

Dental Council
Te Kaunihera Tiaki Niho



Accreditation Standards for Dental Practitioner Programmes

Effective from 1 January 2027



Introduction

The Dental Council (New Zealand) (DC(NZ)) / Australian Dental Council (ADC) accreditation standards for dental practitioner programs (the Standards) are endorsed by the ADC and approved by the DC(NZ) and the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) – pursuant to the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003 (the Act – New Zealand) and Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009 (National Law – Australia).

Public protection is paramount in the administration of New Zealand's health practitioner regulatory framework. The Standards have been developed to support the DC(NZ)'s responsibility for accrediting programmes leading to registration in the oral health professions under the Act.

The Standards help ensure that education programmes meet the educational requirements for preparing newly qualified oral health practitioners who are competent, safe, and fit to practise in New Zealand and Australia.

Domain 1



Public safety

Domain 2



Academic governance

Domain 3



Programme
of study

Domain 4



The student
experience

Domain 5



Assessment

Domain 6



Cultural competence

Each Domain includes a Standard that articulates the key purpose of the Domain. This is the threshold that the programme will be assessed against. Each Standard is supported by multiple criteria, which outline what is expected of an ADC/DC(NZ) accredited programme to meet each Standard. The criteria are not sub-standards that will be individually assessed. When assessing a programme the ADC/DC(NZ) will have regard for whether each criterion is met but will take an on-balance view of whether the evidence presented by a programme provider clearly demonstrates that a particular Standard is met.

New programmes and established programmes are assessed against the same Accreditation Standards, although the assessment may be varied according to the circumstances of the programme provider.

The Accreditation Standards model





Domain 1

Public safety

Standard: Public safety is assured.

Domain 1



Public safety

Standard: Public safety is assured.

Criteria

- 1.1** Public protection and patient care are key principles guiding the programme, clinical education, and learning outcomes.
- 1.2** Student impairment screening and management processes are effective.
- 1.3** Students achieve the relevant competencies before providing patient care as part of the programme.
- 1.4** Students are supervised by suitably qualified and registered dental and/or health practitioners during clinical education.
- 1.5** Health services and dental practices providing clinical placements have robust health and safety, patient safety, and quality and care policies and processes, and meet all relevant regulations and standards.
- 1.6** Patients consent to care by students.
- 1.7** Students understand the legal, ethical and professional responsibilities of a registered oral health practitioner.
- 1.8** Students and staff act ethically and professionally to contribute to a safe environment, with breaches managed appropriately by the programme provider.
- 1.9** All students are registered with the relevant regulatory authority/ies (applicable in Australia only).



Domain 2

Academic governance and quality assurance

Standard: Academic governance and
quality assurance processes are effective.

Domain 2

Standard: Academic governance and quality assurance processes are effective.



Academic governance and quality assurance

Criteria

2.1

Academic governance for the programme includes systematic review and monitoring, risk management and improvement.

2.2

Students, consumers, internal and external academics, and professional peers contribute to the programmes design, management and quality improvement.

2.3

Mechanisms are in place for responding within the curriculum to contemporary developments in clinical practice and health professional education.

2.4

Admission and progression requirements and processes are fair, transparent and informed by programme staff.



Domain 3

Programme of study

Standard: Programme design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required professional competencies.

Domain 3



Programme of study

Standard: Programme design, delivery and resourcing enable students to achieve the required professional competencies.

Criteria

3.1

A coherent educational philosophy aligned with contemporary education principles informs the programmes design and delivery.

3.2

Learning and teaching methods are intentionally designed and used to enable students to achieve the required learning outcomes.

3.3

Programme learning outcomes address all the required professional competencies.

3.4

The complexity, quantity, duration and variety of clinical education is sufficient to produce a graduate competent to practise.

3.5

Programme design, delivery, and assessment enable an understanding of cultural diversity, and the development of skills that promote inclusive and responsive person-centred care.

3.6

The programme design develops research literacy appropriate to the level and type of qualification.

3.7

Students engage with and learn from oral health and other health professions to support the development of collaborative practice.

3.8

Teaching staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver their educational responsibilities.

3.9

Learning environments and clinical facilities and equipment are accessible, well-maintained, fit for purpose and support the achievement of learning outcomes.

3.10

The programme has the resources to sustain the education required for students to achieve the professional competencies.

3.11

Access to clinical training is assured, through formal agreements as required, for students to achieve the professional competencies.



Domain 4

The student experience

Standard: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support.

Domain 4



The student experience

Standard: Students are provided with equitable and timely access to information and support.

Criteria

4.1

Programme information is clear and accessible to both prospective and current students.

4.2

Students are informed of and have access to effective grievance and appeals processes.

4.3

Mechanisms are in place to identify and support the academic learning needs of students.

4.4

Students are informed of and have access to support services provided by qualified personnel.

4.5

Students are formally represented within decision-making committees for the programme, with mechanisms to enable active participation.

4.6

Equity and diversity principles are observed and promoted in the student experience.



Domain 5

Assessment

Standard: Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure graduates are competent to practise.

Domain 5



Assessment

Standard: Assessment is fair, valid and reliable to ensure graduates are competent to practise.

Criteria

5.1

Assessments conform to the principles of validity, reliability and fairness.

5.2

Mechanisms are in place for recognising and responding to emerging developments and risks in assessment.

5.3

There is a clear relationship between learning outcomes and assessment strategies.

5.4

All required professional competencies are mapped to learning outcomes and are assessed.

5.5

Multiple assessment methods are used including direct observation in the clinical setting.

5.6

Students receive timely feedback to support their learning.

5.7

Students are assessed throughout the programme by qualified and experienced educators, including external experts. External examiners assess students for final year exit examinations.



Domain 6 (NZ)

Cultural competence

Standard: The programme ensures students are able to provide culturally competent engagement and appropriate care for Māori and Pacific peoples.

This domain remains unchanged from 2021.

Domain 6 (NZ)



Cultural competence

Standard: The programme ensures students are able to provide culturally competent engagement and appropriate care for Māori and Pacific peoples.

Criteria

6.1

The programme demonstrates its commitment to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi as the foundation document of New Zealand.

6.2

The programme upholds both the Articles and Principles of the Treaty through its educational philosophy and delivery.

6.3

The programme, staff and students understand the Māori perspective of health and wellbeing, their beliefs and cultural practices as it pertains to oral health in particular.

6.4

Cultural understanding of Māori and Pacific peoples are integrated throughout the programme, clearly articulated in required learning outcomes (including competencies that will enable effective and respectful interaction with Māori).

6.5

Clinical experiences provide students with experience of providing culturally competent care for Māori and Pacific peoples, and clinical application of cultural competence is appropriately assessed.

6.6

There is a partnership in the design and management of the programme from Māori and Pacific peoples.

6.7

The programme provider promotes and supports the recruitment, admission, participation, retention and completion of the programme by Māori and Pacific peoples.

6.8

The programme provider ensures students are provided with access to appropriate resources, and to staff and the community with specialist knowledge, expertise and cultural capabilities, to facilitate learning about Māori health.

6.9

The programme recognises the important role of Māori Te Reo, Ngā Mokai o Ngā Whetu (Māori Dental Students' Association) and Te Aō Marama (The New Zealand Maori Dental Association) in achieving cultural competence to oral health practitioners.

6.10

Staff and students work and learn in a culturally appropriate environment.



Domain 6 (AUS)

Cultural responsiveness

Standard: The programme ensures students are able to provide culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

This Domain is applicable only to assessments conducted in Australia is included in this document for reference. Only the New Zealand Domain 6 should be considered when assessing programmes in New Zealand.

Domain 6 (AUS)



Cultural responsiveness

Standard: The programme ensures students are able to provide culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Criteria

6.1

Staff and students work and learn in a culturally responsive, safe and anti-racist environment.

6.2

Students and staff have access to appropriate resources and personnel with specialist knowledge, expertise and cultural capabilities, to facilitate learning about providing culturally responsive care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

6.3

The programme provider continuously seeks input from local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Communities external to the provider into the design and implementation of the programme.

6.4

Delivery of Country- and Community-appropriate culturally responsive healthcare is scaffolded and integrated throughout the programme, clearly articulated in learning outcomes, and assessed.

6.5

All students undertake culturally responsive clinical placements to provide culturally safe and anti-racist care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

6.6

The programme provider proactively promotes and supports the recruitment, admission, participation, retention and successful completion of the programme by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

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