

National Commission Policy and Procedure Manual

July 2025



National Commission on Recognition of
Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards

Introduction

- The National Commission Policy and Procedure Manual contains information related to the National Commission policies and procedures for the:
 - Recognized dental specialty sponsoring organizations
 - Recognized dental specialty certifying boards
 - Potential applicants for specialty sponsoring organization and certifying board recognition
 - The National Commission's Communities of Interest
- Contains background information on the establishment of the National Commission, specialty recognition actions taken by the American Dental Association prior to the establishment of the National Commission and recognition actions taken by the National Commission Board of Commissioners.
- The full National Commission Policy and Procedure Manual is posted on the National Commission's website at <https://ncrdscb.ada.org/policies-and-procedures>



National Commission Policy and Procedure Manual

- The National Commission Policy and Procedure Manual is divided into six (6) main sections:
 - I. Introduction and General Information
 - II. Board of Commissioners and Review Committees
 - III. General National Commission Policies and Procedures
 - IV: Policies and Procedures Related to the Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards
 - V. Complaints
 - VI: Due Process



Section I: Introduction and General Information

- Section I of the Policy and Procedure Manual contains the following information:
 - Purpose of the Policy and Procedure Manual
 - History and Authority of the National Commission
 - The American Dental Association *Bylaws* Duties of the National Commission
 - The Rules of the National Commission
 - Governing Law and Venue Policy
 - National Commission Mission, Vision and Values Statements
 - Development of Administrative and Operational Policies



Authority of the National Commission

- In October 2017, the ADA House of Delegates established the National Commission as an independent and semi-autonomous body with full authority to recognize the dental specialty sponsoring organizations and their respective certifying boards.
- The establishment of an independent commission addressed real and perceived conflicts of interest and bias in the decision-making process and conformed to the national standards and public expectations on establishing objective processes for applying standards and making high-stakes decisions.
- The role of the National Commission is to recognize the dental specialty sponsoring organizations and their respective certifying boards based on compliance with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.
- It is not the role of the National Commission to act as a mediator, intervene on the behalf of any organizations and/or individuals, or act as an arbitrator between disputing organizations.



ADA Bylaws Related to the Duties of the National Commission Duties

Section: 30 Duties: The ADA Bylaws adopted by the ADA House of Delegates in October 2017 describe the duties of the National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards as follows:

- a. Formulate and adopt procedures for the recognition of specialties and specialty certifying boards in accord with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialties*.
- b. Grant or deny specialty recognition to specialty organizations and specialty certifying boards seeking recognition in accord with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialties*.
- c. Provide a means for sponsoring organizations and certifying boards to appeal an adverse recognition decision.
- d. Submit an annual report to the House of Delegates of this Association and interim reports upon request
- e. Submit the National Commission's annual budget to the Board of Trustees of the Association.



National Commission Mission, Vision and Values

Mission Statement:

- The National Commission protects the public and the profession through objective and transparent review of the recognized and prospective dental specialty sponsoring organizations and certifying boards based on the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.

Vision Statement:

- The National Commission is held to be the standard for excellence, transparency and professionalism in the recognition and continued oversight of the recognized dental specialty sponsoring organizations and certifying boards.

Core Values:

- Objectivity
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Consistency
- Professionalism
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Leadership



Section II: Board of Commissioners and Review Committees

- Section II of the Policy and Procedure Manual contains the following information:
 - National Commission and Commission Meetings
 - Policy on Nomination of Public Members
 - Review Committees and Review Committee Meetings
 - National Commission Standing Committees
 - Policy on Removal of National Commission Board of Commissioners and Appeal Board Members
 - Policy on Appointment of Commissioners and Appeal Board Members if Appointing Organization Fails to Appoint Due to Vacancy



Board of Commissioners Composition

The Board of the National Commission shall consist of:

- One (1) dentist representative, who has attained specialist status, appointed by the respective recognized specialty sponsoring organization, who are active, life or retired members of the American Dental Association (ADA).
- An equal number of general dentist representatives, as specialist representatives, appointed by the ADA Board of Trustees who are active, life or retired members of the ADA. The general dentist representatives are selected from nominations open to all trustee districts.
- One (1) public member who shall not have any formal or informal connection to the profession of dentistry.



Policy on the Nomination of Public Members

- The composition of the Board of Commissioners and Appeal Board will each contain one (1) representative of the public.
- Public members play a vital role in bringing the public/consumer perspective to the deliberations of Board of Commissioners and Appeal Board Hearing Panel.
- This perspective allows the public member to function as the Board member with the least amount of inherent bias, nor are they subject to potential undue influence from an appointing organization.
- The public member aids the National Commission Chair, Director, Chair of the Strategic Planning and Policy Review Committee and legal counsel in assessing potential conflict of interest issues of other appointed members of the National Commission when those issues arise.



Review Committees and Review Committee Meetings

- There are 2 Review Committees:
 - Review Committee on Specialty Recognition
 - Review Committee on Specialty Certifying Board Recognition
- Composition
 - Six (6) commissioners appointed by the National Commission chair
 - The National Commission public commissioner
- Consensus is the method used for decision-making.
- If a situation arises in which a vote is required, and the review committee cannot reach a consensus due to a tie the committee chair will be allowed to vote to break the tie. In all other instances, the committee chair does not vote.
- If a review committee cannot reach a decision by consensus, the committee will prepare a report stating the rationale for its recommendation to the National Commission Board of Commissioners for consideration.



National Commission Standing Committees

- The National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards (National Commission) has four (4) standing committees:
 - Communication and Technology
 - Finance
 - Nomination
 - Strategic Planning and Policy Review
- Ad hoc committees, task forces and other committees may be formed to address specific issues or concerns. An ad hoc committee functions until the issue is resolved or until it becomes a standing committee of the National Commission.



Policy on Removal of National Commission Board of Commissioners and Appeal Board Members

Pursuant to the *Rules* of the National Commission, the Board of Commissioners may remove a Commissioner or Appeal Board member due to any of the following:

- continued, gross or willful neglect of the duties of the office;
- failure to comply with the National Commission's policies on conflict of interest;
- failure or refusal to disclose necessary information on matters of National Commission business;
- failure to keep confidential any exclusive information protected by secrecy that becomes known to the member by reason of the performance of his or her duties on the National Commission's behalf;
- failure to comply with the Association's professional conduct policy and prohibition against harassment;
- unauthorized expenditures or misuse of National Commission funds;
- unwarranted attacks on the National Commission, any of its committees or any person serving the National Commission in an elected, appointed or employed capacity;
- unwarranted refusal to cooperate with any National Commission officer, National Commission, Committee or Appeal Board member or staff;
- misrepresentation of the National Commission and any person serving the National Commission in an elected, appointed or employed capacity to outside persons;
- being found to have engaged in conduct subject to discipline pursuant to Chapter XI of the *Governance and Organizational Manual* of the American Dental Association; and
- conviction of a felony.



Policy on Appointment of Commissioner and Appeal Board Members if Appointing Organization Fails to Appoint Due to Vacancy

- If a vacancy occurs on the Board of Commissioners or Appeal Board, the National Commission will notify the appointing organization and request the organization appoint a successor who possess the qualifications established by the *Governance and Organizational Manual* of the American Dental Association and the *Rules* of the National Commission to complete the unexpired term.
- If the appointing organization fails to select a replacement by the prescribed deadline, the National Commission Board of Commissioners will select and appoint an appropriate representative to complete the unexpired term.
- If the National Commission must select a replacement for an unexpired term, the Commission will actively seek and encourage applications from qualified individuals.
- The National Commission will publicize the open position(s) by posting notices on the National Commission website and/or emailing notices to professional organizations, state boards, and other interested parties and groups.



Section III: General National Commission Policies and Procedures

- Section III of the Policy and Procedure Manual contains the following information:
 - Confidentiality Policy
 - Conflict of Interest Policy
 - Policy on Simultaneous Service
 - Payment Annual Fees by Recognized Specialty Sponsoring Organizations
 - Referral of Policy Matters to Appropriate Committees
 - Policy and Procedure Related to Compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPPA)
 - Policy on Integrity



Confidentiality Policy

- The National Commission's Confidentiality Policy applies to all documentation generated by the National Commission Board of Commissioners, the Review and Standing Committees and the Appeal Board Hearing Panel. Confidential materials are maintained to ensure the integrity of the specialty recognition process and may be shared by the National Commission in instances related to responding to state or federal legal requirements, as appropriate.
- All business conducted during the National Commission Board of Commissioners meeting, including the review of policy, finances and discussions related to the recognition and/or re-recognition of dental specialties and certifying boards is confidential and conducted in closed session.
- All deliberations of the Appeal Board Hearing Panel are confidential and conducted in closed session. All business conducted during Ad Hoc, Review and Standing Committee meetings, and all meetings related to National Commission operations are confidential and conducted in closed session.



Conflict of Interest Policy

- A central component of the National Commission's operations is the impartiality of its decision-making and each member's personal duty to avoid real conflicts of interest or even the appearance of conflicts of interest.
- The potential for a conflict of interest arises when a member's duty to make decisions in the public's or professions best interest is compromised by competing interests of a personal or private nature.
- A conflict of interest is considered to be a partiality or bias, either of which might interfere with objectivity in the recognition process.
- Clear procedures for due process, as well as strict guidelines for all written documentation and recognition decisions reinforce adherence to transparent and fair practices.
- Every effort is made to avoid conflicts of interest, either from the point of view of discipline-specific sponsoring organizations, the discipline-specific certifying boards, the ADA, or any person representing the National Commission.



Conflict of Interest Policy

- Although Commissioners are appointed by designated communities of interest, their duty of loyalty is first and foremost to the National Commission.
- The National Commission believes that a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest must be avoided in all situations in which decisions are being made by Commissioners or members of the Appeal Board.
- No Commissioner or member of the Appeal Board should participate in any decisions in which they have a financial or personal interest, have divided loyalties, and/or have a personal stake related to the outcome of a decision.
- To safeguard the objectivity of the National Commission, conflict of interest determinations shall be made by the Chair of the National Commission.
- The management of the conflict of interest will be determined by a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners.



Policy on Simultaneous Service

- Any member of the National Commission's Board of Commissioners or Appeal Board may not simultaneously serve as a principal officer, member of an executive committee or executive board on any of the National Commission's primary communities of interest if that organization has a role in appointing a member to the National Commission.
- The National Commission interprets principal officer to mean individuals with final decision-making authority, which usually includes positions such as the president, president-elect, immediate past president, secretary or treasurer of an organization.
- The National Commission further defines executive committee and executive board that has final decision-making authority which does not require confirmation by a board or house.



Policy on Integrity

- The National Commission expects that integrity and decorum be exhibited by all organizations and individuals throughout the recognition process and maintenance of recognition.
- It is expected that any individual or organization bringing business in front of the National Commission must demonstrate honesty and integrity at all times.
- Any organization recognized by the National Commission and/or applying for recognition that fails to report honestly, by presenting false information, by omission of essential information or by distortion of information with the intent to mislead, constitutes a breach of integrity, in and of itself.
- If it appears to the National Commission that the organization has violated the principles of integrity in the materials submitted to the National Commission or in any other manner that required immediate attention, an investigation will be made, and the organization will be offered an opportunity to respond to suspected violations.



Section IV: Policies and Procedures Related to the Recognition of Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organizations and Certifying Boards

- Section IV of the Policy and Procedure Manual contains the following information:
 - National Commission Recognition Status Definitions
 - Policy on Periodic Review of Dental Specialty Education and Practice
 - Policy on Annual Survey of the Recognized Certifying Boards
 - Policy on Failure to Comply with Request for Information and Missed Deadlines
 - Application Process for Recognition of a Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organization
 - Application Process for Recognition of a Dental Specialty Certifying Board
 - Policy on Recognition of a Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organization and Dental Specialty Certifying Board
 - Policy on Third Party Comments
 - Policy and Procedure Related to a Recognized Specialty's Request for Change in Name, Definition and/or Scope of Practice
 - Withdrawal of Specialty Recognition from a Recognized Specialty Sponsoring Organization or Certifying Board
 - Policy on Voluntary Discontinuance
 - Policy on Progress Reports



Section IV: Policies and Procedures Related to the Recognition of Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organizations and Certifying Boards

- Because of the importance the of the following polices, please see the individual presentations that are dedicated to these policies:
 - National Commission Recognition Status Definitions
 - Policy on Periodic Review of Dental Specialty Education and Practice
 - Policy on Annual Survey of the Recognized Certifying Boards
 - Application Process for Recognition of a Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organization
 - Application Process for Recognition of a Dental Specialty Certifying Board
 - Policy on Recognition of a Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organization and Dental Specialty Certifying Board
 - Policy and Procedure Related to a Recognized Specialty's Request for Change in Name, Definition and/or Scope of Practice.



Policy on Failure to Comply With Request For Information and Missed Deadlines

- So that the National Commission may conduct its recognition program in an orderly fashion, all specialty sponsoring organizations and certifying boards recognized by the National Commission are expected to adhere to deadlines for requests for information and/or submission of reports.
- If a recognized specialty sponsoring organization and/or recognized certifying board fails to comply with the National Commission's request for information, it will be assumed that the recognized organization no longer wishes to participate in the recognition process. In this event, the National Commission will immediately notify the organization of its intent to withdraw recognition at its next scheduled meeting.
- Recognized organizations that miss a required deadline and did not submit a written request for extension will be assessed a late fee in the amount of \$1,500, to be paid within 30 days of receiving the invoice/notification.
- If the recognized organization does not adhere to the payment deadline, the National Commission will view this as an indication that the organization no longer wishes to participate in the recognition process and will withdraw recognition at its next scheduled meeting.



Policy on Third Party Comments

- When an application for recognition is received, the National Commission will solicit written comments from the communities of interest and other interested parties on the National Commission website and through electronic mail notification from the National Commission.
- All comments will be due in the National Commission office no later than sixty (60) days after posting the application for recognition the on the National Commission's website.
- Comments must pertain only to the applicant's compliance to the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.
- Comments that include Protected Health Information (PHI) and/or Personally Identifiable Information (PII) will be destroyed.
- Comments that violate the American Dental Association's Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct, violate the National Commission's Policy on Integrity and/or contains unprofessional remarks or anecdotal information related to a personal experience will be disregarded.



Withdrawal of Specialty Recognition From A Recognized Specialty Sponsoring Organization or Certifying Board

- The National Commission has the authority to withdraw specialty recognition from any recognized specialty sponsoring organization or certifying board that fails to comply with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists* and/or policies of the National Commission.
- A withdrawal determination must be preceded by a notice of *intent to withdraw* recognition six (6) months prior to the withdrawal decision.
- The decision is communicated to the recognized specialty sponsoring organization and certifying board and announced to the communities of interest. A statement summarizing the reasons for the Commission's decision and comments, if any, that the affected organization has made regarding this decision, is available upon request from the Commission office.
- If a recognized specialty sponsoring organization and/or recognized certifying board has had its recognition withdrawn, the organization does have the opportunity to formally appeal the decision to withdraw recognition through the National Commission's policy and procedures on Appeal of Adverse Actions. (See Section on Due Process)



Policy on Voluntary Discontinuance

- If a recognized sponsoring organization voluntarily discontinues specialty recognition, the discontinuance will become effective at the close of the ADA House of Delegates meeting in the ensuing year.
- If a recognized certifying board voluntarily discontinues specialty recognition, the discontinuance will become effective at the date requested by the organization with final approval by the Board of Commissioners. The respective sponsoring organization that will be notified that in order to remain recognized another certifying board must be established.
- Given that the ADA Board of Trustees makes annual appointments to the National Commission based on the number of Commissioners whose terms are expiring in a given year, the National Commission will suggest to the Board of Trustees that it has the option to retire one (1) general dentist commissioner early or appoint one (1) less general dentist Commissioner who will be eligible to serve a four (4) year term on the National Commission.



Section V: Complaints

- Section V of the Policy and Procedure Manual contains the following information:
 - Definition of a Complaint
 - Policy and Procedure Regarding the Investigation of Complaints
 - Investigative Procedure for Formal Complaints
- Because of the importance the of the Complaint Policy, please see the individual presentation that is dedicated to that policy.



Section VI : Due Process

- Section VI of the Policy and Procedure Manual contains the following information:
 - Due Process Related to Review Committee Special Appearances
 - Function and Procedures of the Appeal Board
 - Appeal Procedure
 - Appeal Board Hearing Guidelines
- Because of the importance the of the Policy on Due Process and the Appeal Board, please see the individual presentation that is dedicated to that policy.



In Summary

- The National Commission has the authority to adopt its own Rules and Policies and Procedures.
- The *Rules* are comprehensive in scope and outline the purpose and function of the National Commission.
- The *Rules* and Policies and Procedures of National Commission must be in sync and not contradict each other.
- The Rules and Policies and Procedures of the National Commission cannot supersede or be in conflict with the *Constitution and Bylaws* of the American Dental Association and the *Governance and Organizational Manual* of the American Dental Association.
- As the National Commission continues to evolve, the *Rules* and Policies and Procedures of the National Commission will be revised.

