

Dental Specialty Certifying Board Recognition
and the
*Requirements for Recognition of
National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*

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National Commission on Recognition of
Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards

Introduction

- The *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties and National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists* contain criteria that specialty applicants and the recognized specialty sponsoring organizations and certifying boards must meet in order to become and/or remain recognized by the National Commission on Recognition of Dental Specialties and Certifying Boards (National Commission).
- In order to become, and remain, eligible for recognition by the National Commission as a national certifying board for a dental specialty, the specialty must have a recognized sponsoring organization that meets all of the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties*. A close working relationship must be maintained between the recognized sponsoring organization and the certifying board. A certifying board seeking recognition must be able to provide documented evidence showing that it satisfies all the *Requirements for Recognition of National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.



Introduction

- The *Requirements for Recognition of National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists* contains 14 requirements that are divided into three (3) sections:
 - Organization of Boards (4 requirements)
 - Operation of Boards (7 requirements)
 - Certification Requirements (3 requirements)
- On an annual basis, the recognized certifying boards are required to complete an *Annual Survey of the Recognized Certifying Boards* showing compliance with the *Requirements for Recognition of National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists*.



Recognized Dental Specialty Certifying Boards

- The National Commission recognizes the following twelve (12) dental specialty certifying boards:
 - American Board of Dental Public Health
 - American Board of Endodontics
 - American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
 - American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
 - American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
 - American Board of Oral Medicine
 - American Board of Orofacial Pain
 - American Board of Orthodontics
 - American Board of Pediatric Dentistry
 - American Board of Periodontology
 - American Board of Prosthodontics
 - American Dental Board of Anesthesiology



Organization of Boards-Requirement 1

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must have no less than five (5) and no more than twelve (12) voting directors/officers designated on a rotation basis in accordance with a method approved by the National Commission. Although the National Commission does not recommend a single method for selecting directors/officers of boards, directors/officers may not serve for more than a total of nine (9) years. All voting directors/officers must be diplomates of that specific certifying board and the certifying boards may establish additional criteria/qualifications if they so desire.

Interpretation: (a) There are no more than twelve (12) of voting directors, (b) whose terms do not exceed a total of nine (9) years and (c) all directors are diplomates.



Organization of Boards-Requirement 1

Recommended Documentation:

Bylaws provide language related to:

- The required number of voting directors, which is no less than five (5) and no more than twelve (12) voting directors.
- The length of the directors terms, which is no longer than nine (9) years total.
- The requirement that each board member is a diplomate.

Further recommended documentation outside of *Bylaws*:

- Written documentation outlining the boards selection process, membership criteria and diplomate requirement for directors/officers.
- A list of current voting members/officers of the board.



Organization of Boards-Requirement 2

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must have a certification program that is comprehensive in scope and meets the needs of the diplomate practitioners in the recognized specialty and the profession and protects the public. Further, the certifying board must provide evidence of a close working relationship with a recognized specialty sponsoring organization that meets all of the *Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties*.

Interpretation: There is a specialty sponsoring organization recognized by the National Commission and there is a close working relationship between the certifying board and sponsoring organization.

Recommended Documentation:

- *Bylaws* contain language related to the close working relationship between the sponsoring organization and the certifying board.



Organization of Boards-Requirement 2

Examples of a close working relationship may include:

- A statement of sponsorship of the certifying board by the recognized specialty sponsoring organization.
- Formal policy statements by the sponsoring organization and certifying board recognizing each other.
- Sponsoring organization and certifying board engaging in regular, formal communications.
- Attendance of leadership/liaisons representing the sponsoring organization/certifying board at annual meetings.
- The sponsoring organization's ability to make nominations to the certifying board's board of directors.
- Procedures acknowledging that the sponsoring organization may establish additional qualifications for diplomates who serve on the certifying board.
- Sponsoring organization providing continuing education courses that prepare diplomates for examination of the board as well as review courses as part of the re-credentialing process.
- Collaboration of review and revision of accreditation standards for advanced education programs in the specialty discipline. Although collaboration between the sponsoring organization and the certifying boards is **required**, the certifying board **must be** independent, bearing full responsibility for its program; the evaluation of qualifications and competence of those it certifies as diplomats; and financially independent from the sponsoring organization.



Organization of Boards-Requirement 3

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must provide evidence of adequate financial viability to conduct its certification program.

Interpretation: Examines financial viability of the certifying board.

Recommended Documentation:

- Copy of the previous year Financial Statement and/or Audit Report.



Organization of Boards-Requirement 4

This requirement only applies to certifying boards that outsource administrative functions and/or development of examinations to agencies outside of the certifying board.

An applicant and a recognized certifying board may outsource administrative duties to suitable external consultants and/or external agencies to assist in daily operations and/or examination functions. If the certifying board does outsource administrative and/or examination functions, the certifying board must submit documentation describing the process. External and internal consultants who participate in the development and/or administration of certification examinations must be diplomates in the specialty that is being examined.

Interpretation: Outsourcing of administrative duties of the certifying board to external agencies to run the daily operations and/or develop the examination content.

Recommended Documentation:

If the certifying board does outsource administrative and/or examination functions:

- The *Bylaws* must describe the process of selecting consultants or agencies, the duties of these individuals/agencies
- A copy of the Annual Report from the individual(s)/agency.

If the certifying board does not outsource administrative or examination functions to outside agencies, no evidence of compliance is required.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 1

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must only certify qualified dentists as diplomates in the specialty recognized by the National Commission. No more than one (1) certifying board will be recognized by the National Commission for the certification of diplomates in a recognized specialty area of practice.

Interpretation: The certifying board is only certifying dentists as diplomates.

Recommended Documentation:

- *Bylaws* and/or written policies stating that the board is only certifying qualified dentists as diplomates.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 2

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must give at least one (1) examination in each calendar year and must announce examination details at least six (6) months in advance of the examination. In extraordinary circumstances, recognized certifying boards may request a conditional waiver of exception from the National Commission.

Interpretation: The certifying board gives at least one (1) examination yearly and properly posts announcements related to examination dates at least six (6) months in advance.

Recommended Documentation:

- A copy of the announcement of examination(s) date/place posted by the certifying board.
- Written description of where the information is posted.
- Screenshot of organizations website showing posting.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 3

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must maintain a current list of diplomates.

Interpretation: The certifying board keeps a current list of diplomates.

Recommended Documentation:

- Current list of diplomates.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 4

An applicant and a recognized certifying board submit to the National Commission data relative to financial viability and operations, written examination procedures, candidate examination guidelines and procedures, certification and recertification examination content, test construction and evaluation and the reporting of results. Examination procedures and results should follow the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing, including validity and reliability evidence. A diplomate in good standing may, upon written request, obtain a copy of the annual examination technical and financial reports of the certifying board. The recognized certifying board will submit the required documentation on a cycle established by the National Commission.

Interpretation: Validity and reliability of the examination to ensure the examination is properly testing what it is meant to be testing and whether all aspects of the test is unbiased.

The requirement also addresses a diplomates ability to be given access, via written request, to the annual technical report of the examination and the financial reports of the board.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 4

Recommended Documentation:

- Policy and/or public statements demonstrating diplomates ability, upon written request, to obtain information on the certifying boards financial viability and examination technical reports.
- Written Examination Procedures.
- Candidate Brochure/Guidelines/Procedures for Certification Examination.
- Certification and Recertification Examination Content

Documentation related to Test Construction and Evaluation:

- Validity and Reliability evidence provided by a psychometrician/statistician (Examination Technical Report)
- Test Development and Revisions Process
- Test administration, Scoring and Reporting Process
- Policy on Fairness in Testing and Test Use
- Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers
- Policy on Testing Individuals of Diverse Linguistic Backgrounds
- Policy on Testing Individuals with Disabilities



Operation of Boards-Requirement 5

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must require diplomates to engage in lifelong learning and shall encourage continuous quality improvement.

Interpretation: Continuing education and recertification/certification requirements related to lifelong learning.

Recommended Documentation:

- Written Recertification/Certification Maintenance Policies.
- Written Continuing Education Practices and Requirements.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 6

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must provide to the National Commission evidence of examination and certification of a significant number of additional dentists in order to warrant approval of and continued recognition by the National Commission. The recognized certifying boards will submit the required documentation on a cycle established by the National Commission.

Interpretation: The certifying board gives a certification examination (at least once a year) for a number of additional practitioners commensurate to its size.

Recommended Documentation:

- Evidence of holding at least one (1) certification examination.

Please note that the number of practitioners in each of the recognized specialties varies, which has an impact on the number of examinations given in a year and the number of examinees in a specific discipline.



Operation of Boards-Requirement 7

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must bear sole authority and responsibility for conducting certification programs, the evaluation of the qualifications and competence of those certified as diplomates, and the issuance of certificates.

Interpretation: The certifying board is autonomous from the sponsoring organization and has full authority to conduct its business related to the evaluation and competence of diplomates and the issuance of certification.

Recommended Documentation:

- Written documentation (articles of incorporation) showing that the certifying board is an autonomous entity.
- *Bylaws* show board has authority to develop and administer examinations and make certification decisions independently.



Certification Requirements-Requirement 1

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must require, for eligibility for certification as a diplomate, the successful completion of an advanced education program that is two (2) or more academic years in length accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

Although full-time, continual attendance in a Commission on Dental Accreditation accredited advanced education program is desirable, the period of advanced education need not be continuous, nor completed within successive calendar years. An advanced educational program equivalent to two (2) or more academic years in length, successfully completed on a part-time basis over an extended period of time as a graduated sequence of educational experience not exceeding four (4) calendar years, may be considered acceptable in satisfying this requirement. Short continuation, refresher courses (educational experiences only obtained through continuing education) and teaching experience in a specialty departments in a dental education facility will not be accepted in meeting any portion of this requirement.

A certifying board may establish an exception (alternative pathway) to the qualification requirement of completion of an advanced education program that is two (2) or more academic years in length accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation for the unique candidate who can demonstrate comparable educational and/or training requirements to the satisfaction of the certifying board. A certifying board must submit a separate petition to the National Commission for permission to establish and/or revise a policy on alternative pathways.



Certification Requirements-Requirement 1

Interpretation: Provides analysis into the following areas:

- Eligibility requirements for diplomates that have successfully completed an advanced education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).
- Eligibility requirements for diplomates who attended an advanced education program on a part-time basis and completed the program with four (4) years.

Please note that not all advanced education programs accredited by CODA allow for part-time attendance

- Alternate pathways to certification for diplomates that have not graduated from a CODA accredited advanced education program.



Certification Requirements-Requirement 1

Recommended Documentation:

- Written eligibility requirements for certification showing completion of a CODA accredited advanced education program that is two (2) or more years in length.
- If the recognized specialty does allow part-time attendance, there is written evidence related to eligibility and the length of the part-time program.
- Alternative Pathways to Certification
 - If there are alternate pathways to certification, there is written evidence related to equivalency or other measures to demonstrate equal scope and level of knowledge.

Please note an alternate pathway is an eligibility pathway for individuals with unique circumstances such as an internationally-educated dentist who has accepted a full-time, teaching appointment in the discipline in a CODA accredited predoctoral or postdoctoral education program or for individuals who have been practicing exclusively in the discipline for many years prior to the establishment of the CODA-accredited programs.

Alternative pathways are not for individuals who have graduated from non-accredited, U.S. based advanced education programs.



Certification Requirements-Requirement 2

An applicant and a recognized certifying board must establish its minimum requirements for years of practice in the area for which certificates are granted. The years of advanced education in the discipline specific specialty may be accepted toward fulfillment of this requirement.

Interpretation: Review of minimum eligibility requirements for certification.

Recommended Documentation:

- Written documentation related to minimum requirements for certification.



Certification Requirements-Requirement 3

An applicant and a recognized certifying board in cooperation with their recognized specialty sponsoring organization, must prepare and publicize joint recommendations on the Commission on Dental accreditation educational standards for the advanced education programs for that specialty.

Interpretation: Evaluates whether the certifying board and sponsoring organization work together in developing educational standards and experiential requirements.

Recommended Documentation:

- Written evidence of joint comments made on CODA accreditation standards.
- Agenda/Meeting minutes showing that the certifying board and sponsoring organization meet on a regular basis to review educational program standards and experiential requirements.



Final Comments

- In order to become recognized, an applicant certifying board must meet all 14 requirements.
- In order to remain recognized, all 14 requirements must continue to be met.
- Any comments, questions or concerns should be submitted to the National Commission at nationalcommission@ada.org

