

Commission on Dental Accreditation

Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs

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**Commission on Dental Accreditation
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Effective January 1, 2013

Last Revised: February 2017

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Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs

Document Revision History

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Action</i>
<i>July 26, 2007</i>	<i>Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs</i>	<i>Adopted</i>
<i>July 26, 2007</i>	<i>Standards to Ensure Program Integrity Examples of Evidence Modified: Standard 1-3</i>	<i>Approved and Implemented</i>
<i>February 1, 2008</i>	<i>Intent Statement Modified: Standard 3-3</i>	<i>Approved and Implemented</i>
<i>February 1, 2008</i>	<i>Revised Definition of Terms and Usage of Examples of Evidence</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>January 1, 2009</i>	<i>Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
<i>July 30, 2009</i>	<i>Revised Standard 2-17</i>	<i>Adopted</i>
<i>January 1, 2010</i>	<i>Revised Standard 2-17</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
<i>February 3, 2012</i>	<i>Revised Standards 2-16, 2-17, 2-19, 2-22, 2-25, 3-3, 3-7, 4-3, 4-5, 4-7</i>	<i>Adopted</i>
<i>August 8, 2012</i>	<i>Revised Standard, 3-7 Intent Statement Modified, 3-8</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>January 1, 2013</i>	<i>Revised Standards 2-16, 2-17, 2-19, 2-22, 2-25, 3-3, 3-7, 4-3, 4-5, 4-7</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
<i>August 9, 2013</i>	<i>Revised Standards 2-20, 3-7</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>August 1, 2014</i>	<i>Renumbered Standards 2-9 through 2-12 to be subsection a, b, c and d of 2-8</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>February 6, 2015</i>	<i>Revised Standards 2-4, 3-6, 3-7,b</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>February 6, 2015</i>	<i>Revised Standard 2-1</i>	<i>Adopted</i>

<i>August 6, 2015</i>	<i>New Standard 2-18</i>	<i>Adopted</i>
<i>January 1, 2016</i>	<i>Revised Standard 2-1, New Standard 2-18</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
<i>February 5, 2016</i>	<i>Revised Accreditation Status Definition</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>August 5, 2016</i>	<i>Revised Standards 2-15 and 4-4</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>
<i>August 5, 2016</i>	<i>Revised Standard 3-6</i>	<i>Adopted</i>
<i>January 1, 2017</i>	<i>Revised Mission Statement</i>	<i>Implemented</i>
<i>February 3, 2017</i>	<i>Revised Standards 2-8b and 4-4b</i>	<i>Adopted and Implemented</i>

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Mission Statement of the Commission on Dental Accreditation

The Commission on Dental Accreditation serves the public and profession by developing and implementing accreditation standards that promote and monitor the continuous quality and improvement of dental education programs.

Commission on Dental Accreditation
Adopted August 5, 2016

Discontinued: An action taken by the Commission on Dental Accreditation to affirm a program's reported discontinuance effective date or planned closure date and to remove a program from the Commission's accredited program listing, when a program either 1) voluntarily discontinues its participation in the accreditation program and no longer enrolls a first year class students/residents who matriculated prior to the program's reported discontinuance effective date or 2) is closed by the sponsoring institution.

Intent to Withdraw: A formal warning utilized by the Commission on Dental Accreditation to notify an accredited program and the communities of interest that the program's accreditation will be withdrawn if compliance with accreditation standards or policies cannot be demonstrated by a specified date. The warning is usually for a six-month period, unless the Commission extends for good cause. The Commission advises programs that the intent to withdraw accreditation may have legal implications for the program and suggests that the institution's legal counsel be consulted regarding how and when to advise applicants and students of the Commission's accreditation actions. The Commission reserves the right to require a period of non-enrollment for programs that have been issued the Intent to Withdraw warning.

Withdraw: An action taken by the Commission when a program has been unable to demonstrate compliance with the accreditation standards or policies within the time period specified. A final action to withdraw accreditation is communicated to the program and announced to the communities of interest. A statement summarizing the reasons for the Commission's decision and comments, if any, that the affected program has made with regard to this decision, is available upon request from the Commission office. In the event the Commission withdraws accreditation from a program, students currently enrolled in the program at the time accreditation is withdrawn and who successfully complete the program, will be considered graduates of an accredited program. Students who enroll in a program after the accreditation has been withdrawn will not be considered graduates of a Commission accredited program. Such graduates may be ineligible for certification/licensure examinations.

Revised 2/16; Reaffirmed: 8/10, 7/07, 7/01; CODA: 12/87:9

Denial: An action by the Commission that denies accreditation to a developing program (without enrollment) or to a fully operational program (with enrollment) that has applied for accreditation. Reasons for the denial are provided. Denial of accreditation is considered an adverse action.

Adopted: 8/11

Preface

The Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs represent a revision of Requirements and Guidelines for Accredited Dental Hygiene Education Programs. These standards have been developed for the following reasons: (1) to protect the public welfare, (2) to serve as a guide for dental hygiene program development, (3) to serve as a stimulus for the improvement of established programs, and (4) to provide criteria for the evaluation of new and established programs. To be accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, a dental hygiene program must meet the standards set forth in this document. These standards are national in scope and represent the minimum requirements for accreditation. The importance of academic freedom is recognized by the Commission; therefore, the standards are stated in terms which allow institution flexibility in the development of an educational program. It is expected that institutions which voluntarily seek accreditation will recognize the ethical obligation of complying with the spirit as well as the letter of these standards.

The Commission on Dental Accreditation

From the early 1940's until 1975, the Council on Dental Education was the agency recognized as the national accrediting organization for dentistry and dental-related educational programs. On January 1, 1975, the Council on Dental Education's accreditation authority was transferred to the Commission on Accreditation of Dental and Dental Auxiliary Educational Programs, an expanded agency established to provide representation of all groups affected by its accrediting activities. In 1979, the name of the Commission was changed to the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

The Commission is comprised of 30 members. It includes a representative of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) and other disciplines accredited by the Commission as well as public representatives.

Specialized Accreditation

Specialized accrediting agencies exist to assess and verify educational quality in particular professions or occupations to ensure that individuals will be qualified to enter those disciplines. A specialized accrediting agency recognizes the course of instruction which comprises a unique set of skills and knowledge, develops the accreditation standards by which such educational programs are evaluated, conducts evaluation of programs, and publishes a list of accredited programs that meet the national accreditation standards. Accreditation standards are developed in consultation with those affected by the standards who represent the broad communities of interest. The Commission on Dental Accreditation is the specialized accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education to accredit programs which provide basic preparation for licensure or certification in dentistry and the related disciplines.

Dental Hygiene Accreditation

The first dental hygiene accreditation standards were developed by three groups: the American Dental Hygienists' Association, the National Association of Dental Examiners and the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Education. The standards were submitted to and approved by the American Dental Association House of Delegates in 1947, five years prior to the launching of the dental hygiene accreditation program in 1952. The first list of accredited dental hygiene programs was published in 1953, with 21 programs. Since then the standards for accreditation have been revised five times -- in 1969, 1973, 1979, 1991, 1998 and 2005.

In an effort to provide the communities of interest with appropriate input into the latest revision of the standards, the Commission on Dental Accreditation utilized the following procedures: conducting surveys of communities of interest, holding open hearings and distributing widely a draft of the proposed revision of the standards for review and comment. Prior to approving the revised standards in July 2007, the Commission carefully considered comments received from all sources. The revised accreditation standards were implemented in January 2009.

Institutions and programs are also strongly encouraged to develop mechanisms to award advanced standing for students who have completed coursework at other educational programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation or by use of appropriate qualifying or proficiency examinations.

This entire document constitutes the Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs. Each standard is numbered (e.g., 1-1, 1-2) and in bold print. Where appropriate, standards are accompanied by statements of intent that explain the rationale, meaning and significance of the standard. Expanded guidance in the form of examples to assist programs in better understanding and interpreting the “must” statements within the standards follow. This format is intended to clarify the meaning and application of standards for both those responsible for educational programs and those who evaluate these programs for the Commission.

Definitions of Terms Used in Dental Hygiene Accreditation Standards

The terms used in this document indicate the relative weight that the Commission attaches to each statement. Definitions of these terms are provided.

Standard: Offers a rule or basis of comparison established in measuring or judging capacity, quantity, quality, content and value; criterion used as a model or pattern.

Must: Indicates an imperative need, duty or requirement; an essential or indispensable item; mandatory.

Should: Indicates a method to achieve the Standards.

Intent: Intent statements are presented to provide clarification to the dental hygiene education programs in the application of and in connection with compliance with the Accreditation Standards for Dental Hygiene Education Programs. The statements of intent set forth some of the reasons and purposes for the particular Standards. As such, these statements are not exclusive or exhaustive. Other purposes may apply.

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance include: Desirable condition, practice or documentation indicating the freedom or liberty to follow a suggested alternative.

Competent: The levels of knowledge, skills and values required by new graduates to begin the practice of dental hygiene.

Competencies: Written statements describing the levels of knowledge, skills and values expected of graduates.

Instruction: Describes any teaching, lesson, rule or precept; details of procedure; directives.

Basic Clinical Education: The patient care experiences required for all students in order to attain clinical competence and complete the dental hygiene program. This education is provided in the program's clinical facilities (on campus or extended campus facilities) as defined in the Accreditation Standards and is supervised and evaluated by program faculty according to predetermined criteria.

Laboratory or Preclinical Instruction: Indicates instruction in which students receive supervised experience performing functions using study models, manikins or other simulation methods; student performance is evaluated by faculty according to predetermined criteria.

Enriching Clinical Experiences: Clinical experiences that exceed the basic clinical education requirements of the program and that are provided to enhance the basic clinical education. Enriching experiences may be provided on campus and/or in extramural clinical facilities and may be supervised by non-program personnel according to predetermined learning objectives and evaluation criteria.

Distance Education: As defined by the United States Department of Education, distance education is “an educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student. The term includes courses offered principally through the use of (1) television, audio or computer transmission; (2) audio or computer conferencing; (3) video cassettes or disks; or (4) correspondence.”

Patients with special needs: Those patients whose medical, physical, psychological, or social situations make it necessary to modify normal dental routines in order to provide dental treatment for that individual. These individuals include, but are not limited to, people with developmental disabilities, complex medical problems, and significant physical limitations.

Post-Degree Certificate: A certificate awarded to students who have previously earned a minimum of an associate’s degree and complete all requirements of the accredited educational program in dental hygiene.

Standard of Care: Level of clinical performance expected for the safe, effective and ethical practice of dental hygiene.

Dental Hygiene Diagnosis: Identification of an existing or potential oral health problem that a dental hygienist is qualified and licensed to treat.

The Commission’s accreditation standards have been stated, purposefully, in terms which allow flexibility, innovation and experimentation. Regardless of the method(s) used to provide instruction, the Commission expects that each accredited program will comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the accreditation standards.

STANDARD 6 - PATIENT CARE SERVICES

- 6-1 The program must have policies and mechanisms in place that inform patients, verbally and in writing, about their comprehensive treatment needs. Patients accepted for dental hygiene care must be advised of the scope of dental hygiene care available at the dental hygiene facilities.**

Intent:

All dental hygiene patients should receive appropriate care that assures their right as a patient is protected. Patients should be advised of their treatment needs and the scope of care available at the training facility and appropriately referred for procedures that cannot be provided by the program. This Standard applies to all program sites where clinical education is provided.

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

- documentation of an ongoing review of a representative sample of patients and patient records to assess the appropriateness, necessity and quality of care provided
- quality assurance policy and procedures
- patient bill of rights

- 6-2 The program must have a formal written patient care quality assurance plan that includes:**

- a) standards of care that are patient-centered, focused on comprehensive care, and written in a format that facilitates assessment with measurable criteria;**
- b) an ongoing review of a representative sample of patients and patient records to assess the appropriateness, necessity and quality of the care provided;**
- c) mechanisms to determine the cause of treatment deficiencies;**
- d) patient review policies, procedure, outcomes and corrective measures.**

Intent:

The program should have a system in place for continuous review of established standards of patient care. This Standard applies to all program sites where clinical education is provided.

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

- documentation of an ongoing review of a representative sample of patients and patient records to assess the appropriateness, necessity and quality of care provided
- quality assurance policy and procedures
- patient bill of rights
- documentation of policies on scope of care provided, recalls and referrals

