

From: Commission on Dental Accreditation [mailto:ada@messaging.ada.org]

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 11:43 AM

To:

Subject: CODA Statement to Dental Education Programs Regarding COVID-19



CODA Alert

CODA Statement to Dental Education Programs Regarding COVID-19

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) is monitoring information from various sources related to COVID-19. Based upon recent and evolving events at the state and national level, the Commission has learned that dental and dental-related education programs may encounter an interruption of education, including but not limited to didactic and clinical curricular modifications to address changes in the academic calendar. The Commission takes this matter and the impact on the educational programs, and students, faculty and staff of these educational programs, seriously.

The Commission staff has been in consultation with the United States Department of Education (USDE) related to the impact on accredited dental and dental-related education programs, and will continue to monitor the activities and guidance from the USDE and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Below you will find information to assist you in managing interruption of the educational program. Additional updates will be provided when available.

Interruption of Education and Use of Distance Education Modalities

On March 5, 2020, the United States Department of Education issued a [Guidance document](#) related to the impact of COVID-19 on educational programs related to Federal Financial Aid. The USDE Guidance document suggested that educational programs consider using distance education to reduce disruption to academic programming. Further, the USDE Guidance indicated that the USDE is *“permitting accreditors to waive their distance education review requirements for institutions working to accommodate students whose enrollment is otherwise interrupted as a result of COVID-19.”* The Commission has confirmed that it may allow educational programs to enhance or initiate use of distance education to address interruption of education. Please also note that educational programs should confer with licensure and other regulatory bodies to ensure that temporary use of distance education is permitted.

If your program intends to use distance education modalities for the purpose of managing interruption of education during the COVID-19 period, please notify the Commission. Temporary use of distance education **must be reported immediately but will not require CODA approval**. Programs are required to submit a Report of Program Change to CODA outlining the use of distance education for the period of interrupted education. Within the report, please outline the specific uses of distance education and methods by which the program will apply student identity verification in accordance with CODA’s Policy on Distance Education (below).

Policy on Distance Education: 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 accreditation standards.

Distance education means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

- the internet;
- one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- audio conferencing; and/or
- video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed above.

Revised: 8/10; Reaffirmed: 8/15

1. Student Identity Verification Requirement For Programs That Have Distance Education Sites: Programs that offer distance education must have processes in place through which the program establishes that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. Programs must verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the program, methods such as a secure login and pass code; proctored examinations; and/or new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity. The program must make clear in writing that processes are used that protect student privacy and programs must notify students of any projected additional student charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment. Reaffirmed: 8/15; Adopted: 8/10

Program Length (Length of Academic Year)

The Commission on Dental Accreditation has learned through communication with the USDE that there is an expectation to maintain the educational program (curriculum content and length) based upon the accreditor-approved program curriculum and program length. **In other words, the program may not shorten its program length (term/quarter/semester/etc.) or reduce/modify its educational requirements without making up those missed weeks/months of curricular content and assessment.** While the USDE Guidance suggests that a reduced academic year may be authorized by the USDE via inquiry through the "School Participation team," CODA understands that this comment relates to Title IV funding and not the program's length and curriculum as approved by accreditors. Therefore, programs experiencing an interruption of education (didactic, preclinical, laboratory and/or clinical) must submit a Report of Program Change to the Commission in accordance with the Policy on Interruption of Education (below).

Policy on Interruption of Education:

Interruption of an educational program due to unforeseen circumstances that take faculty, administrators or students away from the program is a potentially serious problem. If such

interruption may compromise the quality and effectiveness of education, the Commission must be notified in writing of any such disruption. The institution must provide a comprehensive plan for how the loss of instructional time will be addressed. A program which experiences an interruption of longer than two (2) years will be notified of the Commission's intent to withdraw accreditation at its next scheduled meeting. Revised: 8/15; 8/10, 5/91, 1975; Reaffirmed: 7/07, 7/01

Review [CODA Accreditation Standards](#) and the [Guidelines for Reporting Program Changes](#) on the Commission's website.

Conduct of 2020 Site Visits (Those Scheduled Now Through April 10, 2020)

For those programs scheduled for an accreditation site visit in spring 2020, **please be advised that the Commission has made a decision to CANCEL and RESCHEDULE all remaining site visits that were to occur prior to April 10, 2020.** The Commission is aware that programs put a great amount of time and effort into preparing for an accreditation site visit. However, the Commission believes the safety of educational personnel and its volunteer site visitors is of the utmost importance. The Commission will continue to monitor travel restrictions for programs and its site visitors and will notify all affected parties when updates are made. Visits to occur prior to April 10, 2020 will be rescheduled to a date later this year. Please await a communication from the Commission office related to a future site visit date. The Commission also requests that programs notify the Commission staff immediately if your institution prohibits travel to your facility or if the facility has an interruption of education during a scheduled visit.

For current information regarding COVID-19, visit the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) COVID-19 webpage](#).

If you have further questions, please contact the [Commission office](#).

[Accessibility](#) | [Privacy Notice](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Copyright © 2020 The Commission on Dental Accreditation.
All Rights Reserved. Permission is granted to distribute or reprint the CODA alert for educational purposes, including dissemination to faculty, staff, and students/residents

This email was sent by the American Dental Association, 211 E. Chicago Ave, Chicago, IL 60611, USA. We respect your right to [privacy](#) — View our policy and [terms](#).