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FDI POLICY STATEMENT

BASIC DENTAL EDUCATION

Revised version adopted by the General Assembly: 2026, Prague, Czech Republic.

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CONTEXT

4 The revision of this Policy Statement on Basic Dental Education (BDE) is proposed
5 to reflect the evolving needs of oral health education in the 21st century. The visible
6 global momentum to elevate oral health on the global health agenda, advances in
7 science and technology—including the rapid development of artificial intelligence
8 (AI)—changing societal expectations, the integration of evidence-based practice, and
9 the increasing emphasis on interprofessional education and collaborative care
10 necessitate an updated approach, aimed at preparing a more competent oral health
11 workforce capable of addressing population needs through prevention-oriented,
12 integrated, and evidence-based care.

SCOPE

14 This Policy Statement addresses the principles and objectives of Basic Dental
15 Education (BDE), namely basic oral health education, which constitutes the
16 foundation for safe, ethical, and competent dental practice, socially accountable and
17 sustainable dental practice, as well as clinical and research work.

18 It covers:

- 19 • The comprehensive educational framework preparing students for
20 independent dental practice.
- 21 • The competencies and ethical standards expected of dental graduates.
- 22 • The responsibility of educational institutions and regulatory bodies in ensuring
23 quality and consistency.

24 In this context, the Policy Statement underlines the importance of including areas that
25 newly graduated dentists should be able to master upon entering clinical practice, as
26 well as the fundamental competencies that all clinicians should continuously
27 demonstrate and further develop through continuing professional education.

DEFINITIONS

Basic Dental Education (BDE) refers to the formal undergraduate or graduate education that provides future dentists with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies and values required to deliver safe, ethical, and person-centered care, and to engage in career-long professional development.

PRINCIPLES

Basic Dental Education (BDE) must be grounded in ethical, evidence-based, and evidence informed and person-centered practice, in accordance with national rules and regulations.

BDE should be inclusive, equitable, and adaptable to societal needs and health system priorities.

POLICY

FDI encourages national dental associations (NDAs), educational institutions and regulatory bodies to adopt and periodically review competency-based curricula aligned with international standards. This ensures that new graduates:

- practice safe, evidence-based dentistry by integrating technical expertise, clinical reasoning, communication, and professional ethics.
- understand the importance of dental research, scientific literacy, and critical appraisal skills, including research ethics, and develop a research-oriented mindset.
- understand the link between oral health, overall health, and quality of life;
- understand the need for preventive strategies and oral health promotion initiatives at both the individual and community levels
- are aware of specific local public health needs and how to incorporate these needs in their clinical practice;
- provide ethical, culturally safe, evidence-based treatment;
- responsibly integrate scientific and clinical innovations, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence while maintaining clinical judgment and patient interaction;
- develop clinical readiness through a well-defined balance between theoretical learning and practical/clinical training;
- demonstrate digital and AI literacy, including responsible integration of scientific and clinical innovations, data privacy, cybersecurity, and critical assessment of emerging technologies;
- develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills to support evidence-based and patient-centered decision-making;

FDI encourages increased harmonization of key curricular elements across countries to promote consistency in educational outcomes and levels of competence among graduates according to the legislation in each of the member countries:

- Dental education institutions should promote interprofessional collaboration and integrate behavioral and communication sciences throughout the curriculum.
- Faculty development, quality assurance, and assessment mechanisms should support continuous improvement and evaluate technical competence, professionalism, ethics, and communication skills.
- Assessment methods should be aligned with competency-based principles and evaluate not only knowledge and technical skills, but also clinical decision-making, communication, and professional behavior.
- Educational institutions should define transparent minimum standards for simulation based, practical, and clinical training in line with internationally accepted guidelines.
- Alignment with national legislation and accreditation frameworks is essential for consistent educational outcomes.
- Educational institutions should incorporate innovative teaching methods, simulation-enhanced training, and digital learning technologies, supported by formative and summative assessment approaches that promote continuous feedback and competency development.
- Dental education institutions should ensure the development of students' core academic competencies, including critical analysis, research, and the effective communication of ideas and arguments, in accordance with the standards expected of an academically educated oral health professional
- Curricula must be designed to ensure that dental graduates possess the relevant knowledge and competencies to provide appropriate primary oral healthcare to all members of society, including vulnerable groups and people with disabilities
- Dental education institutions should ensure that dental educators are appropriately trained to meet the evolving needs of dental students.
- Educational institutions should also promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, while fostering a psychologically safe learning environment that supports the well-being and wellness of students and faculty.

KEYWORDS

Basic dental education, Competencies, Ethics, Career-long learning, Internationally recognized guidelines.

DISCLAIMER

The information in this Policy Statement is based on the best scientific and educational evidence available at the time of adoption. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities and socio-economic conditions.

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