

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON DENTAL ASSISTING EDUCATION TO THE COMMISSION ON DENTAL ACCREDITATION

Committee Chair: Ms. Martha McCaslin. Committee Members: Ms. Julie Bera, Ms. Kimberly Bland, Ms. Margaret Bowman-Pensel, Ms. Kori Preble-Boeckler, Ms. Christy Ross, Dr. Preeti Sahasi, and Dr. Debra Schneider. Ms. Dorothea Cavallucci was unable to attend the meeting. Guests (Open Session Only): Mr. Adam Block, government relations associate, Dental Assisting National Board (DANB), Ms. Eileen O'Donnell, document review coordinator, Pearson VUE and Training, DANB, and Ms. McKayla Theisen, senior program manager for professional development, American Dental Education Association, attended the policy portion of the meeting. Commission Staff: Ms. Jamie Asher-Hernandez, manager, Allied Dental Education, Dr. Sherin Tooks, director, and Mr. Daniel Sloyan, senior project assistant, Allied Dental Education, Commission on Dental Accreditation. The meeting of the Review Committee on Dental Assisting Education (DA RC) was held on July 14-15, 2022 via a virtual meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS RELATED TO DENTAL ASSISTING EDUCATION

Informational Report on Frequency of Citings of Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs (p. 300): The Review Committee on Dental Assisting Education (DA RC) considered the annual report of the frequency of citings of Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs and noted the most frequently cited areas of non-compliance for site visits conducted between July 1, 2020 through October 31, 2021.

The data indicates that a total of 212 citings of non-compliance were made. Of these, 16 (7.5%) were related to Standard 1–Institutional Effectiveness; 154 (72.6%) were related to Standard 2–Educational Programs; 17 (8%) were related to Standard 3–Administration, Faculty and Staff; 16 (7.5%) were related to Standard 4–Educational Support Services; 8 (3.8%) were related to Standard 5–Health and Safety Provisions; and 1 (0.5%) were related to Standard 6–Patient Care Services.

Analysis of the data indicates the most frequently cited areas of non-compliance are within Standard 2-Educational Programs. Standard 2-9, a-o, related to the skills/functions that students demonstrate knowledge of, in a laboratory/preclinical setting prior to performing these skills/functions in a clinical setting, was cited most frequently and represents 20.8% (32) of all Standard 2 citations. Following close behind Standard 2-9 are the subsets of Standards 2-5 related to curriculum sequence, assimilation, depth, and scope, and Standard 2-6, a-c, which describes the formal, written curriculum management plan to include annual curriculum review, evaluation, and coordinating instruction among faculty, was cited most frequently and represents 9.1% (14) of all Standard 2 citations. The subset of citations within Standard 1–Institutional Effectiveness were most frequent in Standard 1-7 (7) related to the dentists and dental assistants being equally represented on the advisory committee, and represent 43.8% all of Standard 1–Institutional Effectiveness citations.

Recommendation: This report is informational in nature and no action is required.

Consideration of the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Allied Dental

Education Biosketch (p. 301): At its Winter 2022 meeting, the Commission on Dental Accreditation considered the Report of the Review Committee on Dental Hygiene Education (DH RC), which included a new business item related to the biosketch for allied dental education programs. Specifically, the DH RC discussed the Commission’s Allied Biosketch Template that is provided to dental hygiene education programs for use when reporting information on faculty, including changes in the program director. The DH RC noted that information is often incomplete and/or outdated, which results in questions pertaining to a program’s compliance with CODA’s Accreditation Standards related to faculty qualifications. It was also noted that the Teaching Schedule table within the biosketch should be reviewed to ensure current and complete program director and full-time faculty duties are clearly documented by programs. At its Winter 2022 meeting, the Commission directed the appointment of an Ad Hoc Committee of dental hygiene and dental assisting Review Committee members to review the Allied Biosketch Template, with a report to the Commission in Summer 2022.

At this meeting, the DA RC considered the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to Review the Allied Dental Education Biosketch, including a proposed revised biosketch (**Appendix 2, Policy Report p. 301**). The DA RC believed that the proposed revised biosketch will better assure that information received by the Commission is complete and reflective of the interrelationship between teaching, knowledge of subjects an individual is teaching, and educational methodology. The Committee believed that the revised biosketch should be adopted by the Commission and implemented immediately, including implementation in the Dental Assisting Self-Study Guide.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Commission on Dental Accreditation direct adoption and immediate implementation of the proposed revised Allied Biosketch (**Appendix 2, Policy Report p. 301**) and inclusion in all applicable Commission documents including the Dental Assisting Self-Study Guide.

Consideration of Accreditation Standards Related to Institutional Accreditation (p. 302):

The Review Committee on Dental Assisting Education (DA RC) considered the changes in the language used by the United States Department of Education (USDE) related to a parent institution’s accreditation changed from “regional” accreditation to “institutional” accreditation, as noted in regulation §602.3 (Definitions). It was noted that review of this topic occurred in Winter 2021, Summer 2021, and Winter 2022. Most recently, in Winter 2022, the Commission directed that the Review Committees on Dental Assisting, Dental Hygiene, Dental Laboratory Technology, and Predoctoral Dental Education review the Accreditation Standards within their purview and confirm the language and names of accrediting agencies included is accurate, complete and current, and to review and replace, where appropriate, regional/national accreditation with institutional accreditation, with a report to the Commission at its Summer 2022 meeting.

At this meeting, the DA RC reviewed Standard 1-5 of the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs, related to the institutional accreditation requirement for dental assisting education programs that are accredited by the Commission. Following discussion, the DA RC believed that some institutional accreditors' names should be updated in CODA's Accreditation Standards. The editorial changes in institutional accreditor names are noted below (Underline indicates Addition; ~~Strikethrough~~ indicates Deletion).

1-5 Programs must be sponsored by institutions of post-secondary education which are accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Intent:

Dental schools, four-year colleges and universities, community colleges, technical institutes, vocational schools, private schools and recognized federal service training centers which offer appropriate fiscal, facility, faculty and curriculum resources are considered appropriate settings for the program.

Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:

- Accreditation (or candidate status) from a recognized institutional (regional, national or state) accrediting agency such as: ~~Commission on Higher Education~~, Middle States Commission on Higher Education ~~Association of Colleges and Schools~~; ~~Commission on Institutions of Higher Education~~, New England Commission on Higher Education ~~Association of Schools and Colleges~~; Commission on Technical and Career Institutions, New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Higher Learning Commission ~~Commission on Institutions of Higher Education~~, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; ~~Commission on Colleges~~, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges and Commission on Colleges and Universities; ~~Commission on Colleges~~, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges; WASC Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges; ~~Western Association of Schools and Colleges~~; ~~Accrediting Commission for WASC~~ Senior Colleges and University Commission ~~Universities~~, ~~Western Association of Schools and Colleges~~; Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools; Accrediting Commission ~~of for~~ Career Schools and Colleges ~~of Technology~~; ~~Accrediting Commission of the~~ Distance Education Accrediting Commission ~~and Training Council~~; The Council on Occupational Education; Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools

The DA RC also considered whether additional Accreditation Standards warrant revisions. Since the dental assisting Standards cite both national and regional accreditors, the DA RC believed no other revisions were warranted at this time. Due to the editorial nature of the proposed revisions to Standard 1-5, the DA RC recommended that the Commission adopt and immediately implement the proposed revisions in all applicable Dental Assisting Standards and related documents.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Commission on Dental Accreditation adopt and direct immediate implementation of the proposed revisions, noted above, to Standard 1-5 of the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs and all related documents.

Consideration of Proposed Revisions to the Accreditation Standards for Allied Dental Education Programs in Dental Assisting (p. 303): On May 19, 2022, the Commission on Dental Accreditation received a letter from Mr. Bracken Killpack, executive director, Washington State Dental Association, on behalf of 15 state dental associations, to consider proposed revisions for the removal of the faculty to student ratios for clinical settings (Standard 3-8) and the requirement that the program administrator possess a baccalaureate degree or higher degree (Standard 3-4) from the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs. The state dental associations believe that a severe shortage of dental assistants could be addressed, in part, through changes to the above noted Standards.

Following publication of the Commission's Summer 2022 policy on this matter, on June 27, 2022, the Commission received a letter from the ADA's Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL) (**Appendix 1**) in regard to the 15 state dental associations and further requesting the Commission to consider proposed revisions to Standard 2-1 that would allow dental assisting programs and their sponsoring postsecondary institutions to determine solely the program's admission criteria, procedures and policies. With this change, a sponsoring postsecondary institution and program would have the prerogative to matriculate high school students wishing to enroll, perhaps on a part-time basis, in an accredited dental assisting program. The Council believed that such a change would allow programs to determine their specific admission requirements which may increase their enrollments and help to alleviate the ongoing workforce shortage of dental assistants.

At this meeting, the DA RC considered the letters received in the Commission office (**Appendix 1, Policy Report p. 303, and Appendix 1**). The DA RC first noted that there was no data to support the recommendations to revise the CODA standards as submitted by the state dental associations.

Related to the requested revisions to faculty to student ratios (Standard 3-8), the DA RC noted that teaching ratios have a long-standing history within the CODA Accreditation Standards for allied dental education programs. The ratios are in place to ensure appropriate instruction and supervision of students as a critical component to the quality of education and skill development, as well as to ensure protection of the student. The DA RC also noted that most states do not require graduation from a Commission-accredited dental assisting program for licensure and/or employment. Therefore, there is likely little to no correlation between workforce shortages and CODA Standards, and no information was provided to suggest otherwise. Following discussion, the DA RC believed there should be no change to the Standards related to faculty to student ratios.

Related to the requested revisions to program administrator qualifications (Standard 3-4), the DA RC discussed the program administrator qualifications and determined these qualifications are reflective of the educational background that supports students in dental assisting education programs. The Committee also discussed that many educational institutions that sponsor dental assisting education programs require a program administrator to have a baccalaureate degree to serve as a program administrator. Institutions may also require that faculty have degrees higher than the degree offered to their students. The Committee also noted that holding a baccalaureate degree enhances the quality of education. Following discussion, the DA RC believed there should be no change to the Standards related to program director qualifications at this time.

Related to the requested revisions to admissions including the requirement for a high-school diploma or its equivalent (Standard 2-1), the DA RC discussed the rationale for this requirement and discussed the need for more data regarding how changing this standard may impact the program. The DA RC noted that in some states students cannot perform dental assisting skills and functions until they reach a certain age, which is often post-secondary. Additionally, the DA RC noted that CODA-accredited dental assisting programs may admit students through advanced standing policies and procedures when those students have completed equivalent didactic, laboratory and preclinical content prior to admission in the CODA-accredited program. Following discussion, the DA RC believed there should be no change to the Standard related to admissions at this time.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Commission on Dental Accreditation direct there be no revision to Standard 2-1 (admissions), Standard 3-8 (faculty to student ratios), and Standard 3-4 (program administrator qualifications) of the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion Related to Decline in CODA-Accredited Dental Assisting Programs: The Review Committee on Dental Assisting Education (DA RC) discussed the decline in CODA-accredited dental assisting programs and the number of students enrolled in CODA-accredited dental assisting programs over the last several years. The DA RC noted that one reason for this decline may be that many states do not require graduation from a CODA-accredited program to practice as a dental assistant. There appears to be a lack of standardized certification processes for the profession of dental assisting. It was noted that CODA is not always informed of the reason(s) why a program/institution may choose to discontinue its accreditation with CODA. The DA RC believes it would be helpful to understand the reason(s) why dental assisting programs may discontinue CODA-accreditation. It was suggested that a component of the CODA guidelines for reporting a discontinuance/teach-out report could provide an opportunity for these programs to disclose the rationale for discontinuing so that the Commission may begin to capture this information more succinctly. The Committee believed the feedback from discontinuing dental assisting programs could assist in the review of the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting to determine if revisions need to be made to the Standards. Following discussion, the DA RC

believed the Commission should direct the Standing Committee on Documentation and Policy Reviews to consider the guidelines for reporting program closure/discontinuance/teach-out to determine whether information should be collected on the reasons for program closure or discontinuance of accreditation.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the Commission on Dental Accreditation direct the Standing Committee on Documentation and Policy Reviews to review and revise, as needed, the policy and procedure for reporting program closure/discontinuance/teach-out reports to provide the Commission with feedback as to why programs discontinue CODA-accreditation.

CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS RELATING TO MORE THAN ONE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Matters related to more than one review committee are included in a separate report.

CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS RELATED TO ACCREDITATION STATUS

Matters related to accreditation status of programs are included in a separate report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Martha McCaslin
Chair, Review Committee on Dental Assisting Education

June 27, 2022

Dr. Bruce Rotter, Chair
Commission on Dental Accreditation
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611

Dear Dr. Rotter,

The ADA Council on Dental Education and Licensure has subject matter responsibility for matters related to the accreditation of dental, advanced dental and allied dental education programs. At its June 16-17, 2022 meeting, the Council reviewed the current Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs and discussed a possible revision to Standard 2-1 that would allow dental assisting programs and their sponsoring postsecondary institutions to determine solely the program's admission criteria, procedures and policies. With this change, a sponsoring postsecondary institution and program would have the prerogative to matriculate high school students wishing to enroll, perhaps on a part-time basis, in an accredited dental assisting program. Providing this greater flexibility in Standard 2-1 aligns with the Commission's intent to "encourage curricular experimentation, development of institutional individuality, and achievement of excellence without establishment of uniformity." The Council believed that such a change will allow programs to determine their specific admission requirements which may increase their enrollments and help to alleviate the ongoing workforce shortage of dental assistants.

Accordingly, the Council respectfully requests the Commission to consider the following proposed revision to Dental Assisting Standard 2-1 (deletions are ~~stricken~~):

2-1 Admission of students must be based on specific published criteria, procedures and policies that include a high-school diploma or its equivalent, or post-secondary degree. Previous academic performance or other predictors of scholastic aptitude and ability must be utilized as criteria in selecting students with the potential to successfully complete the program. Applicants must be informed of the criteria and procedures for selection, goals of the program, curricular content, course transferability, scope of practice and employment opportunities for dental assistants.

In a separate but related matter, the Council reviewed correspondence dated May 19, 2022 to the Commission on Dental Accreditation submitted by fifteen state dental associations requesting consideration of revisions to the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs. The Council appreciated the thoughtful and deliberate nature of the state dental associations' request, recognizing the current shortage of dental assistants and the impact the shortage is having on access to patient care. Accordingly, the Council urges the Commission to also review the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs regarding faculty-to-student ratios and the qualifications of program administrators as requested in the letter.

Thank you for your consideration of the Council's comments and suggested revisions to the Accreditation Standards for Dental Assisting Education Programs.

Sincerely,

Donna Thomas-Moses

Donna Thomas-Moses, D.M.D., P.C.
Chair, Council on Dental Education and Licensure

DTM:kh/ap

cc: Colorado Dental Association
Connecticut State Dental Association
Idaho State Dental Association
Indiana Dental Association
Missouri Dental Association
Montana Dental Association
New Mexico Dental Association
Ohio Dental Association
Oregon Dental Association
Rhode Island Dental Association
Tennessee Dental Association
Virginia Dental Association
Washington State Dental Association
Wisconsin Dental Association
Wyoming Dental Association
Ms. Martha McCaslin, Chair, CODA Review Committee on Dental Assisting
Education
Dr. Sherin Tooks, Director, Commission on Dental Accreditation
Dr. James A. Hoddick, Chair, Council on Dental Practice
Dr. Hana Alberti, Director, Council on Dental Practice
Dr. Donna Thomas-Moses, Chair, Council on Dental Education and Licensure
Ms. Karen Hart, Director, Council on Dental Education Licensure
Dr. Cesar R. Sabates, President, American Dental Association
Dr. Raymond A. Cohlma, Executive Director, American Dental Association