

## Policy Statement 3.2 – Dentists

### Position Summary

Education and training of dentists must be to degree level in a program conducted by a tertiary institution in the higher education sector and accredited by the Australian Dental Council (ADC). Dentists should maintain an appropriate level of professional indemnity cover and conduct themselves in accordance with the Australian Dental Association Code of Ethics. Dentists are the only registered dental practitioners with a full scope of practice and are best placed to lead dental teams.

### 1. Background

- 1.1. A dentist is the only dental practitioner entitled to use the title “dentist” but may also be known as a dental surgeon, surgeon dentist or by a specialist dentist title.
- 1.2. Dentist education and training involves different models at university that culminate in registration with the Dental Board of Australia (DBA) in courses accredited by the ADC.
- 1.3. Dentists are the only dental practitioners who are trained to practise the full scope of dentistry.
- 1.4. Dentists in Australia have a proud tradition of voluntarily supporting Australian Dental Schools, their professional association, and other initiatives.

#### Definitions

- 1.5. BOARD is the Dental Board of Australia.
- 1.6. A DENTAL TEAM comprises a mix of dentists and appropriate allied dental personnel and should at all times be headed by a dentist who is responsible for the diagnosis, treatment planning, delivery of dental procedures and continuing evaluation of the oral health of the patient. The dentist supports and directs the other members of the dental team working directly with them.
- 1.7. A DENTIST is an appropriately qualified dental practitioner, registered by the Board to practise all areas of dentistry.
- 1.8. A DENTAL PRACTITIONER is a person registered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency via the Board to provide dental care.
- 1.9. DENTISTRY is the science and art of preventing, diagnosing and treating diseases, injuries, developmental and acquired defects of the teeth, oral cavity and associated structures within the context of general health.

### 2. Position

- 2.1. Education and training of dentists must be to degree level in a program of study by a tertiary institution in the higher education sector accredited by the Australian Dental Council (ADC) and approved by the Board.
- 2.2. The program should train dentists in the full scope of dentistry and be a requirement of entry into specialist programs.
- 2.3. A one-year clinical placement within the dentist training program is supported provided assistance and clinical supervision is provided to enhance the knowledge and skills and experience of the student.
- 2.4. Voluntary post-graduate year one programs are supported provided they are based on mentoring the continuing professional development of the graduates and not just the provision of service.

This Policy Statement is linked to other Policy Statement: 3.1 Dental Workforce & Education, 3.4 Specialist Dentists, 3.8 Overseas Qualified Dentists, 3.9 Recency of Practice, 3.10 Clinical Practice Placements, 3.12 Benefits of Defined Health Professions, 4.1 Continuing Professional Development & 5.21 Regulatory Authorities

- 2.5. Specialist dental training must be of at least three years full time duration and should be consistent nationally.
- 2.6. Overseas qualified dentists must satisfactorily fulfil ADC and Board requirements before practising in Australia.
- 2.7. The dentist, by providing a full spectrum of care, is the primary provider of dental services to the community. Dentist-based systems of care and delivery is a high priority, along with the provision of high quality and appropriate dental care. Where allied dental personnel are utilised, they must be part of a dental team.
- 2.8. Dentists providing dental care within clinical practice must maintain an appropriate level of professional indemnity insurance cover.
- 2.9. Dentists should conduct themselves in accordance with the Australian Dental Association Federal and Branch Codes of Ethics.
- 2.10. Dentists must engage in continuing professional development throughout their practising careers.

### **Policy Statement 3.2**

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