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The Dental Council of Hong Kong



Annual Report 2010





Message from the Chairman

*Dr. TSO Wei-kwok, Homer, SBS, JP
Chairman, Dental Council of Hong Kong*

All Members of the Council and I hold a strong belief that the paramount objective of the Dental Council is to protect members of the public and to maintain public confidence in the dental profession. There should exist no conflicts between the interests of the dental profession and that of the public. We are confident that the Council and the profession can work in unison to further the interest of the public.

The Dental Council has achieved satisfactory progress in the accreditation exercise of the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong ("Faculty"). A Task Force on Accreditation of Standard and Structure of Undergraduate Dental Education and Training ("Task Force"), which comprises experienced dental practitioners practising in Hong Kong and non-dental professionals, was set up in March 2010 under the Council's Education and Accreditation Committee ("EAC") to work out a timetable and road map for the accreditation exercise. The ultimate objective of the exercise is to ensure that the dental graduates meet the required professional standards prescribed by the Council for registration under the Dentists Registration Ordinance ("DRO").

To kick start the accreditation exercise, two representatives from the Commission on Dental Association of Canada were invited to lead a 2-day training workshop in December 2010 to familiarize the Task Force members with their roles and functions in the exercise. Members of the Faculty also participated actively in the workshop. In parallel, the Council engaged two independent experts from the United Kingdom and Canada respectively to help conduct a pre-accreditation consultancy study on the dental undergraduate curriculum offered by the Faculty. The study report written by the two experts will be used as one of the foundation documents for the accreditation exercise. In the coming year, the EAC and the Task Force will continue to work closely with the Faculty to iron out the details of implementation.

The EAC has drawn up a new set of "Guidelines for Inclusion of Qualifications in the List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications" and a "List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications" ("List") which took effect from 1 November 2010. Registered dentists possessing a qualification entered in the List can quote that qualification in dissemination of service information to the public, irrespective of whether the same has been entered in the General Register.

The implementation of additional examiners in the Council's Licensing Examination went smooth. In 2010, nine general dentists were appointed as additional examiners and seven of them assisted the Chief Examiners in Part II Practical Test and Part III Clinical Test of the examination. We will continue to train up more dentists to take up the job. On the other hand, the Council has instituted an appeal mechanism for applicants/candidates who are aggrieved by the decision regarding permission to take the Licensing Examination and/or results of the examination. A Review Committee with membership independent of the Council has been set up to deal with applications made under the appeal mechanism.

The current cycle on voluntary Continuing Professional Development ("CPD") programme for dentists ended on 31 December 2010. A new 3-year cycle will start on 1 January 2011 till 31 December 2013. All practicing dentists are encouraged to proactively engage in life-long learning to keep themselves abreast of new dental knowledge and service innovations. The CPD Accreditation Committee formed under the Council will continue monitoring the accreditation of CPD activities and conduct review of the CPD programme as necessary.

With regard to the Council's statutory function on regulating the conduct and discipline of registered dentists, it is noted that 128 complaints were made to the Council in 2010, of which 100 cases were related to disregard of professional responsibilities to patients. Although a majority of these cases have not proceeded to formal disciplinary proceedings, we take this as a clear indication of the trust which the public have placed on the investigation/disciplinary authorities of the Council. Opportunity is taken to remind that it is prohibited to settle disciplinary complaints in private or to attempt by either the complainant or the dentist involved in suppressing provision of information and evidence to the Council for its investigation into the case. Any such act may involve the criminal offence of perverting the course of public justice.

I am privileged to have the support and assistance of all the Council Members and staff of the Council Secretariat in furthering the Council business. The Council is confident of the continuous collaboration with members of the dental profession in the coming year to achieve sustained improvements to our professionalism and the quality of service standards.



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Introduction

- 1.1 This annual report, covering the period 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010, is published by the Dental Council of Hong Kong. Through this report, the Council aims to keep members of the dental profession as well as the general public better informed of the functions and activities of the Council and its various committees and working groups during the year under report.
- 1.2 As this report is intended for general information to the readers, certain functions of the Council have accordingly been simplified and/or presented in the form of an information document. Readers who are interested in the more specific details of the statutory functions of the Council and its committees and working groups are invited to refer to the relevant provisions under the Dentists Registration Ordinance, Chapter 156 of the Laws of Hong Kong and the Dentists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations.

Enquiries relating to the functions and work of the Dental Council can be addressed to –

The Dental Council Secretariat

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99 Wong Chuk Hang Road, Aberdeen, Hong Kong
Tel. No. : (852) 2873 5862 Fax No. : (852) 2554 0577
E-mail : dchk@dh.gov.hk

Enquiries relating to registration matters can be addressed to -

Central Registration Office

17/F, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong
Tel. No. : (852) 2961 8655 Fax No. : (852) 2891 7946
E-mail : cro1@dh.gov.hk

24-hour enquiry hotline : (852) 2574 4333

Dental Council's website : <http://www.dchk.org.hk>

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Functions of the Dental Council

- 2.1 The Dental Council is established under section 4 of the Dentists Registration Ordinance to carry out the following statutory functions in accordance with the Ordinance and the Dentists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations –
- (a) registration of dental practitioners in Hong Kong, including processing applications for registration, applications for specialist registration and applications for registration of additional qualifications, as well as issuing various types of certificates relating to the practice of dentistry to registered dental practitioners;
 - (b) conduct of licensing examinations; and
 - (c) disciplinary regulation of dental practitioners in Hong Kong.
- 2.2 The Council and its various committees and working groups meet regularly to consider and decide on policies to facilitate the proper conduct of their statutory functions. The Council Secretariat provides executive and secretariat support to the Council at these meetings. During the year, aside from holding routine policy and committee meetings, the Council has processed, with the support of the Secretariat –
- (a) 98 applications to sit for the licensing examination;
 - (b) 61 applications for new registration;
 - (c) 9 applications for inclusion in the Specialist Register;
 - (d) 1,981 applications for renewal of annual practising certificates for dentists whose names are on the General Register for dentists resident in Hong Kong;
 - (e) 128 complaints or information received against registered dentists; and
 - (f) over 10,000 general enquiries from members of the profession and the public on registration- and regulation-related matters.

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Membership of the Dental Council

3.1 Under section 4 of the Dentists Registration Ordinance, there should be 12 members in the Dental Council and the composition of the Council is as follows –

- (a) the Registrar (the consultant dental surgeon in charge of the Dental Service of the Department of Health (DH));
- (b) a consultant dental surgeon of the Dental Service of DH;
- (c) a registered dentist, who is a full-time member of the teaching staff of the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Hong Kong (HKU);
- (d) 2 medical practitioners;
- (e) 6 registered dentists to be appointed –
 - (i) from a panel of not less than 12 such registered dentists nominated by the Hong Kong Dental Association (HKDA); or
 - (ii) in the event of HKDA failing to nominate at least 12 such registered dentists, at the discretion of the Chief Executive; and
- (f) 1 lay member.

Members in (b) to (f) above are all appointed by the Chief Executive.

3.2 The membership of the Council in 2010 is as follow –

Dr Tso Wei-kwok, Homer, BBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Chan Cho-yee, Joseph, JP (Registrar)
Dr Lee Kwing-hong, JP (*up to 24.9.2010*)
Dr Yau Chuen-kam, JP (*since 25.9.2010*)
Professor Lakshman Perera Samaranyake
Dr Fan Yun-sun, Susan
Dr Leong Fung Ling-yee, Lilian, BBS, JP
Dr Ho Chi-wai, David
Dr Lau Chi-kai, George
Dr Chan Fook-yee, Franklin
Dr Sun Yee-waha, David
Dr Chiu Tin-yan
Miss Chan Chiu-ling, Ophelia, BBS

The Council's Legal Adviser is Mr Chan Chor-chak, Charles, and its Secretary is Miss Leung Shun-chee, Evelyn.

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Continuing Professional Development Accreditation Committee (CAC)

- 8.1 The existing 3-year cycle of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Programme for practising dentists commenced on 1 January 2008 and continues to be on a voluntary basis. Same in the first two cycles, the CPD Programme continues to adopt a 'credit point system' with credit points awarded for participation in CPD activities recognized by the Dental Council. A minimum of 45 credit points have to be accumulated over the 3-year cycle ending 31 December 2010.
- 8.2 As in the past, all registered dentists, including those deemed-to-be registered but excluding those on the overseas list, can enroll in the CPD Programme. Fellows of HKAM who can fulfill HKAM's CME/CPD requirements will be regarded as having met the CPD requirements of the Dental Council at the end of the cycle.
- 8.3 A CPD Accreditation Committee (CAC) has been set up to monitor and review the CPD Programme. Its terms of reference are as follows –
- (a) to monitor the process of accreditation of CPD activities ;
 - (b) to recommend CPD Programme Providers, CPD Programme Accreditors and CPD Programme Administrators for approval by the Dental Council ;
 - (c) to recommend award of the CPD certificate for approval by the Council ; and
 - (d) to conduct review of the CPD Programme for practising dentists.
- 8.4 The CAC comprises of the following representatives -
- (a) 3 representatives from the Dental Council (one of them shall be the Chairman);
 - (b) a representative from CDSHK;
 - (c) a representative from HKDA; and
 - (d) a representative from the Faculty of Dentistry of HKU.
- 8.5 The membership of the CAC in 2010 is as follows -
- Dr Chan Fook-yee, Franklin (Chairman) (Dental Council)
 - Dr Chiu Tin-yan (Dental Council)
 - Dr Ho Chi-wai, David (Dental Council)
 - Professor Erik Urban Oskar Hägg (HKU)
 - Dr Hui Kwok-kuen, Kenneth (CDSHK)
 - Dr Leung Fun-shing, Vincent (HKDA)



8.6 Upon the recommendation of the CAC, the following CPD Programme Accreditors, CPD Programme Administrators and CPD Programme Providers have been appointed by the Dental Council -

CPD Programme Accreditors

CDSHK

HKDA

CPD Programme Administrators

CDSHK

HKDA

DH (for Dental Officers of the Department of Health only)

CPD Programme Providers

CDSHK

HKDA

DH

Faculty of Dentistry of HKU

Hong Kong Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

Hong Kong Endodontic Society

Hong Kong Prosthetic Dentistry Society

Hong Kong Society of Hospital Dentistry

Hong Kong Society of Oral Implantology

Hong Kong Society of Orthodontists

Hong Kong Society of Paediatric Dentistry

Hong Kong Society of Periodontology

Hong Kong Society for Sedation and Anaesthesia in Dentistry

Hong Kong Society of Family Dentistry

8.7 The Dental Council had, on the recommendation of the CAC, awarded CPD Certificates to 890 practising dentists who had satisfactorily completed the CPD Cycle ending 31 December 2010. These dentists are allowed to use the title "CPD Certified (valid up to 31/12/2010)" in their visiting cards and letterheads.

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Communication with the Profession and the Public

- 9.1 In order to enhance communication between the Dental Council and members of the profession, the Council, apart from publishing an annual report, will issue circular letters to all dental practitioners in Hong Kong from time to time. These circular letters in general will highlight matters considered by the Council to be of interest to members of the profession.
- 9.2 The Council welcomes any views from members of the profession on issues which the Council can undertake to further explore and review so as to keep the profession abreast of the latest development in knowledge and skills in dental services for the benefits of members of the public.
- 9.3 The Council hosts a website <http://www.dchk.org.hk> to provide the following information –
- (a) Membership of the Council and its subsidiary committees and boards;
 - (b) Information on the date of an upcoming inquiry of the Council;
 - (c) Text of the Code of Professional Discipline for the Guidance of Dental Practitioners in Hong Kong;
 - (d) Information pamphlet and form in relation to complaints against registered dentists;
 - (e) List of registered dentists;
 - (f) Guidelines and form in relation to application to be a specialist dentist;
 - (g) Text of the Annual Report of the Dental Council;
 - (h) Information on the Continuing Professional Development Programme (CPD) for Practising Dentists;
 - (i) List of dentists who have met the CPD requirements set by the Dental Council;
 - (j) Guidelines for Inclusion of Qualifications in the List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications;
 - (k) List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications;
 - (l) Application for sitting the Licensing Examination of the Dental Council;
 - (m) Scope of dental work that may be undertaken by enrolled dental hygienists;
 - (n) Competences for the Hong Kong Dentist; and
 - (o) Judgments of the Dental Council.
- 9.4 To facilitate members of the public to have access to the practice information of dental practitioners, the Council has approved dentists to provide such information through an electronic directory of dentists developed by approved organizations. Since 2003, the Council has approved HKDA to develop an electronic directory of dentists.

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Future Developments

- 10.1 The Dental Council is committed to continue leading the dental profession in its role for greater professionalism. In meeting the community's changing needs and rising public awareness and demands, the Council must stay up-to-date of the community's aspiration as well as the latest developments in technology and demands in dental service.
- 10.2 The Council believes that in an ever-evolving knowledge-based environment, dental practitioners have the obligation to keep themselves updated on current development in knowledge and skills in the various fields of professional practice in order to maintain quality professional service. To encourage practising dentists to maintain and raise further their professional competence, the Council has been running a voluntary continuing education programme for dentists since 2002. The Council will continue encouraging active participation of the registered dentists and to keep the programme under close monitoring.
- 10.3 The Council will continue to regularly look into the scope for improving procedures and processes in the handling of disciplinary cases of registered dentists to further enhance efficiency and transparency. Save for exceptional circumstances, the Council's disciplinary inquiries are normally held in public. This will remain the practice of the Council. Information on the date and venue of an upcoming disciplinary inquiry has also been posted on the Council's website for information to members of the public and interested parties.
- 10.4 The Council's Secretariat will strive to continue enhancing its efficiency in the provision of services to members of the profession as well as the public. In particular, arrangement has been made for information on the Council's website to be updated regularly so as to provide the most up-to-date information on the various issues pertaining to the activities of the Council as well as the practice of dentistry in Hong Kong.
- 10.5 The Council is answerable to the public and has the continuing statutory duty to ensure that all persons are of the required professional standard before they are given the registration to practise in Hong Kong. To this end, the Council is embarking on the accreditation of the degree of Bachelor of Dental Surgery of the University of Hong Kong for the purpose of registration of dentists under the Dentists Registration Ordinance. The exercise is the first of this kind by the Council.

Table 1

Statistics on Disciplinary Cases Handled by the Dental Council

Complaints Received by the Dental Council

Nature	No. of Cases		
	2008	2009	2010
1. Conviction punishable with imprisonment	1	1	1
2. Disregard of professional responsibilities to patients	99	101	100
3. Abuse of alcohol or drugs	-	-	-
4. Abuse of dangerous or scheduled drugs	-	-	-
4A. Mandatory labeling of all dispensed medicines	-	-	-
5. Abuse of professional position in order to further an improper association or commit adultery	-	-	-
6. Abuse of professional confidence	-	-	-
7. Advertising (combined with "9. Canvassing" with effect from 2009)	1		
8. Depreciation of other dental practitioners	-	-	-
9. Canvassing	8	32	12
10. Misleading and unapproved descriptions and announcements	3	8	4
11. Improper financial transactions	-	-	-
12. Untrue or misleading certificates and other professional documents	-	-	-
13. Covering	-	-	-
14. Improper delegation of dental duties	-	1	-
15. Responsibility of partners and directors	-	-	-
16. Miscellaneous	8	8	11
Total :	120	151	128

