



Australian
Dental
Council

MEDIA RELEASE
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Training of oral and maxillofacial surgeons wins endorsement

The Australian Dental Council and the Australian Medical Council have endorsed the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons' training of oral and maxillofacial surgeons. This follows a comprehensive review, which assessed the College's training against the standards of both the ADC, which is the national standards body for dental education and training and the AMC, the national standards body for medical education and training.

The President of the AMC, Dr Joanna Flynn, said: "The AMC and the ADC share a commitment to ensuring Australia is served by a competent, well trained health workforce. Collaboration between the two Councils, in this joint accreditation and other projects, demonstrates our commitment to sharing expertise across the professions, and to improving our processes for setting and assessing standards of education and training." The President of the ADC, Dr Brian Mor, is in complete agreement with the comments of Dr Flynn and stated that the joint process was appropriate and satisfied all the requirements of both Councils.

Oral and maxillofacial surgery is a surgical specialty that deals with the diagnosis, surgical and adjunctive treatment of diseases, injuries and defects of the human jaws and associated structures. The Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons provides specialist training programs in a range of dental specialties in Australia and New Zealand, including oral and maxillofacial surgery which is both a dental and a medical specialty.

The requirements for award of a College Fellowship in oral and maxillofacial surgery include completion of both a dental and a medical degree, followed by five years of on-the-job training, completed while trainees work in College-accredited hospital posts. Training also includes academic programs, provided with input from the university dental schools, and a range of surgical skills courses.

The assessment by the joint AMC/ADC expert team included visits to hospitals in Australia and New Zealand where training occurs; a review of College documents and interviews with College representatives; surveys of oral and maxillofacial surgery trainees and their supervisors; and interviews and submissions from stakeholders such as health departments, dental and medical professional bodies and the university dental schools.

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The ADC/AMC team's overall impression was of trainees and graduates of very high quality, whose training is strongly supported at the state and/or regional level by practicing oral and maxillofacial surgeons. This view was supported by the feedback from medical administrators, health and medical practitioners and health service managers.

As well as identifying strengths, the team's detailed report identifies areas where further work is required. The College is investing significantly in a review of its training and is developing a more national approach to training, but the team found that this is still very much a work in progress. The team has also commented on the capacity of the university dental schools to bring additional academic rigour to the College's training program, enhance research opportunities, and provide skilled academic teachers and administrative support for the trainees. The report recommends the College negotiate a heads of agreement with the dental schools concerning their role in the oral and maxillofacial surgery training program.

In response to the report College President, Dr David Thomson, said "Accreditation by the ADC and AMC is a major milestone in the development of oral and maxillofacial surgery in Australia and New Zealand. It is a first for the specialty and represents acceptance of the College as the provider of training for this specialty that bridges dentistry and medicine. "

Dr Thomson said that accreditation would add to the standing of the specialty and contribute to ongoing development in the quality of training of new specialists. He looked forward to further improvement in specialist services provided to the community by oral and maxillofacial surgeons through the expansion of training opportunities and an increase in the number of qualified surgeons.

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