



Commission on Dental Accreditation

Advanced Dental Education

Proposed Revisions to Accreditation Standards for Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology

At its Winter 2026 meeting, the Commission directed that the proposed revisions to Standards 3-5 and 4-2.3 of the Accreditation Standards for Advanced Dental Education Programs in Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology be distributed to the appropriate communities of interest for review and comment, with comment due December 1, 2026, for review at the Winter 2027 Commission meeting

Written comments will only be accepted through the CODA's Electronic Comment Submission Portal:

https://surveys.ada.org/jfe/form/SV_57KS6LaWeb10cRf.

Additions are underlined:

~~Strikethroughs~~ indicate deletions

STANDARD 3 - FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

Institutional facilities and resources **must** be adequate to provide the educational experiences and opportunities required to fulfill the needs of the educational program as specified in these Standards. Equipment and supplies for use in managing medical emergencies **must** be readily accessible and functional.

***Intent:** The facilities and resources (e.g.; support/secretarial staff, allied personnel and/or technical staff) should permit the attainment of program goals and objectives. To ensure health and safety for patients, students/residents, faculty and staff, the physical facilities and equipment should effectively accommodate the clinic and/or laboratory schedule.*

The program **must** document its compliance with the institution's policy and applicable regulations of local, state and federal agencies, including but not limited to radiation hygiene and protection, ionizing radiation, hazardous materials, and bloodborne and infectious diseases. Policies **must** be provided to all students/residents, faculty and appropriate support staff and continuously monitored for compliance. Additionally, policies on bloodborne and infectious diseases **must** be made available to applicants for admission and patients.

***Intent:** The program may document compliance by including the applicable program policies. The program demonstrates how the policies are provided to the students/residents, faculty and appropriate support staff and who is responsible for monitoring compliance. Applicable policy states how it is made available to applicants for admission and patients should a request to review the policy be made.*

Students/Residents, faculty and appropriate support staff **must** be encouraged to be immunized against and/or tested for infectious diseases, such as mumps, measles, rubella and hepatitis B, prior to contact with patients and/or infectious objects or materials, in an effort to minimize the risk to patients and dental personnel.

***Intent:** The program should have written policy that encourages (e.g., delineates the advantages of) immunization of students/residents, faculty and appropriate support staff.*

All students/residents, faculty and support staff involved in the direct provision of patient care **must** be continuously recognized/certified in basic life support procedures, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

***Intent:** Continuously recognized/certified in basic life support procedures means the appropriate individuals are currently recognized/certified.*

The use of private office facilities as a means of providing clinical experiences in advanced dental education is only approved when the discipline has included language that defines the use of such facilities in its discipline-specific standards.

***Intent:** Required clinical experiences do not occur in private office facilities. Practice management and elective experiences may be undertaken in private office facilities.*

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3-1 An advanced oral and maxillofacial pathology training program **must** provide access for the student/resident to an active and well-organized radiographic imaging facility.

3-2 An advanced oral and maxillofacial pathology training program **must** provide access to a licensed, active and well-organized diagnostic biopsy service.

3-2.1 The director of the diagnostic biopsy service **must** be board certified and registered by the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology.

3-2.2 The oral and maxillofacial pathology training program **must** maintain adequate files, reports and an index system of diagnosed materials so that cases may be retrieved and studied.

3-3 The oral and maxillofacial pathology biopsy service **must** have sufficient space and equipment, adequate desk space, a microscope and some degree of privacy for the student/resident.

3-4 There **must** be sufficient technical and support personnel so that the service will function efficiently.

3-5 An advanced oral and maxillofacial pathology training program **must** have an active clinical facility. The student/resident **must** have access to the facility with adequate supervision by an oral and maxillofacial pathologist for the comprehensive examination and management of patients.

***Intent:** The facility should not be a traditional screening clinic for predoctoral dental patients, but a specialized clinic which focuses on the evaluation and management of patients with diseases affecting the oral and maxillofacial region.*

STANDARD 4 – CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM DURATION

The advanced dental education program **must** be designed to provide special knowledge and skills beyond the D.D.S. or D.M.D. training and be oriented to the accepted standards of the discipline's practice as set forth in specific standards contained in this document.

***Intent:** The intent is to ensure that the didactic rigor and extent of clinical experience exceeds pre-doctoral, entry level dental training or continuing education requirements and the material and experience satisfies standards for the discipline.*

Advanced dental education programs **must** include instruction or learning experiences in evidence-based practice. Evidence-based dentistry is an approach to oral health care that requires the judicious integration of systematic assessments of clinically relevant scientific evidence, relating to the patient's oral and medical condition and history, with the dentist's clinical expertise and the patient's treatment needs and preferences.

Examples of Evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

- Formal instruction (a module/lecture materials or course syllabi) in evidence-based practice
- Didactic Program course syllabi, course content outlines, or lecture materials that integrate aspects of evidence-based practice
- Literature review seminar(s)
- Multidisciplinary Grand Rounds to illustrate evidence-based practice
- Projects/portfolios that include critical reviews of the literature using evidence-based practice principles (or "searching publication databases and appraisal of the evidence")
- Assignments that include publication database searches and literature appraisal for best evidence to answer patient-focused clinical questions.

The level of discipline-specific instruction in certificate and degree-granting programs **must** be comparable.

***Intent:** The intent is to ensure that the students/residents of these programs receive the same educational requirements as set forth in these Standards.*

Documentation of all program activities **must** be ensured by the program director and available for review.

If an institution and/or program enrolls part-time students/residents, the institution/program **must** have guidelines regarding enrollment of part-time students/residents. Part-time students/residents **must** start and complete the program within a single institution, except when the program is discontinued. The director of an accredited program who enrolls students/residents on a part-time basis **must** ensure that: (1) the educational experiences, including the clinical experiences and responsibilities, are the same as required by full-time students/residents; and (2) there are an equivalent number of months spent in the program.

4-1 The program must provide training in application to the medical sciences.

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

- Formal courses taken for University credit; and
- Courses, seminars, conferences, reading assignments, hospital rounds and assignment in the laboratories which are carefully organized; the objectives and content should be carefully planned or reviewed by the program director to avoid deficiencies and unnecessary repetition.

- 4-1.1** Instruction must provide comprehensive understanding of pathology as well as understanding and application of the biomedical and clinical sciences, as these relate to patient care.

Intent: Instruction in other areas such as research and teaching methodologies, experimental design, quality assurance, and laboratory information systems is also important.

- 4-1.2** A program must not contain a preponderance of didactic course work.

Intent: The amount of time devoted to didactic course work should be carefully evaluated in relation to the total program.

4-2 SURGICAL ORAL PATHOLOGY

- 4-2.1** Students/Residents must study and assume initial major responsibility for reports and diagnosis on an adequate volume of surgical specimens of sufficient variety to obtain competence in surgical oral and maxillofacial pathology.

Intent: Surgical oral and maxillofacial pathology comprises an essential and important aspect of an advanced dental education program in oral and maxillofacial pathology. Competence in this area can be accomplished in only an active, professional, licensed and quality-oriented laboratory service that processes a volume of human material that assures student/resident exposure to the spectrum of diseases encountered in the oral regions.

- 4-2.2** Although quality of education is stressed, the laboratory must receive at least 2000 oral and maxillofacial pathology accessions of adequate variety annually.

- 4-2.3** Students/residents must have adequate exposure to sufficient seminar materials, special collections, exchange slides, **digital/virtual pathology**, and file materials to gain experience with diagnosis of unusual and difficult lesions.

- 4-2.4** Surgical oral and maxillofacial pathology case conferences must be held at least weekly, but daily conferences are recommended.

- 4-2.5** Students/residents **must** become familiar with administrative and licensing procedures associated with directorship of laboratories.