the entire health care team.

The newly revised Competencies include a clearer statement which links interprofessional collaborative care with patient-centred care.

Dental practitioners are required to have the understanding, skills and personal qualities needed to work effectively with those outside of their own profession once qualified, with the aim of improving quality of care for patients.

References

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Resources

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