

# **CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation**

## **Guidelines for International Consultation & Preliminary Accreditation Consultation Visit (PACV) Survey**

Revised 1/2025

**American Dental Association  
Commission on Dental Accreditation  
401 North Michigan Ave, Suite 3300  
Chicago, IL 60611-4250  
USA  
+1 312-440-4653  
<https://coda.ada.org/>**

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## **COMMISSION ON DENTAL ACCREDITATION**

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) has operated under the administrative aegis of the American Dental Association (ADA) since its establishment by the ADA House of Delegates in 1975. The CODA's independent and autonomous duties, which have been approved by the ADA House of Delegates, include formulation and adoption of accreditation standards for predoctoral, advanced dental and allied dental education programs, the accreditation of dental and dental-related educational programs and provision of a means for appeal from adverse decisions of the CODA to a separate and distinct body.

The scope of the CODA encompasses dental, advanced dental and allied dental education programs.

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF CODA**

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

Adopted August 5, 2016; Revised August 6, 2021

## **OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Dental accreditation in the United States is a voluntary quality evaluation system that includes a standard setting and review process to promote the goal of continuous quality improvement in dental education. Additional goals are to provide public protection and accountability and to assure prospective students and state licensing agencies that educational programs provide appropriate education, training and experience to adequately prepare individuals for dental licensure and practice in the U.S. International dental education programs may seek consultation and/or accreditation services from the CODA for the purpose of obtaining an independent, external review, for benchmarking or to serve the needs of graduates who may wish to demonstrate their preparedness for licensure in a state in the U.S.

International consultation and accreditation fee-based services are available to international predoctoral dental education programs, upon request. Once an international dental education program meets the established criteria, consultation and accreditation services will be provided in accord with CODA policies and procedures. Eligibility criteria and CODA policies, standards and procedures are subject to change and will be periodically reviewed and updated. It is the responsibility of programs to keep informed of changes in CODA accreditation policies and procedures, and abide by all current policies and procedures.

An international dental education program is defined as a program located and sponsored by an institution whose primary location is outside of the United States and Canada. The CODA will only accept requests for consultation and accreditation fee-based services from established international dental education programs. The international dental education program must be: 1) accepted in its country of origin, 2) officially chartered/recognized in its country of origin, and 3) recognized or accredited by the country's relevant government or non-governmental agency.

International dental education programs seeking accreditation by the CODA must meet the same Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs as the United States-based programs and follow the same process and procedures.

Figure 1 (page 12) outlines a series of consultation steps that an international dental education program must go through to attain accreditation from the CODA. All steps are required including attendance at a U.S. dental school site visit as a silent observer and a Preliminary Accreditation Consultation Visit (PACV). These steps are designed to provide consultation and evaluation of the international program's readiness for accreditation. Since the consultation and accreditation process is a voluntary one, programs can discontinue the process at any time. A CODA Standing Committee decision to grant an international dental education program a PACV does not automatically mean that the program will achieve accreditation.

## DEFINITIONS

The CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation has established definitions for consultation, accreditation and international dental education program. The remaining definitions are from, or adapted from; Harvey, L., 2004-9, *Analytic Quality Glossary*, Quality Research International, <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/>. Additional definitions can be found in the *Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs*.

**Accountability:** Accountability is the requirement, when undertaking an activity, to expressly address the concerns, requirements or perspectives of others.

**Accreditation:** A conformity assessment process where an agency, such as the CODA on Dental Accreditation, uses experts in a particular field of interest or discipline to define standards of acceptable operation/performance for a school or program. The agency grants public recognition to the school/program that has met predetermined standards.

**Assessment of student learning:** Assessment of student learning is the process of evaluating the extent to which participants in education have developed their knowledge, understanding and abilities.

**Assessment of teaching and learning:** Assessment of teaching and learning is the process of evaluating the quality and appropriateness of the learning process, including teacher performance and pedagogic approach.

**Competence:** Competence is the acquisition of knowledge skills and abilities at a level of expertise sufficient to be able to perform in an appropriate work setting (within or outside academia).

**Consultation:** discussion for advice; the process of discussing something either with experts or with participants and asking for their opinions or advice

**Equivalency:** Equivalency indicates that an international program is essentially the same as a program in the United States or Canada. For dental education programs outside the United States or Canada, equivalency is granted ONLY for dental education standards that require the sponsoring institution to be accredited by a regional accrediting agency. In countries where no system of national or regional accreditation of institutions exists, equivalency is determined by requiring additional evidence of institutional policies and procedures that are aligned with U. S. regional accreditation standards. The additional questions and documentation needed is on pages 16 to 18 of the PACV survey.

**Governance:** Governance in higher education refers to the way in which institutions are organized and operate internally. Governance also includes an institution's relationships with those outside of the organization, particularly with how the institution fulfills its mission in the areas of education, research, and service.

**International Dental Education Program:** A predoctoral dental education program located and sponsored by an institution whose primary location is outside of the United States and Canada.

**Outcome:** A measureable result. Often further divided into:

**A. Learning outcome:** A learning outcome is the specification of what a student should learn as the result of a period of specified and supported study.

**B. Institutional Outcome:** An institutional outcome is shorthand for the product or endeavors of a higher education institution, including student learning and skills development, research outputs and contributions to the wider society locally or internationally.

**Self-assessment:** Self-assessment is the process of critically reviewing the quality of one's own performance and provision

#### **Terms Used in Consultative Site Visit Reports:**

**Advise** – Equivalent term for “suggest” when compliance with an accreditation standard is identified but the compliance with standard could be enhanced.

**Strongly Advise** – Equivalent term for “recommend” when noncompliance with an accreditation standard is identified.

## INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION PHILOSOPHY AND PROCESS

### **Philosophy of Consultation for International Programs<sup>1</sup>**

In the United States accreditation is a non-governmental, voluntary peer review process by which educational institutions or programs may be granted public recognition for compliance with accepted standards of quality and performance. 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.

The assessment of quality in educational programs is the foundation for accreditation, and quality improvement is reflected throughout the dental education standards. The standards are also established on a competency-based model of education through which students acquire the level of competence needed to begin the unsupervised practice of general dentistry. Accreditation standards are developed in consultation with those affected by the standards who represent the broad communities of interest.

Although globalization has prompted increasing interest in international collaboration and consensus on quality standards, most countries and regions of the world continue to use quality assessment programs that meet local needs. In that vein, accreditation of educational programs in the U.S. serves the purposes of public accountability and quality assurance within a context of local social, cultural, economic, regulatory and professional norms and assumptions.

Accordingly, consultation and accreditation reviews by the CODA is intended to meet local needs and requirements. Reviews of international dental school programs that identify discrepancies or deficiencies in complying with the CODA standards should not be construed as denigrating the relative quality and value of the educational program in its home country or region of the world. Comments and recommendations from the CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation, the CODA staff and on-site consultants are intended to identify differences in expectations and requirements appropriate to the U.S. regulatory system and should not be interpreted as arbitrary or intentionally critical. Upon receipt of feedback from the ADA's CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation, some educational programs may choose to make relevant changes in their programs and/or documentation to comply with the CODA standards, while others may find the recommendations and evaluation criteria are not appropriate for their circumstances, and may choose not to continue the process.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken in part from CODA. *Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs*, 2007.

### **The Consultation Process for International Programs**

The CODA adopted its International Policies and Procedures in July 2006, and revised the process in 2009. In November 2015, the ADA House of Delegates sunset the Joint Advisory Committee on International Accreditation (JACIA) and supported establishment of the CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation (SCIA) in its place (*53H-2015*). The CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation has been established to receive requests for fee-based consultation services. The CODA Standing Committee meets as needed to consider fee-based requests for consultation from international dental education programs.

Attainment of CODA accreditation is a multi-step process that involves self-study, observation of the CODA's accreditation process, and consultation with the CODA staff, site reviewers, and the CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation. Figure 1 (page 12) outlines the steps in the process. International dental education programs can discontinue the process at any point, but must inform CODA staff if an on-site visit has been scheduled.

All of the documents described below must be submitted in English. All fees must be drawn on U.S. banks in U.S. dollars. The CODA staff selects consultants to all international site visits and forwards all self-study documents to the consultants. All interviews on each of the site visits described below must be conducted in English. If needed, CODA will employ a translator for on-site visits. Expenses for the translator are paid by the international program.

To begin the process, the Dean of the International Education Program or International University President/Provost requests, in writing, information regarding its fee-based consultation and accreditation services. The CODA staff sends the following via e-mail:

1. Procedures and Policies for International Accreditation
2. PACV (Preliminary Accreditation Consultation Visit) Survey
3. PACV Self-study and Guide
4. Predoctoral Dental Education Standards

#### **Step one. Completion of the PACV survey**

The PACV survey and required fee (page 13) is submitted by the dean of the college and the president/provost of the university to formally begin the international consultation process. In addition, national dental associations, along with the appropriate government ministry and/or accrediting agency, must be informed that the program has begun the process of U.S. accreditation. The program will be required to request the appropriate government ministry and/or accrediting agency to submit a letter of acknowledgement directly to the committee.

The PACV survey is reviewed by the CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation, using the broad eligibility criteria (page 14). If the Committee consensus is that a PACV is warranted, the institution will be invited to attend a comprehensive site visit to a U.S. program to observe the accreditation process.

If the Committee consensus is that the international program is not yet ready to pursue the CODA accreditation, the program will be advised that no further consultation will be offered,



and will be provided with the specific areas that, in the opinion of the committee, limit the ability of the program to meet the CODA accreditation standards.

If the Committee consensus is that the program has the potential to meet the CODA accreditation standards, but selected accreditation standards may be difficult for the international program to meet, the program will be advised that a focused consultation visit is warranted. The program will be asked to submit additional information related to the selected standards and complete a focused consultation visit before the program will be invited to attend a U. S. comprehensive visit.

Focused consultation services are provided by content experts in the specific standards under review. In preparation for the consultation visit, the international dental schools will prepare a written document describing its policies and procedures related to the focused topics. The written material will be submitted 90 days prior to an on-site focused consultation visit. All documents and communications will be in English. Two consultants (staff and/or volunteers) selected for their expertise in the focused topic areas, will make up the visiting committee that provides the focused consultation services and carries out the visit. The trip may be seven days in length, allowing ample time for the committee to adjust to any time change. The program pays a focused consultation fee (page 13) and all expenses associated with the consultation visit, including travel, hotel, meals. The program will receive a written report summarizing the review and recommendations within 60 days. This report will be reviewed by the CODA Standing Committee who will make a determination if the program 1) will be required to submit additional information related to the consultants' findings, 2) can be invited to attend a U. S. comprehensive visit, or 3) will be offered no further consultation at this time.

If no further consultation services are offered, either following the focused consultation visit or the CODA Standing Committee's review of the PACV survey, international programs may reapply one additional time by submitting a new PACV survey no sooner than one year from the date of the CODA Standing Committee's decision.

### **Step two. Observation of a CODA dental school site visit and individual consultation**

Observation of a CODA dental school site visit and consultation with staff and site visitors following the visit is a required step. All costs associated with the observation and consultation will be paid by the international program and include airfare, hotel and meals for the program's representatives. The CODA dental school visits are three and a half (3 1/2) days in length and typically occur from February to May and from September to November each year. A maximum of two observers from the international program will be permitted.

All observers are required to sign the same confidentiality agreement as the CODA site visitors and abide by the same policies and procedures. Observers must remain silent during sessions, but may ask questions during executive sessions and after the site visit is completed. Observers must be able to observe interviews and communicate with site visitors and the CODA staff in English. No interpreters will be permitted during the site visit observation.

Following the site visit, the CODA staff and selected site visitors will meet individually with international observers to answer questions and provide consultation on the accreditation

process. Observers should therefore plan on a total of four (4) days for both the observation of the site visit and individual consultation with the CODA staff and site visitors.

Following the observation and individual consultation, the international program may elect to complete the PACV self-study and submit the PACV consultation fees (page 13) within 6 mos. to 3 years. A six (6)-month extension could be granted for just cause (e.g., translation of documents), with flexibility for extenuating circumstances, which would then be brought to the attention of the Committee. The CODA Standing Committee **MUST** have formal notification of the intent of the international program to continue to pursue CODA accreditation be provided to the Committee within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the observation and individual consultation.

### **Step three. PACV self-study and consultation visit**

Once the international program has completed the PACV self-study, and submitted the appropriate fee, the self-study will be reviewed by the CODA Standing Committee. If the Committee consensus is that the program has the potential to meet CODA accreditation standards, the CODA staff and the institution will schedule the PACV at a time that is mutually convenient to the international dental education program representatives, the CODA representatives, and staff. The program agrees to pay the expenses of the site visit including airfare, hotel, and meals (page 13).

The PACV is a comprehensive consultation service. This is a comprehensive, fee-based site visit with programmatic consultation by trained content experts regarding topics such as:

- Institutional effectiveness/outcomes assessment
- Curriculum content and scope
- Competency-based curriculum
- Faculty and staff qualifications and numbers
- Type and adequacy of facilities
- Patient care services and policies
- Student policies and services
- Research for both faculty and staff
- Readiness for accreditation by the CODA assessment
- Quality Assurance
- Comprehensive patient care
- Relationship of School to the University and government
- Standards of Care

The consulting committee that will conduct the PACV is made up of four consultants (curriculum specialist/committee chairperson, basic science specialist, clinician educator, and clinician practitioner representing the American Dental Association) and one CODA staff. One of the consultants will be a dental professional with experience and/or knowledge of the host country.

The visit will involve several interviews with the identified stakeholders of the international dental education program and the institution's administration. Interviews will be conducted with

the appropriate administrators, faculty, staff and students. The consulting committee will also provide guidance regarding the facilities. A written report summarizing the evaluation will be provided to the program within 60 days of the visit.

Upon receipt of the consultative report, the program has the option to submit a response. The program is requested to acknowledge receipt of the consultative report within 60 days and to notify the CODA Standing Committee as to whether it will submit a response, including an expected submission date of a response.

The written report should ensure comment upon each accreditation standard, when possible, and consistent usage of “strongly advise” and “advise,” as terms equivalent to “recommend” and “suggest.” (See Definitions section of this document, page 5.)

The consultation report and program response, should one be provided, is submitted to the CODA Standing Committee for its consideration. The Committee’s report is communicated to the international dental education program and the CODA. If the consensus of the CODA Standing Committee is that the international program will be able to most likely achieve U.S. accreditation, the program may elect to submit an application for accreditation to the CODA.

**Please note, a positive determination from the CODA Standing Committee does not guarantee that an application for accreditation will be successful.**

The CODA Standing Committee determines that an international program is not yet ready to pursue CODA accreditation. If the Committee consensus is that the program has the potential to meet the CODA accreditation standards, but selected accreditation standards may be difficult for the international program to meet, the program will be advised that a focused consultation visit is warranted. If the Committee consensus is that an international program is not yet ready to pursue CODA accreditation, the program will be advised that no further consultation will be offered, and will receive a written report outlining the specific areas that, in the opinion of the committee, limit the ability of the program to meet the CODA accreditation standards. International dental education programs may reapply one additional time by submitting a new PACV survey no sooner than three years from the date of the CODA Standing Committee’s decision.

#### **Step four. Application for CODA accreditation.**

Upon receipt of the application for accreditation, the CODA United States-based accreditation process and procedures are followed.

The CODA accreditation service is the same as the process and procedures of the accreditation program for U.S.-based dental education programs. Programs that are successful in the PACV may submit an application for accreditation and an application fee for accreditation. The CODA consultants will then be selected to evaluate the written application and determine whether the application is complete. The program may elect to voluntarily withdraw its application or make the appropriate changes and resubmit with additional information. Once the CODA determines that the program has submitted sufficient information to determine the program’s potential for complying with the Accreditation Standards, a site visit will be scheduled. This preliminary determination does not guarantee that an application for accreditation will be successful.

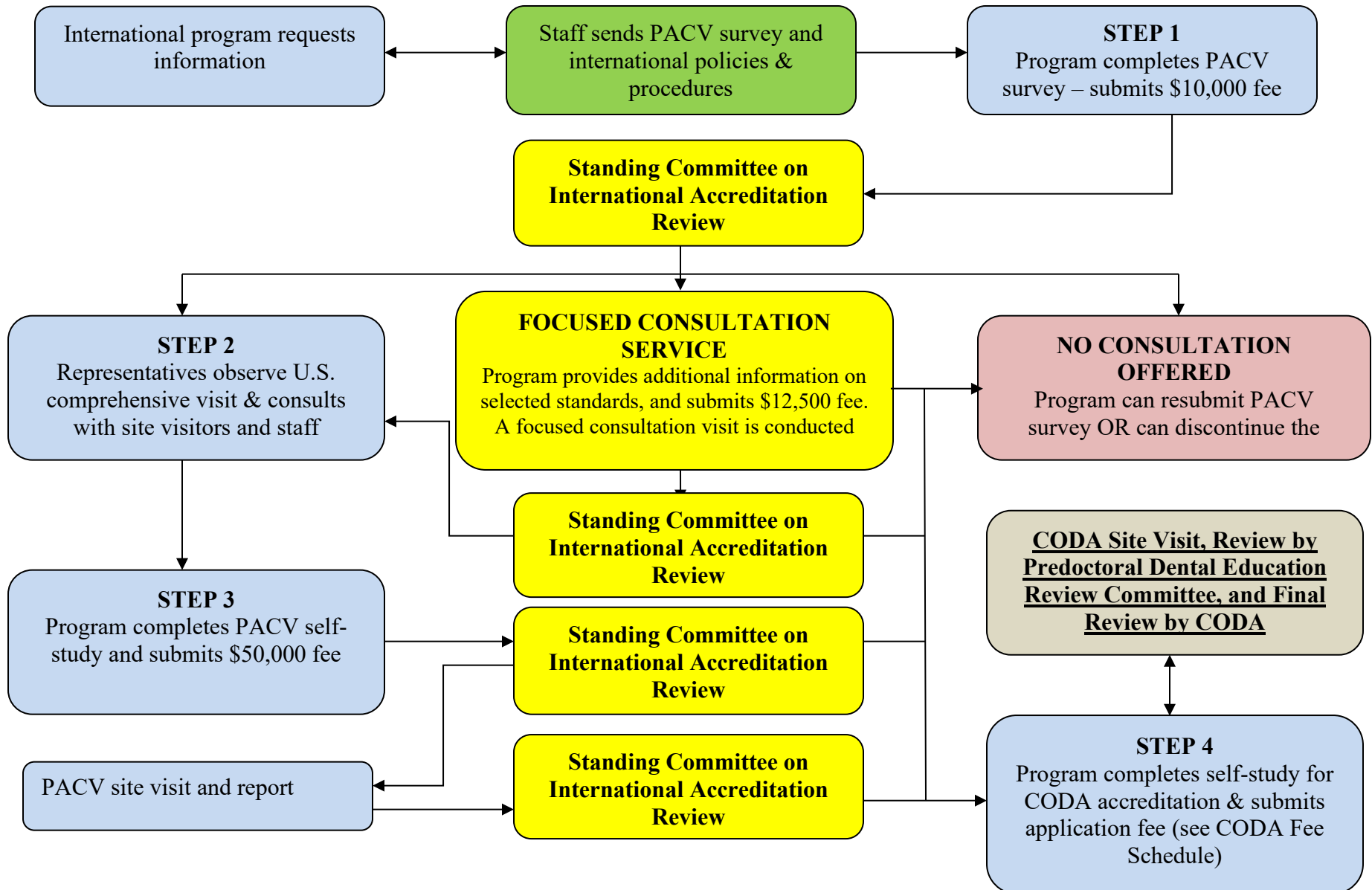
An accreditation site visit committee consists of six (6) CODA-trained volunteer site visitors and one CODA staff. The committee includes a chair, basic scientist, curriculum site visitor, clinical science site visitor, finance site visitor, and a national licensure site visitor. The trip may be seven days in length, allowing ample time for the committee to adjust to any time change.

The accreditation visit, following the process established by U.S. based programs, will involve several interviews with the identified stakeholders of the international dental program and the institution's administration. Interviews are conducted with the appropriate administrators, faculty, staff and students. The accreditation site visit committee also verifies that the written application accurately represents the program through multiple interviews, observations, on-site documentation review and facility inspection.

Following the site visit, the visiting committee writes a preliminary draft site visit report. The preliminary report is sent to the school within 4 to 6 weeks of the site visit. The dental education program may respond to the preliminary report to correct factual inaccuracies and note differences in perception. Both the preliminary site visit report and the school's response are considered by the Review Committee on Predoctoral Dental Education and the CODA. The Board of the CODA then determines whether to grant the program the appropriate accreditation status.

International Dental Education Programs who are successful in the PACV and wish to seek accreditation will be assessed an accreditation application fee. The program will also be responsible for all site visit expenses. Accredited programs also pay an annual fee (page 13).

## International Accreditation Process Flow Chart



## INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION AND ACCREDITATION FEES \*

1. Request the Payment Invoice and Payment Instructions by contacting:  
Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)  
Dr. Sherin Took, CODA Senior Director  
Ms. Kelly Stapleton, CODA Manager, Predoctoral Dental Education  
+1-312-440-4653
2. Payment must be drawn on a U.S. account in U.S. dollars.
3. Fee Categories
  - a. Application fee for PACV Survey - \$10,000.00
  - b. Focused Consultation Service:
    - a. \$12,500.00 Focused Consultation Fee
    - b. Actual costs for Focused Consultation Visit, including travel, hotel, meals for 2 volunteers/staff for 7 days; estimated \$12,500.00 to \$15,000.00
    - c. \$5,400.00 Administrative Fee per Visit
  - c. Preliminary Accreditation Consultation Site Visit (PACV):
    - a. \$50,000.00 Consultation Fee for submission of PACV self study
    - b. Actual costs for Preliminary Accreditation Consultation Site Visit, including travel, hotel, meals for 4 volunteers/staff for 7 days, estimated \$25,000.00 to \$30,000.00
    - c. \$5,400.00 Administrative Fee per Visit

International programs undergoing the consultative process must pay upfront for all prepaid cost such as air fare.

4. Actual costs for Accreditation Site Visit, including travel, hotel, meals for 7 volunteers/staff for 7 days, estimated \$44,300.00 to \$47,000.00
  - a. The application fee to the Commission is \$76,660 (2020-2025); \$84,260 (2026)
  - b. Annual Fees are \$19,670 (2024); \$20,070 (2025); \$24,090 (2026) (once accredited, programs must pay this fee every year)
  - c. 25% Administrative Fee on total cost of Visit

\* Fees are subject to change each year.

## **BROAD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PRELIMINARY ACCREDITATION CONSULTATION VISIT (PACV) SURVEY**

The PACV survey will be evaluated by the CODA Standing Committee on International Accreditation using the following broad criteria. These criteria are subject to change and will be periodically reviewed and updated.

1. Information from the U.S. State Department confirms that no conditions (war, threat of terrorism, etc.) exist that might put the safety of a visiting committee at risk.
2. There are no cultural restrictions or legal restrictions which would make site visits by U.S. citizens problematic.
3. The PACV survey responses in English are appropriate and understandable.
4. The dental school or program has a sponsoring university.
5. There is an accreditation and/or approval process within the country for higher education and the sponsoring university or dental school is accredited/approved within the country. A letter of support from the accreditation/approval agency has been submitted to the CODA. The university or institution that sponsors the dental program has been determined to meet the requirements for equivalency to U.S. regional accreditation.
6. The school or program is degree-granting.
7. It appears the program has adequate financial support.
8. The dental school or program has been in existence long enough have several graduating classes.
9. The education model is essentially similar to that in the U.S. and Canada.
10. Pre-requisites for admission to the dental school are appropriate and adequate.
11. The number of full-time and part-time faculty appears to be adequate based on the number of students enrolled.
12. There appears to be a developed curriculum plan with adequate clock hours in:
  - a. Basic Sciences
  - b. Preclinical laboratory
  - c. Clinical sciences
13. Clinical treatment of patients is an essential part of the educational program.
14. There appears to be developed facilities for dental education.
15. Health care standards and standards of care for dentistry support the practice of dentistry in essentially the same manner as in the U.S.
16. Request for Privacy Information  
In a separate document, please provide copies of all relevant privacy notices issued by the Program, as well as any other documentation governing the handling of the Program's identifiable patient information and sensitive identifiable personal information. Provide only blank copies of the Program's notices and documentation; do not submit any documents that identify a patient or other individual.