



香港牙醫管理委員會
THE DENTAL COUNCIL
OF
HONG KONG

貴處檔號：
Your Ref.
本會檔號： DC 1/13/A III
Our Ref.

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22 December 2022

Dear Dentists,

Letter to Registered Dentists

The purpose of this letter is to update you on a few issues pertaining to the practice of dentistry in Hong Kong.

Guidelines on Inclusion of Qualifications in the List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications

The Dental Council of Hong Kong (“the Council”) has recently completed a review on the Guidelines for Inclusion of Qualifications in the List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications (“the AQ Guidelines”) and issued the new AQ Guidelines which will take effect from **1 July 2024**.

Under the new AQ Guidelines, only qualifications acquired through either of the following means are eligible for inclusion in the List of Registrable/Quotable Additional Qualifications (“the List”) –

- (a) the qualification is conferred after an examination by the conferring institution or other objective and clearly defined mode of assessment by the conferring institution; and the standard of the examination or the assessment should be acceptable to the Council; or
- (b) the duration of study or training for the qualification is not less than one academic year full-time, i.e. 96 credits (10 notional learning hours equal to 1 credit) or its part-time or distance learning equivalent as determined by the Education and Accreditation Committee; and the qualification is conferred after an examination by the conferring institution or other objective and clearly defined mode of assessment by the conferring institution. The standard of the examination or the assessment should be acceptable to the Council.

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Besides, a dentist holding a qualification in the List may quote and/or apply to register that qualification in his/her entry on the General Register (“GR”) **only if** the acquisition and standard of that qualification meet the criteria as set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the new AQ Guidelines with effect from 1 July 2024.

The Council has also reviewed the qualifications in the prevailing List (as at July 2020) and decided that special arrangements would be made for the following two types of qualifications after the new AQ Guidelines comes into effect on 1 July 2024 –

(a) Qualifications to be removed from the List

A few qualifications as set out at Appendix C to the new AQ Guidelines will be removed from the List with effect from 1 July 2024. Dentists who have been conferred those qualifications before 1 July 2024 are still eligible for applying for registering such qualifications in their entries on the GR.

(b) Qualifications to be marked with “*” in the List

A few qualifications will be marked with “*” in the List with effect from 1 July 2024. For dentists (i) holding a qualification to be marked with “*” in the List but that qualification is **not** acquired through either of the means as set out in paragraph 4(a) and 4(b) of the new AQ Guidelines AND (ii) have been conferred that qualification before 1 July 2024, they are still eligible for applying for registering that qualification in their entries on the GR.

However, dentists should **NOT** quote the above two types of qualifications in dissemination of their service information to the public on or after 1 July 2024 if such qualifications are not registered in their entries on the GR.

Please note that all applications for inclusion of qualifications in the List with provision of all the required information/documents received by the Council **on or after 1 July 2024** will be considered in accordance with the new AQ Guidelines. Before the new AQ Guidelines comes into effect, all applications will continue to be considered by the Council in accordance with the prevailing AQ Guidelines.

The prevailing and the new AQ Guidelines are available on the Council’s website at (https://www.dchk.org.hk/en/guidelines_for_inclusion_of_qualifications_in_the_list/index.htm) for information.

Continuing Professional Development (“CPD”) Programme for Practising Dentists

2020-2022 CPD Cycle

The 2020-2022 CPD cycle will end on 31 December 2022. CPD certificates for the 2020-2022 CPD cycle will be awarded through the respective CPD Programme Administrators to each participating dentist who has fulfilled the CPD-point requirement, i.e. a minimum of 45 CPD points accumulated over the three-year cycle. Out of the 45 CPD points, six points must be obtained from the core CPD activities.

Dentists awarded the CPD certificates are allowed to include in their signboards, websites, visiting cards and letterheads the title “CPD Certificate (2020-2022)” or “持續專業發展證書 (2020-2022)” until 30 June 2026, i.e. 6 months upon the end of the subsequent CPD cycle from 2023 to 2025.

2023-2025 CPD Cycle

For the upcoming CPD cycle from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2025, the Council has issued the “Guidelines on the Continuing Professional Development Programme for Practising Dentists for the 2023-2025 CPD Cycle” (“CPD Guidelines 2023-2025”) which can be found on the Council’s website. Under the 2023-2025 CPD cycle, the CPD Programme will continue to operate on a voluntary basis and participating dentists are reminded to note the following new arrangements –

- (a) the maximum CPD points awarded for receptive participation as recipients in online CPD activities participated by each enrollee in each CPD cycle has been adjusted downward from 30 to 25;
- (b) the maximum CPD points that can be awarded for self-study CPD activities has been lowered from 15 to 5;
- (c) the list of the pre-approved regular overseas meetings/conferences has been updated at Appendix VI to the CPD Guidelines 2023-2025; and
- (d) 15 Full CPD Programme Providers have been appointed by the Council and the list is at Appendix II to the CPD Guidelines 2023-2025.

The Council has also made revisions to the CPD Guidelines 2023-2025 on various matters including the maximum CPD points allowed for organisation of online CPD activities by each CPD Programme Provider, organisation of online CPD activities delivered on demand and partnership in organisation of CPD activities. Please refer to the CPD Guidelines 2023-2025 on the Council’s website with the link as follows –

[https://www.dchk.org.hk/docs/Guidelines%20on%20the%20CPD%20Programme%20\(2023-2025%20CPD%20Cycle\)%2020221209.pdf](https://www.dchk.org.hk/docs/Guidelines%20on%20the%20CPD%20Programme%20(2023-2025%20CPD%20Cycle)%2020221209.pdf)

Dentists who have enrolled in the CPD Programme in the current CPD cycle are not required to enroll again if they wish to continue their participation in the new CPD cycle. However, should you decide not to participate in the CPD Programme or wish to change to another CPD Programme Administrator in the new CPD cycle, you should inform your existing CPD Programme Administrator accordingly. For new enrollees who intend to join the CPD Programme, they should enroll with one of the CPD Programme Administrators accredited by the Council. Please note that individual CPD Programme Administrators will have their own fee structures for their services.

For ease of reference of the dentists who have enrolled in the CPD Programme of the Council, a list of the Full CPD Programme Providers with contact details has been uploaded to the Council’s website for reference.

Medical Guidelines Issued by the Guardianship Board

The Mental Health Ordinance (“MHO”), Cap. 136 sets out the statutory framework for the care and supervision of mentally incapacitated persons (“MIPs”). The Guardianship Board has previously issued a guide to doctors and dentists in relation to Part IVC of the MHO which regulates the provision of medical and dental treatment to MIPs. The Guardianship Board had issued on 1 August 2022 the Medical Guidelines which serves as an introduction to doctors and dentists on the use of Part IVC of the MHO and on other issues relating to guardianship applications. For your ease of reference, the Council has posted on its website the Medical Guidelines with link as follows –

https://www.dchk.org.hk/docs/Guardianship_Board_-_Medical_Guidelines_1_August_2022.pdf

Renewal of Annual Practising Certificate by Dentists Practising in Hong Kong

The practising certificate 2022 will expire on 31 December 2022. Every registered dentist who intends to continue practising dentistry in Hong Kong in 2023 must apply for renewal of practising certificate. It is the professional duty of every registered dentist to renew the practising certificate in order to practise dentistry. Starting from the 2017 renewal exercise, no application form is required for applying for the practising certificate.

As a token of appreciation to healthcare professionals in the fight against coronavirus disease-2019, the fees payable in respect of statutory registration/enrolment as well as issuance and/or renewal of practising certificates for 13 healthcare professions that take effect during the three-year concession period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023 are waived by the Government if certain criteria are met. For dentists, the waiver applies to the first time registration in the GR and Specialist Register and the issuance/renewal of practising certificates for up to three times that first take effect during the concession period.

The notice of renewal of practising certificate 2023 was issued to all dentists in mid-August 2022 and the practising certificates had been issued to the dentists who are still eligible for the aforesaid fee waiver if they will continue to practise in 2023. If you have already enjoyed the aforesaid fee waiver for three times, you are required and has been requested to pay the prescribed fee for renewal of practising certificate 2023. Once you have duly paid the prescribed fee, which indicated your intention to apply for the certificate, you will be deemed under section 11A(6) of the Dentists Registration Ordinance (“DRO”) to have renewed the certificate.

Not to Practise without Practising Certificate

Your attention is drawn to section 11A(1) of the DRO, which stipulates that a person “**shall not** practise as a dentist in Hong Kong, unless he is the holder of a practising certificate which is then in force” (“除非持有當時有效的執業證明書，否則不得在香港執業為牙醫”). This is a mandatory requirement, which makes it unlawful for a dentist to practise dentistry when he is not holding a valid practising certificate. Besides, section 15 of the DRO provides that the Council may order the removal from the GR of the name of any person who being a person required to be the holder of a practising certificate, has practised dentistry in Hong Kong for a period exceeding 6 months without having obtained such a certificate. In accordance with this

section, the Council will remove from the GR the name of a dentist who continues to practise without renewing his practising certificate before 1 July 2023. Upon removal from the GR, he ceases to be a registered dentist and therefore has no right to practise dentistry. If he continues to practise dentistry after removal from the GR, he commits the offence of illegal practice of dentistry which is punishable with a fine and/or imprisonment.

Although a person whose name has been removed from the GR can apply for restoration to the GR, he has no entitlement to automatic restoration. Each application will be considered by the Council on a case-by-case basis. The Council under section 22(3) of the DRO has the absolute discretion to allow or refuse the application, and/or may impose conditions on any person restored.

Permitted Scope of Dental Hygienists

The Council has received enquiries from time to time regarding the scope of work of an enrolled dental hygienist. In the circumstances, opportunity is taken to remind registered dentists about the permitted scope of work of a dental hygienist.

The scope of work of enrolled dental hygienists is prescribed in regulation 6 of the Ancillary Dental Workers (Dental Hygienists) Regulations (“Regulations”). An enrolled dental hygienist may undertake the following dental work –

- (a) the cleaning and polishing of teeth;
- (b) the scaling of teeth (i.e. removal of tartar deposits, accretions and stains from those parts of the surface of the teeth which are exposed or which are directly beneath the free margins of the gums, including the application of medicaments thereto);
- (c) the application to the teeth of solutions of sodium or stannous fluoride or such other similar prophylactic solutions as the Council may from time to time determine;
- (d) the exposure of x-ray films inter-orally or extra-orally for the investigation of lesions or suspected lesions of the mouth, jaws, teeth and associated structures; and
- (e) the giving of advice on matters relating to dental hygiene.

It is unlawful for dental hygienists to undertake any dental work other than those mentioned above. Besides, a dental hygienist shall not undertake any form of dental work unless –

- (a) he is enrolled with the Council and his name is entered on the roll of dental hygienists maintained by the Registrar of Dentists;
- (b) he is employed by a registered dentist or by any organization or establishment that has employed at least one registered dentist;
- (c) any patient upon whom he undertakes dental work has first been examined by a registered dentist who has then prescribed the treatment to be carried out by the dental hygienist;
- (d) such dental work is carried out –
 - (i) in accordance with the directions of a registered dentist who is available in the premises at all times when such dental work is carried out; and
 - (ii) in such premises and under such conditions as are suitable for such work.

Change/Addition of Practising Address(es)

Under section 10 of the DRO, the registered address appearing upon a certificate of registration shall be the principal address at which the registered dentist carries on his practice. A registered dentist is required to report to the Registrar every address at which he carries on the practice of dentistry for gain. A registered dentist is required to report any change of his registered address or the change of any other address at which he carries on the practice of dentistry for gain **within 2 months** of any such change. The report should be made to –

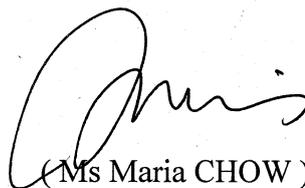
Central Registration Office (Dental)
17/F, Wu Chung House
213 Queen's Road East
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(Tel: 2961 8655 Fax: 2891 7946)

Ordinances and Guidelines

A courteous reminder is extended to all members in the dental profession that they should fully acquaint themselves with the provisions of the DRO and the Dentists (Registration and Disciplinary Procedure) Regulations governing their dental practice, as well as other relevant ordinances and their subsidiary legislations such as Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, Antibiotics Ordinance, Radiation Ordinance and Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance.

Dentists are also advised to read through and familiarise themselves with the *Code of Professional Discipline for the Guidance of Dental Practitioners in Hong Kong* (revised in December 2019) ("the Code") issued by the Council, thereby avoiding the danger of inadvertently transgressing the accepted code of professional ethical behaviour which may lead to disciplinary action by the Council. It must be emphasised that the Code is **NOT** a complete code of professional ethics, nor can it specify all offences which may lead to disciplinary action.

Yours faithfully,



(Ms Maria CHOW)

Secretary

The Dental Council of Hong Kong

c.c. Chairman and Members, The Dental Council of Hong Kong
Legal Adviser, The Dental Council of Hong Kong
President, College of Dental Surgeons of Hong Kong
Dean, Faculty of Dentistry, the University of Hong Kong
President, Hong Kong Dental Association
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