

Guidance Document: Temporary Flexibility in Accreditation Standards to Address Interruption of Education Reporting Requirements Resulting From COVID-19 for the Class of 2021

Below is the *temporary flexibility* guidance on select Accreditation Standards. Only those Accreditation Standards which include *temporary flexibility* or guidance on current expectations are included, all others have been retained as written in the current published Accreditation Standards document.

Predoctoral Dental Education

Alternative Assessment Methods (for example, patient vs simulation)

Dental education programs have temporary flexibility to create alternative assessment methods for the evaluation of students (e.g. simulation, OSCE, etc.) while maintaining continued compliance with the Commission's Accreditation Standards. It is expected that the program's alternative assessment methods ensure the competence of the program's graduates and align with the program's curriculum management processes through the program's internal mechanisms. Although temporary flexibility is afforded to programs related to assessment methods, the Commission expects that programs will provide a sufficient number of patient experiences in all aspects of the clinical education program prior to assessment of competence, in accordance with Dental Standard 2-9.

Modification/Reduction of Curriculum Content or Curriculum Requirements (for example, modification/reduction of program-dictated requirements, CODA competency requirements, and/or CODA quantitative numbers-based requirements)

Dental education programs have temporary flexibility to modify or reduce program-dictated curriculum requirements set for the Class of 2021, while ensuring the competence of students and continued compliance with CODA Accreditation Standards. Again, it is expected that the modification or reduction to curriculum requirements aligns with the program's internal curriculum management processes.

Program Length or Program Component Length (for example, rotations, services, etc.)

It is noted that an academic year in most university/college settings is typically nine (9) months; therefore, a dental education program should typically be no less than 36 months. Dental education programs have the temporary flexibility to modify their program length for the Class of 2021, as long as the program continues to meet the requirement of Dental Standard 2-3 (i.e., at least four (4) academic years of instruction or its equivalent) and ensures the competence of its graduates.

Additional Areas of Consideration

Changes to grading systems (course grade versus pass/fail) are outside the purview of the Commission and should be considered in regard to institutional regulations.

Dental education programs should consider the impact of curricular changes on the students' eligibility for licensure, as this is also outside of the Commission's purview.

Any significant reduction in program length should include consultation with the institutional administration, institutional accreditor and, as needed, the United States Department of Education (USDE) Federal Student Financial Aid office, to determine what must be reported related to program length in relation to Title IV funding.

Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs

Dental Standard 2-3

The curriculum must include at least four academic years of instruction or its equivalent.

Temporary Guidance: An academic year in most university/college settings is typically nine (9) months; therefore, a dental education program should typically be no less than 36 months. For the Class of 2021, temporary flexibility is permitted to modify the program length, as long as the program continues to meet the requirement of Dental Standard 2-3 (i.e., at least four (4) academic years of instruction or its equivalent) and ensures the competence of its graduates.

Dental Standard 2-9

The dental school must ensure the availability of adequate patient experiences that afford all students the opportunity to achieve its stated competencies within a reasonable time.

Temporary Guidance: For the Class of 2021, the Commission expects that programs will provide adequate patient experiences that afford all students the opportunity to achieve its stated competencies within a reasonable time. The assessment of competence may be determined through alternative methods; however, students must have adequate patient experiences in all areas of the program's competencies within the dental education clinical curriculum.