

Site Visitors

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) uses site visitors with education and practice expertise in the discipline or areas being evaluated to conduct its accreditation program. Site visitors are fact-finders, who report committee findings to CODA. Nominations for site visitors are requested from national dental and dental-related organizations. In appointing site visitors, CODA takes into account a balance in geographic distribution and representation. Self-nominations are accepted. Site Visitors are appointed by CODA annually and may be re-appointed. Site visitor appointments become effective after completion of training.

Policies on Site Visitors

On page 63 of the [Evaluation and Operational Policies and Procedures manual](#), you can find all policies on [site visitors](#). These policies include information on Review Committee and CODA board members serving on site visits, consulting as a site visitor, conflict of interest, and site visitor nominations, appointments and composition.

Site Visitor terms are one year, renewable up to six years. CODA can remove a site visitor for failing to comply with CODA policies, continued, gross or willful neglect of the duties of a site visitor, or other just cause as determined by CODA.

Site Visitors are appointed/reappointed annually and required to sign CODA's Conflict of Interest Statement, the Agreement of Confidentiality, the Copyright Assignment, Licensure Attestation, and the ADA's Professional Conduct Policy and Prohibition Against Harassment. Site Visitors must also complete annual training and will receive periodic updates on CODA's policies and procedures related to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Criteria for Nomination of Site Visitors

CODA site visits include both educators and practitioners to ensure a comprehensive peer review process that evaluates all administrative and educational aspects of a program.

Educator Site Visitor Nomination Criteria

- Commitment to predoctoral, advanced, and/or allied dental education;
- Active involvement in an accredited predoctoral, advanced, or allied dental education program as a full- or part-time faculty member; and
- Subject matter experts with formal education and credentialed in the applicable discipline.

Practitioner Site Visitor Nomination Criteria

- Commitment to predoctoral, advanced, and/or allied dental education;
- Current active license and work effort as a practitioner or clinical instructor; and
- Formal education and credential in the applicable discipline.

Predoctoral Dental Education Nominees

The accreditation of predoctoral dental education programs is conducted through the mechanism of a visiting committee. Membership on such visiting committees is general dentistry oriented rather than discipline or subject matter area oriented.

Chair:

- Must be a current dean of a dental school or have served as dean within the previous three (3) years.
- Should have accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental education program accredited by CODA and as a previous site visitor.

Basic Science:

- Must be an individual who currently teaches one or more biomedical science courses to dental education students or has done so within the previous three (3) years.
- Should have accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental education program accredited by CODA or as a previous site visitor.

Clinical Science:

- Must be a current clinical dean or an individual with extensive knowledge of and experience with the quality assurance process and overall clinic operations.
- Has served in the above capacity within the previous three (3) years.
- Should have accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental education program accredited by CODA or as a previous site visitor.

Curriculum:

- Must be a current academic affairs dean or an individual with extensive knowledge and experience in curriculum management.
- Has served in the above capacity within the previous three (3) years.
- Should have accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental education program accredited by CODA or as a previous site visitor.

Finance:

- Must be a current financial officer of a dental school or an individual with extensive knowledge of and experience with the business, finance and administration of a dental school.
- Has served in the above capacity within the previous three (3) years.
- Should have accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental education program accredited by CODA or as a previous site visitor.

National Licensure:

- Should be a current clinical board examiner or have served in that capacity within the previous three (3) years.
- Should have an interest in the accreditation process.

Advanced Dental Education Nominees

In the disciplines of dental public health, dental anesthesiology, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial pathology, oral and maxillofacial radiology, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral medicine, orofacial pain, orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics and prosthodontics, candidates should be:

- board certified; and/or
- Completed or participated in a CODA-accredited advanced dental education program in the discipline; and
- must have experience in advanced dental education as teachers or administrators.

Each applicable Review Committee will determine if board certification is required. Some sponsoring organizations have established additional criteria for their nominations to CODA.

Allied Dental Education Nominees

Dental Hygiene

- a full-time or part-time appointment with a dental hygiene program accredited by CODA;
- a baccalaureate or higher degree;
- background in educational methodology;
- accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental hygiene education program that has completed a site visit; and
- accreditation experience within the previous three years.

Dental Assisting:

- certification by the Dental Assisting National Board as a dental assistant*;
- full-time or part-time appointment with a dental assisting program accredited by CODA;
- equivalent of three years full-time dental assisting teaching experience;
- baccalaureate or higher degree;
- demonstrated knowledge of accreditation; and
- current background in educational methodology.
 - *A licensed dentist who is faculty at a CODA-accredited dental assisting program does not need certification by the Dental Assisting National Board as a dental assistant.

Dental Laboratory Technology:

- background in all five (5) dental laboratory technology specialty areas: complete dentures, removable dentures, crown and bridge, dental ceramics, and orthodontics;
- background in educational methodology
- knowledge of the accreditation process and the Accreditation Standards for Dental Laboratory Technology Education Programs;
- Certified Dental Technician credential through the National Board of Certification; and
- full or part-time appointment with a dental laboratory technology education program accredited by CODA or previous experience as a CODA site visitor.

Dental Therapy:

- a full-time or part-time appointment with a predoctoral dental or allied dental education program accredited by CODA or an accredited (or recognized) dental therapy program;
- a baccalaureate or higher degree;
- background in educational methodology;
- accreditation experience through an affiliation with a dental therapy, allied, or predoctoral dental program that has completed a site visit;*
- accreditation experience within the previous three (3) years;*
- must either be a licensed dentist educator (general dentist) or licensed dental therapist educator; and
- the “licensed dentist educator” may be predoctoral dental educator site visitor (*i.e., a general dentist educator who serves as curriculum or clinical predoctoral site visitor*) or allied dental educator site visitors.
 - *temporarily waived for dental therapist educator position until after CODA determines there exists an adequate supply of site visitors.

Dental therapy site visit team consist of three members as follows:

- one dental therapist educator
- one predoctoral dentist educator (curriculum or clinical site visitor)
- one additional site visitor that could be either a second dental therapist educator, second predoctoral dentist educator, or an allied dentist educator.

Job Descriptions

Predocutorial Dental Education Visiting Committee Members

Chair

- Will conduct a briefing session with the entire visiting committee relative to the philosophy of the CODA on the approach, purpose and methodology of the conduct of the site visit on the evening prior to the first day of the site visit;
- Will be responsible for the continual reinforcement of the above concepts during the course of the site visit and for monitoring continually the conduct of the site visit;
- Will brief visiting committee members as to their role as a fact-finding and reporting committee and the appropriate protocol during the course of the site visit; including what is expected of each member in terms of kinds of activities and relative to the report of findings and conclusions and recommendations, with adequate background rationale for making recommendations and enumerating strengths and weaknesses in the education program being evaluated;
- Will lead all assigned conferences and executive sessions;
- Will serve as liaison between the visiting committee members and the dental administration and the executive administrators of the institution;
- Will make specific and special assignments to individual visiting committee members relative to evaluating and reporting on specific matters and sections of the site visit report, e.g. administrative organization, faculty, library facilities and resources, research program, facilities and equipment, admission process, hospital program(s), student achievement;
- Will be responsible for ensuring that site visitors fully understand their responsibility for reporting adequately, but succinctly, in their area of expertise (finance, curriculum, basic sciences, clinical sciences and national licensure);
- Will consult with the dental administration at regular intervals to discuss progress of the visit;
- Will be responsible, during executive sessions with visiting committee members, for the separation of recommendations from suggestions—focusing upon the recommendations which are to be included in the site visit report which are considered to be major, critical and essential to the conduct of the education program(s); suggestions for program enhancement are to be included as part of the narrative of the report;
- Will be responsible for the preparation of a written summary of the visiting committee's conclusions, findings, perceptions and observations of the program(s) in the form of suggestions and recommendations, as appropriate, for oral presentation during the exit interview with the Dean, and for presentation of an abbreviated summary during the exit interview with the institution's executive administrators.
- Will assess institutional effectiveness including:
 - Assessment of the school's mission statement;
 - Assessment and evaluation of the school's planning, and achievement of defined goals related to education, patient care, research and service;
 - Assessment of the school's outcomes assessment process; and
 - Evaluation of the school's interaction with other components of higher education, health care education or health care delivery systems.
- Will assess the effectiveness of faculty and staff including:
 - Assessment of the number and distribution of faculty in meeting the school's stated objectives;
 - Assessment of the school's faculty development process;
 - Assessment of the school's faculty governance;
 - Assessment of the school's measurement of faculty performance in teaching, patient care, scholarship and service; and
 - Assessment of the school's promotion and tenure process.

Financial Site Visitor

- Will confer with the sponsoring institution's chief financial officer(s) and the dental administration and its financial manager to assess the adequacy of the full spectrum of finance as it relates to the dental school including:
 - Assessment of the operating budget and budgeting process;
 - Assessment of all sources of revenue (state, federal, tuition and fees, practice plans, etc.);
 - Evaluation of the maintenance of the facilities and learning resources to support the school's mission and goals;
 - Assessment of the school's compliance with applicable regulations;
 - Assessment of the resources for planned and/or future renovations and/or new construction; and
 - Assessment of the school's resources as they relate to its mission and goals.

Curriculum Site Visitor

- Will examine the education program and the education support services including:
 - Admissions
 - Instruction
 - Curriculum Management
 - Behavioral Sciences
 - Practice Management
 - Ethics and Professionalism
 - Information Management and Critical Thinking
 - Student Services

Basic Science Site Visitor

- Will work closely with curriculum site visitor to ensure consistency of evaluation and assessment. During the formal and informal evaluation of the basic sciences, the site visitor will conduct personal interviews with students, faculty and departmental Chairs and during the assessment will focus on:
 - Biomedical Sciences
 - Research Program

Clinical Sciences Site Visitor and National Licensure (Practitioner) Site Visitor

- Within the limitations imposed by the length of the site visit, will examine and evaluate the preclinical and clinical portions of the predoctoral dental education program and activities in terms of the details of what is occurring in these areas and assess the quality of the education and experiences provided to students to prepare them for dental practice.
- Will work closely with curriculum site visitor to ensure consistency of evaluation and assessment. During the formal and informal evaluation of the preclinical and clinical sciences, will conduct personal interviews with students, faculty and departmental chairs and during the assessment will focus upon:
 - Clinical Sciences
 - Patient Care Services
 - During the formal and informal evaluation of the clinical program, will conduct personal interviews with students, faculty and departmental chairs and during the assessment will focus upon:
 - stated objectives;
 - adequacy of instruction;
 - appropriateness of subject matter;
 - intra/extra-mural experiences;
 - student clinic requirements;
 - student performance evaluation mechanisms;
 - sterilization of instruments;
 - patient care policies;
 - laboratory tests for patients;
 - patient physical examinations; and
 - clinic administration.

Advanced Dental Education Site Visitors

Dental Public Health, Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (Residency and Fellowship), Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics (Residency and Fellowship), Pediatric Dentistry, Periodontics, Prosthodontics (Combined and Maxillofacial), and Advanced Education in General Dentistry, General Practice Residency, Oral Medicine, Orofacial Pain, and Dental Anesthesiology.

Advanced dental education program site visitors will utilize the site visitors' evaluation report form for their respective area, conduct personal interviews with Program Directors, faculty and students, and assess the advanced dental education program focusing upon:

- administration and staff;
- admissions procedures;
- physical facilities and equipment;
- didactic program (biomedical, lecture, seminar and conference program)
- clinical program;
- evaluation of residents;
- research activities and requirements;
- library resources;
- intra/extra-mural experiences;
- hospital program; and
- teaching conducted by residents.

An assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the advanced dental education program is based upon the published accreditation standards for each respective program.

Allied Dental Education Site Visitors

Site Visit Chair

- Will function as chair/staff representative of visiting committee of site visitors evaluating the allied dental education programs in dental assisting, dental hygiene, dental therapy and dental laboratory technology;
- Will be responsible for the continual reinforcement of the Commission's procedures to be used for the site visit and for monitoring continually the conduct of the visit;
- Will brief site visitors as to their role as a fact finding and reporting committee and the appropriate protocol during the course of the site visit; including what is expected of each site visitor in terms of kinds of activities and relative to the report of findings and conclusions and recommendations, with adequate background rationale for making recommendations and enumerating strengths and weaknesses in the education program being evaluated;
- Will chair all conferences and meetings of the allied dental visiting committee, as well as those which occur during the visiting committee's executive sessions;
- Will be responsible for maintaining closely the site visit evaluation schedule;
- Will serve as liaison between the visiting committee and the allied dental visiting committee members;
- Will make specific and special assignments to individual visiting committee members relative to evaluating and reporting on specific matters and sections of the site visit report, e.g. administrative organization, faculty, library facilities and resources, research program facilities and equipment, admissions process, hospital program(s), student achievement;
- Will be responsible for ensuring that site visitors fully understand their responsibility for reporting adequately, but succinctly, in their area of expertise;
- Will consult with the allied dental administration at regular intervals to discuss progress of the visit;
- Will be responsible, during executive sessions with visiting committee members, for the separation of recommendations from suggestions – focusing upon the recommendations which are to be included in the site visit report which are considered major, critical and essential to the conduct of the education program(s). Suggestions for program enhancement are to be included as part of the narrative of the report; and

- Will be responsible for the preparation of a written summary of the visiting committee's conclusions, finding, perceptions and observations of program(s) strengths, weaknesses, recommendations and suggestions for oral presentation during the exit interview with the dean, and for presentation of an abbreviated summary during the exit interview with the institution's executive administrators.

Dentist

A dentist is also included, when at all possible, on site visits to dental assisting and dental hygiene programs in settings other than dental schools. An additional dentist site visitor will be added to dental school visiting committees when multiple programs are to be reviewed. The role of the dentist team member during allied site visits includes the following responsibilities:

- Take notes during conferences;
- Conduct meeting with advisory committee, when applicable;
- Ensure confidentiality by waiting to begin the meeting until all affiliated school personnel have left the room;
- Introduce the visiting committee to the advisory committee members;
- Thank the members of the committee for meeting with the team and for their interest in and commitment to the specific allied program(s);
- Explain the purpose of the site visit;
- Discuss the Commission's policy on confidentiality as it applies to the meeting and the entire site visit;
- Begin discussion of the following topics/questions:
 - How often the committee meets and the purpose or goals of the committee
 - Strengths/weaknesses of the students
 - Specific current committee activities and future goals or anticipated activities
- Ensure that all of the questions in the Site Visit Evaluation Report form under Standard 1. Institutional Effectiveness, Community Resources are answered during the meeting;
- Assist Curriculum site visitor in review of science courses;
- Review clinical courses and clinical evaluation mechanisms;
- Review learning resources – library & audiovisual materials/equipment (It is usually most efficient for this review to be conducted by the dentist site visitor only.);
- Review documentation in the self-study prior to visit;
- Conduct preclinical, clinical, and/or laboratory observations (on/off campus) with Curriculum site visitor;
 - Extended campus laboratory facilities
 - Extramural clinical facilities
- Review equipment and instruments using Site Visit Evaluation Report Checklist under Standard 4. Educational Support Services;
- Formulate recommendations and suggestions; and
- After the visit, review and critique preliminary draft of the site visit report.