

History of Dental Specialty Recognition

August 2023



National Commission on Recognition of
Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards

History of Specialty Recognition

- Before World War II, the American Dental Association (ADA) Council on Dental Education Committee on Dental Specialties began a comprehensive study pertaining to the specialties of dentistry to determine:
 - What constitutes a specialty
 - What specialties are warranted
 - What the additional training of the specialist should be beyond graduation from a dental school
 - How the specialist should be recognized by the public



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- 1946-The American Board of Oral Surgery petitioned the ADA House of Delegates requesting approval as a certifying body. The petition was referred to the Council on Dental Education with the power to act.
- 1947-The Council on Dental Education approved the *Requirements for the Approval of Examining Boards in Dental Specialties* on February 7, 1947.
- 1947-Under the authority given it by the ADA House of Delegates, the Council on Dental Education approved the American Board of Oral Surgery on April 9, 1947
- 1947-The Council on Dental Education Committee on Dental Specialties presented its full report to the Council on Dental Education in February 1947 related to the dental specialties, that was published in the April 15, 1947 issue of JADA.
- 1947-The ADA House of Delegates approved the *Requirements for Approval of Examining Boards in Dental Specialties* at its August 4-8, 1947 meeting.



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- In Section 1. Definition of the *Requirements for Approval of Examining Boards in Dental Specialties* it states:
 - A specialty in dentistry is a field of practice which calls for intense study and extended clinical and laboratory experience by a dentist beyond the training offered as a preparation for general practice in the undergraduate curriculum. The following branches of dentistry are recognized at this time as suitable fields for the certification of specialists: oral surgery, orthodontics, pedodontia, periodontia and prosthodontia.
- 1947-The ADA House of Delegates granted the Council the authority to approve boards.
- 1948-The Council on Dental Education approved the following examining boards:
 - American Board of Pedodontics
 - American Board of Periodontology
 - American Board of Prosthodontics
- 1949-The ADA House of Delegates recognized Oral Pathology as a specialty.



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- 1950-The ADA House of Delegates recognized Dental Public Health as a specialty and approved the American Board of Orthodontics and the American Board of Oral Pathology.
- 1951-The ADA House of Delegates approved the American Board of Dental Public Health.
- 1953- The Council on Dental Education developed a questionnaire for those seeking specialty recognition that contained the same type of information collected on the groups that are now recognized as dental specialties.
- 1959-The ADA House of Delegates approved a revised version of the Requirements and retitled the document *Requirements for National Certifying Boards for Special areas of Dental Practice*. The document stated that “prior to establishment of a national certifying board, the areas of dental practice for which it wishes to certify must be approved by the House of Delegates.
- 1963- The ADA House of Delegates recognized Endodontics as a specialty using the newly revised 1959 *Requirements for National Certifying Boards for Areas of Dental Practice*.
- 1964-The ADA House of Delegates approved the American Board of Endodontics.



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- 1980-1981-In response to a recommendation in a report from the American Association of Dental Schools' Task Force on Advanced Dental Education, *Advanced Dental Education: Recommendations for the 80's*, the Council on Dental Education studied and proposed revisions to the Requirements. The purpose of the review was to identify those areas of care that should be performed only by specialists and better define the relationship between specialties and general practice.
- 1983-The ADA House of Delegates adopted the proposed revised Requirements and changed the name of the document to the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.
- 1983-The ADA House of Delegates directed that a review of the currently recognized dental specialties must be completed within ten years of the adoption of the *Requirements for Recognition*.



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- 1986-1990-Eight recognized dental specialties submitted applications to the Council for re-recognition as a dental specialty; all eight received re-recognition by the ADA House of Delegates:
 - 1986-Dental Public Health
 - 1987-Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
 - 1987-Prosthodontics
 - 1988-Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
 - 1988-Periodontics
 - 1989-Endodontics
 - 1989-Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics
 - 1990-Pediatric Dentistry
- 1990-1991-The Council on Dental Education undertook a comprehensive review of the specialty recognition process, procedures for resubmission on an application once an organization has been denied recognition, and issues related to a process for periodic review of currently recognized dental specialties.



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- 1992-The Council on Dental Education submitted its report to the ADA House of Delegates. The Council determined the process for re-recognition should be different and more focused than the process used for initial recognition and recommended that a streamlined introspective self-study application be developed, and that the process should include a timetable for review of the recognized specialty.
- 1992-The ADA House of Delegates adopted a resolution endorsing the concept of a periodic review of specialty education and practice.
- 1999-The ADA House of Delegates recognized Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology as a specialty based on the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Board for Dental Specialists*.
- 2000-Council on Dental Education and Licensure approves the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology.
- 2001-The Council on Dental Education and Licensure submitted its Comprehensive Study of Dental Specialty Education and Practice report to the ADA House of Delegates. The House adopted a resolution directing the appropriate agency of the ADA to continue to conduct a periodic review of dental specialty education and practice at ten-year intervals.



The Establishment of the National Commission

- 2016-The ADA Board of Trustees charged the Task Force on Specialty and Specialty Certifying Board Recognition to evaluate the process and criteria by which specialties and specialty certifying boards are recognized.
- 2017-The National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards (National Commission) was established by Res. 30H-2017 as the agency responsible for developing a process and criteria by which specialty sponsoring organizations and specialty certifying boards are recognized.
- The establishment of the National Commission has reduced real and perceived conflicts of interest in the specialty recognition decision-making process, which is aligned with the recognition processes in other health professions and conforms with the national standards and public expectations on establishing objective processes for applying standards and making high-stakes decisions.
- The National Commission Board of Commissioners held its inaugural meeting on May 9-10, 2018.



Recognition Decisions by National Commission

- 2019-The National Commission Board of Commissioners granted specialty recognition to dental anesthesiology
- 2020-The National Commission Board of Commissioners granted specialty recognition to oral medicine.
- 2020-The National Commission Board of Commissioners granted specialty recognition to orofacial pain.
- 2020-The National Commission Board of Commissioners granted specialty certifying board recognition to the American Dental Board of Anesthesiology.
- 2020-National Commission conducted the Periodic Review of Dental Specialty Education and Practice.
- 2021-The National Commission Board of Commissioners granted specialty certifying board recognition to the American Board of Oral Medicine.
- 2021-The National Commission Board of Commissioners adopted the Final Report of the 2020 Periodic Review of Dental Specialty Education and Practice.
- 2022-The National Commission Board of Commissioners granted specialty certifying board recognition to the American Board of Orofacial Pain.



Recognition Summary Chart

Specialty	Recognition	Certifying Board	Approval
Oral Surgery	1947	American Board of Oral Surgery	1948
Orthodontics	1947	American Board of Orthodontics	1950
Pedodontia	1947	American Board of Pedodontics	1948
Periodontia	1947	American Board of Periodontology	1948
Prosthodontics	1947	American Board of Prosthodontics	1948
Oral Pathology	1949	American Board of Oral Pathology	1950
Public Health Dentistry	1950	American Board of Dental Public Health	1951
Endodontics	1963	American Board of Endodontics	1964
Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology	1999	American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology	2000
Dental Anesthesiology	2019	American Dental Board of Anesthesiology	2020
Oral Medicine	2020	American Board of Oral Medicine	2021
Orofacial Pain	2020	American Board of Orofacial Pain	2022

