

Guidelines for the accreditation of international dental practitioner programs

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Phone: +61 (0) 3 9657 1777
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9657 1766
Email: info@adc.org.au

PO Box 13278
Law Courts Victoria 8010
Australia

www.adc.org.au
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ABN 70 072 269 900

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1. Introduction

This document provides information about the accreditation of international dental practitioner programs by Australian Dental Council International (ADC International).

Education providers who are interested in seeking accreditation of their programs by ADC International should contact us to arrange an informal discussion. Please email:

international@adc.org.au

2. About the ADC and ADC International

The ADC is an independent organisation appointed by the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) to conduct assessment and accreditation functions for the dental professions.

These functions include:

- developing accreditation standards, policies and procedures for Australian-based dental practitioner programs; and
- accrediting education and training programs leading to registration with the DBA that meet those standards.

Established in 1993, the ADC has extensive expertise in accreditation of education and training programs in the dental sector.

ADC International is the international arm of the ADC. ADC International offers international accreditation and assessment services to national and international clients. This includes international program accreditation.

3. Regulation of the dental professions in Australia

In Australia, 15 health professions are regulated on a national basis under the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme ('National Scheme'). Each profession has a National Board responsible for the regulation of its profession. The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) is the government agency that administers the National Scheme in partnership with the National Boards.

Dental professionals (collectively known as 'dental practitioners') are regulated by the Dental Board of Australia (DBA). Dental practitioners include the following professions:

- Dentists
- Dental hygienists
- Dental prosthetists
- Dental therapists
- Oral health therapists.

The DBA recognises the following 13 dental specialities:

- Dento-maxillofacial radiology
- Endodontics
- Forensic odontology

- Oral and maxillofacial surgery
- Oral medicine
- Oral and maxillofacial pathology
- Oral surgery
- Orthodontics
- Paediatric dentistry
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Public health dentistry (Community dentistry)
- Special needs dentistry.

4. About international program accreditation

International program accreditation refers to the accreditation by ADC International of dental education and training programs delivered outside of Australia and/or New Zealand.

The purpose of international program accreditation is to benchmark programs against the standards and competencies required for accreditation in Australia.

International accreditation is offered as a mark of program quality. An international program which is accredited by ADC International will have demonstrated its compliance with Australian standards.

Please note: graduates from programs accredited by ADC International will not be eligible for registration in Australia without meeting DBA registration requirements. This includes successful completion of the [ADC's assessment and examination process](#) for overseas qualified dental practitioners.

5. Criteria for commencing the international accreditation process

To commence the international accreditation process, a program needs to demonstrate the following criteria.

- The program prepares graduates to practise at entry-level in one or more of the dental professions regulated in Australia, or in one of the 13 dental specialities recognised in Australia.
- The program is recognised or accredited by the relevant agency, regulator or accreditation body, if applicable, or is otherwise accepted as a professional dental qualification, in its country of origin.
- The program is delivered in English and/or all program documentation is available in English.

International program accreditation is offered at ADC International's absolute discretion. ADC International will only commence the international accreditation process in

circumstances that align with the ADC's and Australian values. The ADC's values are as follows:

- Ethical
- Respectful
- Fair
- Transparent
- Independent
- Collaborative
- Supportive.

We will also consider any other relevant factors that might affect the proposed evaluation of the program, including, for example, any travel advice from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

6. Accreditation standards and professional competencies

International education and training programs seeking ADC International accreditation will be evaluated against the same standards required of Australian programs - the ADC and Dental Council (New Zealand) 'Accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs' ('the Standards') - and the relevant professional competencies published by the ADC or DBA. Where appropriate, the evaluation against the Standards will take account of the health and dental care delivery context of the jurisdiction in which the program is delivered. (This will be agreed in advance with the education provider.)

7. International accreditation process

The process followed will be broadly the same as that used to accredit Australian programs for the purposes of registration.

A short summary is provided below of the process that will be followed when accrediting an international program for the first time ('initial accreditation').

- The education provider contacts ADC International for an informal discussion about accreditation of the program or programs.
- The education provider completes the 'International provider - Notice of intent form' (supplied by ADC International on request). The form requests details about the program seeking accreditation and how dental training and dental care are delivered within the jurisdiction. The aim is to help assessors understand the regulatory context in which dental training is delivered and any local requirements to be addressed. This information will help ADC International plan for a visit. Instructions are included within the form to assist.
- The form requests details about:
 - the regulation of dental practitioners and clinical facilities within the jurisdiction
 - how dental training is structured and delivered
 - the quality assurance process for organisations / institutions delivering dental education and training

- Mapping of the program learning outcomes and assessments to the relevant Australian professional competencies. ADC International expects this to be provided with the Notice of intent. **The accreditation process will not proceed until this mapping has been completed.**
- Following payment of the Notice of intent fee (refer section ten – Accreditation fees), ADC International will review the Notice of intent form and advise of next steps. Additional information or clarification may be requested at this point.
- If ADC International is satisfied that all relevant information has been provided and that ADC International can proceed with the accreditation process, an orientation session (delivered via conferencing) will be set up with the education provider to explain the standards and accreditation process and answer any questions. A site visit will be organised at a mutually agreeable time. An Accreditation Team (AT) will be organised consisting of four members, including members of the profession and a member of staff who will act in a secretariat capacity.
- The education provider will submit an accreditation submission - a self-assessment with supporting documentation providing evidence against the Standards. This includes a draft schedule for the site visit. ADC International requests the submission a minimum of three months prior to a visit so information provided can be reviewed thoroughly.
- The submission will be reviewed by the AT and the education provider may be asked for further information in advance of a site visit and/or asked to make changes to the proposed site visit schedule.
- A site visit takes place, normally over three of four days. At the site visit, the AT will interview a variety of stakeholders, including students, graduates and academic staff, to gather information about whether the program meets the Standards. The AT expects to tour the clinical facilities as part of this visit.
- It is important that interviewees are encouraged to give free and frank answers to questions from AT members. For this reason, staff cannot be interviewed in the same session as their line manager or with another staff member with whom there is a reporting relationship. For example, a program director cannot be interviewed in the same session with a dean of a faculty or head of department. Similarly, when organising the site visit schedule, ADC International requests that staff are separated from students and graduates as part of the interview sessions.
- After the site visit, the AT will complete a report outlining the evidence they have gathered against the Standards and the outcome(s) they have reached as a result. The education provider will have the opportunity to comment on a draft before the report is finalised and provide additional information (if required).
- The final decision about accreditation will be made by ADC International and the education provider will be advised of this decision.

There are a range of possible outcomes.

- If all the Standards are considered met, the program will be accredited for a maximum of seven years (dentistry programs) or five years (all other programs).
- If one or more standards is considered substantially met, accreditation may be made subject to conditions which the program has to meet within a specified time period in order to remain accredited.
- If one or more standards are considered not met, the program will not be accredited.

The AT may also recommend areas of the program which might be improved ('quality improvement recommendations') or acknowledge particularly good or innovative practice ('commendations').

The same process will be followed for re-accreditation of programs prior to the expiration of the accreditation period.

The above process is subject to payment of the relevant fees – see section ten below.

Evaluation of programs without accreditation

For a program to become and remain accredited, it must meet the Standards. The education provider must demonstrate a commitment to ensure the program's ongoing compliance with the Standards and agree to participate in monitoring as outlined in section eight below.

If an education provider decides not to comply with the monitoring as outlined in section eight, then the education provider is unable to refer to the program as accredited by ADC International.

8. International program monitoring

Once accredited, programs will be required to pay an annual monitoring fee and will be subject to monitoring to ensure they continue to meet the Standards.

Programs will be monitored in line with the process followed for Australian accredited programs. Monitoring includes the education provider submitting an annual report providing information and data about the program. Where required to ensure that the Standards are met, ADC International may decide that it is necessary to ask an AT to evaluate documentary evidence and/or decide that a further site visit is required.

A program will remain accredited whilst it continues to demonstrate compliance with the Standards and pays the relevant fee(s). A program which does not pay the fee(s) or which no longer meets the Standards will have its accreditation revoked.

9. Timescales

Education providers interested in ADC International accreditation should contact the ADC at the earliest possible opportunity to discuss their circumstances and potential timescales.

Timescales may vary, but as a guide, education providers should expect the following:

- A minimum of six months between submission of a 'Notice of intent' and a site visit taking place.
- A written submission against the Standards required at least three months before the site visit.
- Up to three months after the site visit for a report to be finalised and an accreditation decision to be made.

10. Accreditation fees

This section provides more information about the fee types which are payable for international accreditation. Please visit the [ADCI website](#) for more information on fees.

For initial program accreditation and reaccreditation, the following fees will be payable to ADC International:

- A fixed fee payable on receipt of a 'Notice of intent'.

- An initial accreditation or reaccreditation fee. Note: the following is not included in the initial or reaccreditation fee and will be charged at cost: business class flights, accommodation and meals.

For monitoring, the following fees will be payable to ADC International:

- An annual monitoring fee payable on the anniversary date of accreditation each year.
- Where monitoring identifies that a documentary review or a further site visit is required, these costs must be reimbursed in full.

11. Further information

The following references provide more information about dental regulation and accreditation in Australia:

More information about accreditation is available from the ADC website: www.adc.org.au

Regulation of the dental professions in Australia

- DBA (2014). Guidelines for scope of practice.
- DBA (2017). List of recognised specialties, related specialist titles and definitions Available from: <https://www.dentalboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx>

Accreditation standards and professional competencies

- [ADC/Dental Council \(New Zealand\) accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs](#) (2021).
- [ADC Professional competencies for dentists, dental hygienists, dental prosthetists, dental therapists, oral health therapists](#) (2022).
- [DBA Entry level competencies for dental specialists](#).

Monitoring processes

- [ADC Accreditation monitoring framework](#).

Complaints and appeals against accreditation decisions

In the event of a grievance about an accreditation process or outcome, an informal resolution will be sought if practicable. An education provider can make a formal appeal against an accreditation decision. Appeals will be handled in accordance with the ADC Program Accreditation – Appeals Policy which also outlines the types of decisions that are appealable and the grounds for appeal. The process for appeals can be found on the [ADC's website](#).