

AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

Policy Statement: Comprehensive Policy on Dental Licensure

Adopted by the 2018 ADA House of Delegates

General Principles

- One standard of competency for dental licensure must be in place in order to provide quality oral health care to the public.
- Provisions for freedom of movement across state lines for all dental professionals should exist to facilitate the provision of quality oral health care to the public.
- Federal licensure and federal intervention in the state dental licensure system are strongly opposed.
- Efforts of unlicensed and unqualified persons to gain a right to serve the public directly in the field of dental practice are strongly opposed.
- Elimination of patients in the clinical licensure examination process is strongly supported to address ethical concerns, including those identified in the ADA Council on Ethics, Bylaws and Judicial Affairs statement entitled Ethical Considerations When Using Patients in the Examination Process (Reports 2008:103). State dental societies and dental boards are urged to work toward acceptance of valid and reliable clinical assessments that do not require single- encounter performance of procedures on patients.
- The state boards of dentistry in each state or licensure jurisdiction are the sole licensure and regulating authorities for all dentists and allied dental personnel.
- State dental boards are encouraged to require verification of completion of continuing dental education as a condition for re-registration of dental licenses.
- Dentists identified as deficient through properly constituted peer review mechanisms should undergo assessment and corrective competency-based education and such provisions should be included in laws, rules and regulations.

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Initial Licensure

States are urged to accept the following common core of requirements for initial licensure:

1. Completion of a DDS or DMD degree from a university-based dental education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.
2. Successful passage of the National Board Dental Examination, a valid and reliable written cognitive test.
3. A determination of clinical competency for the beginning practitioner, which may include:
 - Acceptance of clinical examination results from any clinical testing agency; or
 - Graduation from CODA-accredited PGY-1 program, that is, a residency program at least one year in length at a CODA-accredited clinically-based postdoctoral general dentistry and/or successful completion of at least one year of a specialty residency program; or
 - Completion of a portfolio-type examination (such as employed by the California Dental Board) or similar assessment, that uses the evaluation mechanisms currently applied by the dental schools to assess student competence; or
 - An Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), that is, a valid and reliable non-patient based examination consisting of multiple, standardized stations that require candidates to use their clinical knowledge and skills to successfully complete one or more dental problem-solving tasks.

Curriculum Integrated Format Clinical Examination

A Curriculum Integrated Format (CIF) clinical examination addresses ethical concerns associated with single encounter patient-based examinations currently administered by dental clinical testing agencies. A CIF provides candidates opportunities to successfully complete independent "third-party" clinical assessments on patients of record prior to graduation from a dental education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

The curriculum integrated format, as defined below, should only be employed as a licensure examination until a non-patient based licensure examination is developed that protects the public and meets psychometric standards. The Association believes that the following CIF provisions must be required by state boards of dentistry and incorporated by testing agencies for protection of the patient:

- A CIF examination must be performed by candidates on patients of record within an appropriately sequenced treatment plan.
- The competencies assessed by the clinical examining agency must be selected components of current dental education program curricula and reflective of current dental practice.
- All portions of the CIF examination must be available at multiple times within each institution during dental school to ensure that patient care is accomplished within an appropriate treatment plan and to allow candidates to remediate and retake prior to graduation any portions of the examination which they have not successfully completed.

Graduates of Non-CODA Accredited Dental Education Programs

For initial licensure in dentistry, international graduates of non-CODA accredited dental education programs should possess the following educational credentials: 1) completion of a university-based dental education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) leading to a DDS or DMD degree or 2) graduation from a postgraduate program in general dentistry accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

Licensure by Credentials

States should have provisions for licensure of dentists who demonstrate they are currently licensed in good standing and also have not been the subject of final or pending disciplinary action in any state or jurisdiction in which they have been licensed.

This should also apply to experienced, internationally-trained dentists, who have been licensed in a U.S. jurisdiction, and who may or may not have graduated from a CODA-accredited dental school.

Appropriate credentials may include:

- DDS or DMD degree from a dental education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation
- Specialty certificate/master's degree from accredited program
- Specialty Board certification
- GPR/AEGD certificate from accredited program
- Current license in good standing
- Passing grade on an initial clinical licensure exam, unless initial licensure was granted via completion of PGY-1, Portfolio examination, or other state-approved pathway for assessment of clinical competency.
- Documentation of completion of continuing education

For dentists who hold a current dental license in good standing in any jurisdiction, state dental boards should:

- Accept pathways that allow for licensure without completing an additional clinical examination, e.g., by credentials, reciprocity, and/or endorsement.
- Consider participation in licensure compacts
- Implement specialty licensure by credentials and/or specialty licensure to facilitate licensure portability of dental specialists.
- Make provisions available for a limited or volunteer license for dentists who wish to provide services without compensation to critical needs populations within a state in which they are not already licensed.
- Make provisions available for limited teaching permits for faculty members at teaching facilities and dental programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

Licensure by Credentials for Dentists Who Are Not Graduates of CODA-Accredited Dental Education Programs

State dental societies and dental boards are strongly encouraged to grant the same benefits of licensure mobility to U.S. currently-licensed dentists who were licensed by their respective jurisdictions prior to state implementation of the requirement for graduation from a CODA-accredited dental school with a DDS or DMD degree.

ADOPTED BY THE ADA HOUSE OF DELEGATES (*Trans.2018:341*)