



Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)

The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) is nationally recognized by the United States Department of Education as the agency to accredit dental and dental-related education programs conducted at the post-secondary level.^{1,2} CODA's mission is to serve the public and profession by developing and implementing accreditation standards that promote and monitor the continuous quality and improvement of dental education programs. Most of the information about CODA in this position statement is available in the CODA Evaluation and operational Policies and Procedures Manual (EOPP).³

The Commission functions independently and autonomously in matters of developing and approving accreditation standards, making accreditation decisions on educational programs and developing and approving procedures that are used in the accreditation process. This includes all predoctoral, advanced and allied dental programs. CODA is funded through fees paid by those institutions/programs accredited by the accreditation process. CODA is committed to values that include integrity, collegiality, transparency, and consistency.

Completion of a CODA accredited specialty program is required to be recognized as a specialist and to obtain specialty board certification. Each dental specialty's CODA Standards define what must be taught by that specialty. These requirements define the knowledge, skills and competencies taught and therefore each specialty's scope of practice. Programs provide certificates of completion to students that have met these requirements. The Prosthodontic CODA Standards⁴ define what must be taught by prosthodontic programs for them to have CODA Accreditation and U. S. Department of Education (USDE), American Dental Association (ADA) and American College of Prosthodontists (ACP) program recognition. Prosthodontic Standards are available at: <https://www.ada.org/~media/CODA/Files/prostho> .

CODA is structured to include an appropriate representation of the communities of interest - those affected by the Commission's accreditation activities. Members of the Commission are selected by the participating organizations. CODA's composition includes: the Board of Commissioners, staff, review committees and site visitors/consultants.

The legislative and management body of the Commission is the Board of Commissioners. The Board Members of the Commission includes: 4 representatives from each of the American Dental Association, American Association of Dental Boards, American Dental Education Association, the general public and one representative each from the Special Care Dentistry Association, American Dental Assistants Association, American Dental Hygienists' Association, National Association of Dental Laboratories, dental students, and each recognized dental specialty. The officers of the Commission include a chair, vice-chair and a director. The chair and vice-chair are elected by the Board of Commissioners.

The various types of dental education programs have review committees. The Review Committees are responsible for the review of all policy matters, proposed accreditation standards changes, site visit reports, progress reports, applications for accreditation and special reports on accredited programs. After review, these are submitted to the Commission with recommendations for action. The Prosthodontic Review Committee consists of 6 members. The Chair of this Committee is the Prosthodontic Commissioner. The other five members are a prosthodontist nominated by the American College of Prosthodontists (ACP), one nominated by the American Board of Prosthodontics (ABP), one nominated jointly by the ACP and ABP, a general dentist and a public member. At least one of these members must be a dental educator.



The Commission on Dental Accreditation formally evaluates accredited programs at regular intervals. Comprehensive site visits based on a program's self-study are routinely conducted every seven (7) years for most programs including prosthodontics. The purpose of the site visit evaluation is to obtain in-depth information concerning all administrative and educational aspects of the program. The site visit permits a team of Commission-appointed peers from the particular discipline/specialty to assess a program's compliance with the Accreditation Standards and with the program's own stated goals and objectives. The site visit verifies and supplements the information contained in the comprehensive self-study document completed by the institution. Site visitors also evaluate whether the programs have designed and implemented outcome measures to determine that standards requirements as well as stated goals and objectives are being met to ensure that proper knowledge and competencies are taught to each resident. In addition to the required in-person site visit, virtual methods are becoming a part of the site visit process. A report by the site visitor aided by Commission staff notes compliance with the Accreditation Standards or makes a recommendation when non-compliance is identified. The site visit report is reviewed by the CODA Review Committee for recommendations to the Commission. Final Accreditation decisions are made by the Commission.

Accreditation Standards development and revisions for programs are initiated/drafted by representatives of the discipline/specialty. The appropriate review committee acts on the document and makes recommendations to the Commission. The Commission authorizes circulation to communities of interest. Next the comments from communities of interest are compiled and considered by the Review Committee for a recommendation to the Commission to implement the change/standard, to defeat it or to continue the process through an additional cycle of changes, review, circulation and approval. The Commission makes all final decisions.

In summary, the US Department of Education recognizes CODA as the accreditation agency for dental education programs. The activities of the Commission include formulating and approving accreditation standards by which programs are evaluated; establishing policies and procedures for conducting the accreditation program; determining and publicizing program accreditation status; and appointing consultants and site visitors to assist in accreditation activities. CODA Standards define the knowledge and competencies that each specialty must teach in residency programs.

It is the position of the American College of Prosthodontist to support the Commission on Dental Accreditation as the sole authority to accredit dental education programs and develop dental education standards.

Information for writing this position statement was obtained by the author from published CODA documents. However, it is not sanctioned by CODA.

References

1. American Dental Association (ADA). Constitution and Bylaws and Governance and Organizational Manual of the American Dental Association. Chapter IX Commissions, Section 30 Duties, page 19. Revised January 1, 2020. Available at: https://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Member%20Center/Files/ADA_2021_Bylaws.pdf?la=en
2. American Dental Association (ADA). Governance and Organizational Manual of the American Dental Association. Chapter IX Commissions, page 25, September 9, 2019, Available at: https://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Member%20Center/Files/CEBJA_Governance_Manual_Update_June_2021_WT_OC_Final.pdf?la=en



3. Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). Evaluation and Operational Policies and Procedures Manual (EOPP). January 2020. Available at: <https://www.ada.org/~media/CODA/Files/eopp.pdf?la=en>
4. CODA. Accreditation Standards for Advanced Dental Education Programs in Prosthodontics, Commission on Dental Accreditation. January 31, 2020. Available at: <https://www.ada.org/~media/CODA/Files/prostho>

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