

The Dental Council of Hong Kong

Notes on Dental Internship Programme and Period of Assessment

1. Dental graduates who have successfully obtained the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (“BDS”) programme from The University of Hong Kong (“HKU”) or passed the Licensing Examination (“LE”), and being eligible for taking up Dental Internship Programme (“DIP”) or Period of Assessment (“POA”) will be offered employment with specified institutions under Schedules 6 and 7 of the Dentists Registration Ordinance (“DRO”). (*Note: Both the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority are the institutions specified under Schedules 6 and 7 under the DRO.*)

Structure of DIP / POA

2. DIP / POA comprises the clinical programme and education programmes. For the clinical programme, it includes rotation at various service units under the guidance of experienced dentists, including –

- (a) School Dental Care Service (Paediatric Dentistry)
- (b) Emergency dental service
- (c) Hospital dental service
- (d) Community dental service
- (e) General dental service.

3. The duration of the internship period / POA as specified in Part 1 or Part 2 of Schedule 8 of the DRO is 12 months. The Council may **defer, extend or terminate the internship period, or defer, extend, shorten or terminate POA** on an individual basis. There is no shortening of DIP.

4. Entry to Internship is open once a year, i.e. 1 September, or the next working day if the aforesaid date falls on a non-working day, whilst entry to POA is open twice a year, i.e. 1 March and 1 June, or the next working day if the aforesaid two dates fall on a non-working day.

5. Internship / POA should commence within 18 months upon graduation from the undergraduate dental programme of HKU or passing the Council’s LE. Candidates taking Part III of LE will be invited to indicate the preferred commencement of POA according to the schedules provided by the Council.

6. After the commencement of the Internship / POA, the intern / assessee has to complete the Internship / POA within 3 years from the time the Internship / POA ought to commence, subject to programme arrangements.

Assessment

7. Interns / assessees will be subject to work-based assessment with specific requirements on their performance, attendance and fitness-to-practise.

8. Experienced dentists designated by specified institutions will conduct on-the-job assessment as the supervising officer and complete an Assessment Report upon completion of a rotation. Specified institutions will also make recommendations on whether an intern / assessee should pass the Internship / POA.

9. Interns / assessees will be informed of the assessment results of the specified institutions, and have the right to express their views to these specified institutions.

10. Upon receipt of a recommendation from a specified institution that an intern / assessee should not pass the Internship / POA, the Council will invite the intern / assessee to make representations before deciding whether to extend or terminate the Internship / POA taking into account the specific circumstances.

Deferment to commence

11. Applicant may apply for the deferment to commence an Internship / POA and shortening of POA, and the application will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In general, deferment will not be granted to an applicant unless he / she is engaged in active clinical practice.

Shortening of POA

12. An applicant may apply for shortening of POA if he / she –

- (i) has completed Internship¹ in the place of registration outside Hong Kong;
- (ii) holds a specialist qualification equivalent to a Fellowship of the College for Dental Surgeons of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine and is a registered specialist outside Hong Kong; or

¹ The Internship in the place of registration outside Hong Kong should be acceptable to the Dental Council of Hong Kong.

(iii) has completed at least three years of full-time employment as a dentist at a Schedule 4 or 5 institution under Limited or Special Registration, or in a clinical practice(s) outside Hong Kong that is acceptable to the Council.

13. To facilitate timely processing, application to the Council should be submitted at least 3 months before the commencement of an applicant's POA.

Extension

14. Extension of Internship / POA will be considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration of the intern's / assessee's attendance and / or clinical performance.

Termination

15. Termination of Internship / POA will be considered on a case-by-case basis with consideration of the intern's / assessee's attendance and / or clinical performance. If the Council reasonably determines that a person undergoing an Internship / POA is unlikely to attain the professional standards required of a registered dentist at the end of the Internship / POA, the Council may terminate the Internship / POA in accordance with sections 8A and 8B of the DRO.

16. Internship / POA training would be terminated if the intern / assessee resigns from the post of intern / assessee subject to their employment terms and conditions.

Disciplinary &FTP proceedings

17. Interns / assessees provisionally registered are by law deemed to be a registered dentist for the purpose of the disciplinary proceedings or Fitness-to-Practise proceedings of the Council. All provisions governing the professional conduct of a registered dentist equally apply to interns / assessees.

Full Registration

18. The Council may award the Certificate of Experience ("COE") to the intern / assessee if it is satisfied that –

(i) during the Internship / POA, the intern / assessee undertook work within the specified scope of work; and

(ii) the work of the person was satisfactory.

19. A person may apply to the Council for full registration if he / she –

- (i) has been awarded a qualifying degree in dentistry by an institution in Schedule 1, i.e. HKU; and a COE upon completion of an internship period; or
- (ii) has passed the LE; and has been awarded a COE upon completion of POA.

The Dental Council of Hong Kong
January 2026