

**From:** [Commission on Dental Accreditation](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Additional Post-CODA Meeting Guidance on Interruption of Education Related to COVID-19 for the Class of 2020 (April 14, 2020)  
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## CODA Alert

### **Additional Post-CODA Meeting Guidance on Interruption of Education Related to COVID-19 for the Class of 2020 (April 14, 2020)**

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) conducted a special, closed meeting on April 13, 2020 to further discuss the impact of COVID-19 on dental and dental-related education programs. The Commission considered the proposed *temporary flexibility* for the Class of 2020 based on recommendations of each of its Review Committees.

The Commission continues to recognize the struggle and hardship that COVID-19 has placed on the dental education community, and especially the students, residents, and fellows. The Commission also recognizes the significant work of dental educators through the use of innovative approaches to maintain the quality of dental education for students, residents, and fellows, including but not limited to the use of distance education, enhanced simulation activities, and other valid and reliable educational modalities.

**The Commission reminds each educational program that it has an obligation and responsibility to ensure that its graduates of the Class of 2020 are competent and that the program complies with CODA's Accreditation Standards. Programs may choose to apply the discipline-specific *temporary flexibility* in a number of ways, which results in comparable assessment and evaluation of the Class of 2020 student/resident/fellow to ensure that each Class of 2020 student/resident/fellow is eligible for graduation from a CODA-accredited program. Programs are encouraged to confer with institutional administration to ensure that the overall program objectives, course and program requirements, and program competencies are fully satisfied in determining a student's/resident's/fellow's eligibility to graduate in the Class of 2020. If the Class of 2020 student/resident/fellow has not satisfied the aforementioned program expectations, additional time and/or experiences in the program may be necessary.**

The Commission will conduct special meetings of its Review Committees and the Commission in order to consider the Interruption of Education Reports submitted by each CODA-accredited educational program. **Programs are reminded that they are responsible for determining whether each Class of 2020 student/resident/fellow is eligible for graduation; programs need not await CODA approval of Interruption of Education Reports when making such decisions.** However, failure to submit the report or to document continued compliance with CODA's Accreditation Standards, *temporary flexibility*, policies and/or procedures, could result in further review of the program by the Commission.

Programs are also reminded that there may be licensure or other credentialing implications as a result of the program's temporary curricular modifications, which must be considered by the program and institution and are outside of CODA's purview.

[Reporting Interruption of Education by CODA \(Due no later than May 15, 2020\):](#)

**The Commission has directed that all CODA-accredited programs must submit a report on the use of distance education and interruption of education by no later than May 15, 2020.** The Guidelines for Reporting an Interruption of Education must be used to develop the

program's report. Additionally, the temporary flexibility guidance for each discipline is found below. Please keep the following in mind when preparing the report:

- **Distance Education:** Use of distance education (Question 2a), or affirmation that distance education has not changed or is not in use, must be reported for all years of the program. This portion of the program's report must not exceed five (5) pages.
  - If a program previously submitted a distance education report that conforms to the Commission's prior guidance and addresses the items in Question 2a, no further submission on distance education is required.
  - If a program has not submitted a report on distance education to CODA, or if the previously submitted report does not address the guidance on distance education, Question 2a of the Guidelines for Reporting Interruption of Education must be addressed in the program's submission.
- **Interruption of Education:** The program's curricular modifications must be reported to ensure the program complies with CODA Accreditation Standards and the *temporary flexibility* when determining (or when it determined) graduation eligibility for the individuals in the Class of 2020, including those eligible for immediate graduation using alternative mechanisms of education and evaluation.
  - Excluding the distance education question as noted above, all remaining questions and subparts within the Guidelines for Reporting Interruption of Education must be addressed [no more than five (5) pages] related to the program's management of instruction and evaluation of the Class of 2020. In reporting interruption of education, the program must answer each question with a discussion of the program's temporary modifications in instruction and evaluation, in accordance with CODA's *temporary flexibility* document. The temporary flexibility for each discipline is found below.

#### Future Commission Considerations:

The Commission recognizes that the educational impact of COVID-19 reaches beyond the Class of 2020, which has an immediate urgency related to graduation. As such, the Commission will further study this topic and may issue additional guidance at a later date to address each program's additional adjustments to maintain the quality of dental education for students, residents, and fellows in accordance with CODA's Accreditation Standards, policies and procedures.

#### Considerations for Modifications to Program Length Related to Title IV Funding (Outside of CODA's Purview):

Programs are again reminded that if the program length is significantly shortened, the institution should notify the institutional accreditor (even for dental education programs) and seek further guidance from the United States Department of Education (USDE) Federal Student Financial Aid office on what must be reported related to program length in relation to Title IV funding. It is the program's obligation and responsibility, not CODA's, to ensure the program/institution has followed through with the institutional accreditor and USDE Student Financial Aid Office, as necessary. Additionally, in the case of postgraduate programs, it is the program's obligation and responsibility, not CODA's, to inform the office for Graduate Medical Education (GME) as this may impact GME allocations.

#### Final Notes:

Students/Residents/Fellows should work directly with their educational program to determine requirements for graduation based upon the guidance noted above. The Commission office will

not engage with students/residents/fellows on this matter.

Additionally, Commission staff is unable to advise programs on individual programmatic solutions to address interruption of education; each CODA-accredited program has an obligation and responsibility to ensure that its graduates are competent and that the program complies with CODA's Accreditation Standards, policies, and procedures.

The Commission will offer webinars to assist program directors with general considerations in preparation of reports. Additional information, including the webinar dates, will be available in the coming days.

If you have further questions, please contact [Commission staff](#).

[Click on any of the links below to read the guidance document for that discipline:](#)

- [Temporary Flexibility – Predoctoral Dental Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Dental Assisting Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Dental Hygiene Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Dental Laboratory Technology Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Advanced Education in General Dentistry](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Dental Anesthesiology Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Dental Public Health Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Endodontics Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – General Practice Residency Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Education \(Residency and Fellowship\)](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Oral Medicine Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Orofacial Pain Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics Education \(Residency and Fellowship\)](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Pediatric Dentistry Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Periodontics Education](#)
- [Temporary Flexibility – Prosthodontics Education \(Prosthodontics, Maxillofacial Prosthetics, Combined PROS/MXPROS\)](#)

[Guidelines for Reporting an Interruption of Education During COVID-19](#)

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