

National Commission Process on Recognition of a Dental Specialty Sponsoring Organization and Dental Specialty Certifying Board

May 2026



National Commission on Recognition of
Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards

Introduction

- Organizations applying for recognition are evaluated for compliance with the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists* by the Board of Commissioners based on the information and data provided in the application and comments from the communities of interest.
- The Board of Commissioners can take the following actions on applications for specialty sponsoring organization and certifying board recognition:
 - Grant recognition
 - Postpone action, pending additional information
 - Deny recognition
- Recognition of a dental specialty sponsoring organization and certifying board can only be granted by a two-thirds affirmative vote on all the *Requirements for Recognition* by the voting Commissioners.
- All votes taken by the Board of Commissioners related to granting or denying recognition is conducted through confidential paper ballot.



Granting Recognition to a Sponsoring Organization

If the Board of Commissioners grants recognition to a sponsoring organization:

- The National Commission will contact the sponsoring organization within five (5) days to request the appointment of an *interim* Commissioner to serve until the close of the American Dental Association (ADA) House of Delegates meeting in the year recognition was granted.
- The National Commission will request that the sponsoring organization appoint an individual who will serve a full four (4) year term that will start at the close of the ADA House of Delegates meeting.
- The individual who is appointed as the *interim* Commissioner is eligible to serve the full four (4) year term starting at the close of the ADA House of Delegates meeting.
- The National Commission will also request from the sponsoring organization the appointment an individual who will serve a full four (4) year term on the National Commission Appeal Board.



Granting Recognition to a Sponsoring Organization

- The National Commission will contact the ADA within five (5) days requesting the President of the ADA appoint an *interim* general dentist Commissioner to serve until the close of the ADA House of Delegates meeting.
- The National Commission will also request that the Board of Trustees appoint an individual who will serve a full four (4) year term that will start at the close of the ADA House of Delegates meeting.
- The individual who is appointed as the *interim* Commissioner is eligible to serve the full four (4) year term starting at the close of the ADA House of Delegates meeting.
- The National Commission will report the recognition on its Report of Unofficial Major Actions.
- The National Commission will develop and adopt a policy statement recognizing the new dental specialty.



Granting Recognition to a Sponsoring Organization

- The National Commission will request from the sponsoring organization an official definition of the specialty.
- The annual fee for the first year will be pro-rated. After the first year, the new specialty sponsoring organization will pay the full annual fee, as long as recognition is maintained.
- The certifying board that has a close working relationship with the newly recognized dental specialty sponsoring organization must submit an application for certifying board recognition within 18 months of the sponsoring organization's recognition.
- If the certifying board does not submit an application for recognition within the 18-month timeframe, the matter will be referred to the Board of Commissioners for adjudication.



Postponing Action on Recognition of a Sponsoring Organization

If the Board of Commissioners postpones action:

- The National Commission will contact the sponsoring organization and request additional information.
- It will be at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners as to whether it wishes to convene a special meeting to consider the additional information or postpone action until its next regularly scheduled meeting.



Denial of Recognition to a Sponsoring Organization

If the Board of Commissioners denies recognition the sponsoring organization is advised of:

- The reason(s) for the denial (adverse action)
- The organizations right to an appeal of the adverse action
- If the Board of Commissioners makes the determination to deny recognition, the applicant organization has the right to appeal the denial. The appeal must be filed within 14 days.
- If the applicant organization opts to file an appeal and the Appeal Board Hearing Panel upholds the decision of the Board of Commissioners, the decision to deny recognition becomes final.
- If the applicant organization opts to not file an appeal within 14 days of notification of the denial of recognition, the decision to deny recognition becomes final.



Denial of Recognition to a Sponsoring Organization

- When the decision to deny specialty recognition becomes final, the applicant organization will not be allowed to submit another application for recognition for a period of 12 months.
- If the applicant sponsoring organizations wishes to submit another application for recognition after the 12-month waiting period, the organization will need to submit a new application for recognition including the full non-refundable application fee.



Granting or Postponing Action on Recognition of a Certifying Board

- If the Board of Commissioners grants recognition:
 - The National Commission will notify the certifying board within two (2) days of the conclusion of the meeting that the action was taken.
 - The National Commission will report the recognition on its Report of Unofficial Major Actions
 - The National Commission will develop and adopt a policy statement recognizing the new dental specialty certifying board.
- If the Board of Commissioners postpones action:
 - The National Commission will contact the organization and request additional information.
 - It will be at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners as to whether it wishes to convene a special meeting to consider the additional information or postpone action until its next regularly scheduled meeting.



Denial of Recognition to a Certifying Board

- If the Board of Commissioners denies recognition, the certifying board is advised of:
 - The reason(s) for the denial (adverse action)
 - The organizations right to an appeal of the adverse action
- If the Board of Commissioners makes the determination to deny recognition, the applicant organization has the right to appeal the denial. The appeal must be filed within 14 days. If an appeal is filed, it stays the decision of the Board of Commissioners.
- If the applicant organization opts to file an appeal and the Appeal Board Hearing Panel upholds the decision of the Board of Commissioners, the decision to deny recognition becomes final.
- If the applicant organization opts to not file an appeal within 14 days of notification of the denial of recognition, the decision to deny recognition becomes final.



Denial of Recognition to a Certifying Board

- When the decision to deny recognition becomes final, the applicant certifying board organization will not be allowed to submit another application for recognition for a period of 6 months.
- If the applicant certifying board wishes to submit another application for recognition after the 6-month waiting period, the organization will need to submit a new application for recognition including the full non-refundable application fee.
- If the Board of Commissioners denies recognition and/or the Appeal Board upholds the Board of Commissioners decision to deny recognition a second time:
 - The recognized specialty sponsoring organization will be informed that their recognition status will be changed from Recognition to Recognition, with reporting requirements,
 - The recognized specialty sponsoring organization will have two (2) years to develop a fully functioning certifying board that must apply for specialty certifying board recognition.
 - If the recognized specialty sponsoring organization fails to develop a fully functioning certifying board that can apply for specialty certifying board recognition within the two (2) year period, the National Commission withdraw the specialty sponsoring organizations recognition.



Termination of Relationship Between Sponsoring Organization and Certifying Board

- If at any time a recognized specialty sponsoring organization and its respective recognized certifying board make the decision to terminate their close working relationship:
 - The recognized certifying board will be requested to submit to the National Commission notification of voluntary discontinuance of recognition.
 - If the recognized specialty sponsoring organization fails to develop a fully functioning certifying board that can apply for specialty certifying board recognition within the two (2) year period, the National Commission withdraw the specialty sponsoring organizations recognition.



Changes in a Recognized Organizations Status Due to an Adverse Action

- If a recognized specialty sponsoring organization is granted the recognition status of Recognition, *with reporting requirements* and fails to correct its deficiencies within the specified twelve (12) month time period, the National Commission will notify the recognized certifying board that the recognition status of the recognized specialty sponsoring organization may have a negative impact on the recognition status of the certifying board.
- If a recognized specialty sponsoring organization is granted the recognition status of Recognition, *with reporting requirement, intent to withdraw*, the National Commission will notify the recognized certifying board that the recognition status of the recognized specialty sponsoring organization will be withdrawn in six (6) months if the sponsoring organization cannot achieve compliance.
- If the National Commission Board of Commissioners withdraws recognition from the recognized specialty sponsoring organization, the Board of Commissioners will also withdraw recognition from the recognized certifying board.



Changes in a Recognized Organizations Status Due to an Adverse Action

- If a recognized certifying board is granted the recognition status of Recognition, *with reporting requirements* and fails to correct its deficiencies within the specified twelve (12) month period, the National Commission will notify the recognized specialty sponsoring organization that the recognition status of the certifying board may have a negative impact on the recognition status of the specialty sponsoring organization.
- If a recognized certifying board is granted the recognition status of Recognition, *with reporting requirements, intent to withdraw*, the National Commission will notify the recognized specialty sponsoring organization that the recognition status of the certifying board will be withdrawn in six (6) months if the certifying board cannot achieve compliance.
- The recognized specialty sponsoring organization will have two (2) years to sponsor the development of another fully functioning certifying board that it has a close working relationship with that can apply for specialty certifying board recognition.
- If a fully functioning certifying board cannot be established within the two (2) year period, the National Commission Board of Commissioners will withdraw the specialty sponsoring organizations recognition and the specialty will no longer be recognized.



Responsibilities of the Recognized Specialty Sponsoring Organization if Recognition is Withdrawn from the Recognized Certifying Board

- If the National Commission Board of Commissioners makes the determination to withdraw recognition from the certifying board, the recognized sponsoring organization has the following responsibilities:
 - Sponsoring the development of another certifying board that can meet the *Requirements for Recognition*
 - Invoicing and collection of annual fees for diplomates to ensure no lapse occurs
 - Monitoring and approval of annual re-certification requirements of diplomates, if these requirements are based on continuing education, to ensure no lapse occurs
- The specialty sponsoring organization **does not** have the authority to conduct any certification examinations. The administration of certification examinations must be paused until a new functioning certifying board is in place.
- The National Commission will provide the recognized specialty sponsoring organization with all documentation that was submitted by the previously recognized certifying board in the Annual Survey of the Recognized Certifying Boards.



Recognition of a New Dental Specialty Certifying Board When Recognition has been Withdrawn from a Previously Recognized Certifying Board

- If recognition is withdrawn from a recognized dental specialty certifying board, it is the responsibility of the recognized dental specialty sponsoring organization to sponsor the development of another fully functioning certifying board that it has a close working relationship, can meet the *Requirements for Recognition* and apply for specialty certifying board recognition within the two (2) year period.
- If an application for specialty certifying board recognition is being reviewed by the National Commission, the two (2) year period will be temporarily paused while the application is active.
- If the application for specialty certifying board recognition is active, is under review by the National Commission and the two (2) year period has expired, the National Commission will continue to review the application and not withdraw the recognized specialty sponsoring organizations recognition.
- If the recognized specialty sponsoring organization is unable to sponsor the development of another fully functioning certifying board within the two (2) year period, the Board of Commissioners will withdraw the recognized specialty sponsoring organizations recognition and the discipline will no longer be recognized by the National Commission.



Recognition of a New Dental Specialty Certifying Board When Recognition has been Withdrawn from a Previously Recognized Certifying Board

- Recognition of a new dental specialty certifying board can only be granted by a two-thirds affirmative vote on all of the Requirements for Recognition of National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists by the voting Commissioners.
- All votes taken by the National Commission Board of Commissioners related to recognition will be conducted through confidential paper or electronic ballot.
- Applications for Specialty Certifying Board Recognition will be evaluated for compliance with the *Requirements for Recognition* by the National Commission Board of Commissioners on the basis of the information and data provided in the application for recognition and written comments submitted by the communities of interest. Upon consideration of an application for recognition of a national certifying board and written comments submitted by the communities of interest, the Board of Commissioners may take action to:
 - Grant recognition
 - Postpone action, pending additional information
 - Deny recognition



Recognition of a New Dental Specialty Certifying Board When Recognition has been Withdrawn from a Previously Recognized Certifying Board

If the National Commission Board of Commissioners grants recognition to a dental specialty certifying board:

- The National Commission will notify the certifying board within two (2) days of the conclusion of the meeting that the action was taken.
 - The National Commission will report the recognition on its Report of Unofficial Major Actions.
 - The National Commission will develop and adopt a policy statement recognizing the new dental specialty certifying board.
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- If the National Commission Board of Commissioners postpones action and requests additional information, the deadline for the specialty sponsoring organization to develop a fully functional certifying board will be extended for good cause. It will be at the discretion of the Board of Commissioners as whether it wishes to convene a special meeting to consider the additional information or postpone action until its next regularly scheduled meeting. The recognized specialty sponsoring organization will be informed of the Board of Commissioners decision to postpone action.



Recognition of a New Dental Specialty Certifying Board When Recognition has been Withdrawn from a Previously Recognized Certifying Board

If the National Commission Board of Commissioners denies recognition, the certifying board is advised of:

- The reason(s) for the denial (adverse action)
- The organizations right to an appeal of the adverse action
- The recognized specialty sponsoring organization is reminded of the previously established deadline to develop a new certifying board and that if the recognized specialty sponsoring organization does not meet the established deadline, recognition will be withdrawn.



Recognized Specialty Sponsoring or Certifying Board Request for a Period of Restructuring

- If a recognized specialty sponsoring organization or certifying board has been granted the recognition status of Recognition, *with reporting requirements, intent to withdraw*, the National Commission Board of Commissioners may allow, depending on the circumstances, a period of restructuring.
- The request for a period of restructuring must be submitted to the National Commission by the recognized organization prior to the National Commission withdrawing recognition
- The period of restructuring will only be in place for a period of twelve (12) months. **As part of the restructuring, members of the Board or Executive Committee of the recognized organization that engaged in actions that contributed to the recognition status of Recognition, *with reporting requirements, intent to withdraw* must be removed from their positions.**



Recognized Specialty Sponsoring or Certifying Board Request for a Period of Restructuring

- As part of the restructuring, the recognized organization must provide the National Commission with a detailed outline of the components of the restructuring plan and a timeline.
- If the recognized specialty sponsoring organization or recognized certifying board is unable to successfully complete the restructuring and come into compliance with the within the twelve (12) month period, the National Commission Board of Commissioners will withdraw recognition at its next scheduled meeting.
- If the Board of Commissioners determines that progress is being made, the Commission has the discretion to extend the period of restructuring for good cause and may grant a continued status of Recognition, with reporting requirements, intent to withdraw, period of restructuring. The Board of Commissioners will only extend the period for restructuring for a period of six (6) months.



In Summary

- Every recognition and re-recognition decision made by the National Commission is based on compliance with the *Requirements for Recognition*.
- Specialty recognition is a two-step process. First, the specialty sponsoring organization must be recognized, followed by a certifying board that has a close working relationship with the recognized specialty sponsoring organization.
- Only one (1) specialty sponsoring organization and one (1) certifying board can be recognized for each specialty.
- Currently, there are no more disciplines in dentistry that have the ability to meet all six (6) of the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties*.

