

Criteria for Recognition of Interest Areas in General Dentistry
Adopted by the ADA House of Delegates, October 2010

Introduction

An Interest Area in General Dentistry is a field in dentistry that has been formally recognized by the American Dental Association as meeting the "Criteria for Recognition as an Interest Area in General Dentistry" specified in this document. Interest Areas in General Dentistry are recognized by the Association to protect the public, nurture the art and science of dentistry, and improve the quality of care. It is the Association's belief that the needs of the public are best served if the profession is oriented primarily to general practice. Interest Areas in General Dentistry are recognized in those fields where advanced knowledge and skills are essential to maintain or restore oral health.

Not all fields in dentistry will satisfy the requirements for this recognition. However, the public and profession benefit substantially when interest areas in general dentistry develop and advance dentistry through education, practice and research. The profession acknowledges the contributions of such groups and their endeavors are encouraged.

The sponsoring institution must submit to the Council on Dental Education and Licensure a formal application that demonstrates compliance with all the requirements for recognition as an interest area in general dentistry. The Council will submit its recommendation for approval or denial of the proposed interest area in general dentistry to the Association's House of Delegates.

If approved, the interest area may request the Commission on Dental Accreditation to develop accreditation standards and initiate an accreditation process for advanced education programs in the general dentistry interest area.

Criteria for Recognition of Interest Areas in General Dentistry

A sponsoring institution seeking recognition for an interest area in general dentistry must document that the discipline satisfies all the criteria specified in this section.

Criteria for Recognition of Interest Areas in General Dentistry

1. The existence of a well-defined body of established evidence-based scientific and clinical dental knowledge underlying the general dentistry area - knowledge that is in large part distinct from, or more detailed than, that of other areas of general dentistry education and practice and any of the ADA recognized specialties.

Elements to be addressed:

- Definition and scope of the general dentistry area
- Educational goals and objectives of the general dentistry area
- Competency and proficiency statements for the general dentistry education area
- Description of how scientific dental knowledge in the area is substantive and distinct from other general dentistry areas

2. The body of knowledge is sufficient to educate individuals in a distinct advanced education area of general dentistry, not merely one or more techniques.

Elements to be addressed:

- Identification of distinct components of biomedical, behavioral and clinical science in the advanced education area
- Description of why this area of knowledge is a distinct education area of general dentistry, rather than a series of just one or more techniques
- Documentation demonstrating that the body of knowledge is unique and distinct from that in other education areas accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation
- Documentation of the complexity of the body of knowledge of the general dentistry area by identifying specific advanced techniques and procedures, representative samples of curricula from existing programs, textbooks and journals

3. The existence of established advanced educational programs with structured curricula, qualified faculty and enrolled individuals for which accreditation by the Commission on Dental Accreditation can be a viable method of quality assurance.

Elements to be addressed:

- Description of the historical development and evolution of educational programs in the area of advanced training in general dentistry
- A listing of the current operational programs in the advanced general dentistry training area, identifying for each, the:
 - a. Sponsoring institution;
 - b. Name and qualifications of the program director;
 - c. number of full-time and part-time faculty (define part-time for each program);

- d. Curriculum (course outlines, student competencies, class schedules);
 - e. Outcomes assessment method;
 - f. Minimum length of the program;
 - g. Certificate and/or degree awarded upon completion;
 - h. Number of enrolled individuals per year for at least the past five years*;
and
 - i. Number of graduates per year for at least the past five years.*
*If the established education programs have been in existence less than five years, provide information since their founding.
- Documentation on how many programs in the education area would seek voluntary accreditation review, if available.
4. The education programs are the equivalent of at least one 12-month full-time academic year in length. The programs must be academic programs sponsored by an institution accredited by an agency recognized by the United States Department of Education or accredited by the Joint Commission or its equivalent rather than a series of continuing education experiences.

Elements to be addressed:

- Evidence of the minimum length of the program for full-time students
 - Evidence that a certificate and/or degree is awarded upon completion of the program
 - Programs' recruitment materials (e.g., bulletin, catalogue)
 - Other evidence that the programs are bona fide higher education experiences, rather than a series of continuing education courses (e.g., academic calendars, schedule of classes, and syllabi that address scope, depth and complexity of the higher education experience, formal approval or acknowledgment by the parent institution that the courses or curricula in the education area meet the institution's academic requirements for advanced education)
5. The competence of the graduates of the advanced education programs is important to the health care of the general public.

Elements to be addressed:

- Description of the need for appropriately trained individuals in the general dentistry area to ensure quality health care for the public
- Description of current and emerging trends in the general dentistry education area
- Documentation that dental health care professionals currently provide health care services in the identified area
- Evidence that the area of knowledge is important and significant to patient care and dentistry
- Documentation that the general dentistry programs comply with the ADA Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct, as well as state and federal regulations