

Transitional Arrangement for Existing Specialist Dentists

Since its establishment on 1 October 1959, the Dental Council has adopted an administrative system to grant permission for the use of “specialist title” to registered dentists who have met the minimum level of training and experience requirements in particular areas of dental practice. The granting of such specialist titles is not governed by the Dentists Registration Ordinance (DRO), but rather as a policy decision by the Council. Registered dentists who use specialist titles without being accredited by the Council will be subject to disciplinary proceedings for unprofessional conduct under the Code of Professional Discipline for dental practitioners.

2. Before 1982, applications from dentists for the use of specialist titles were considered on a case by case basis. Starting from 1982, the Dental Council has adopted a set of guidelines for considering applications to use specialist titles by dentists. The guidelines have been updated from time to time to reflect developments of the profession, including the setting up of the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (HKAM) and the College of Dental Surgeons of Hong Kong (CDSHK) (one of HKAM’s constituent colleges) in 1993 and the proposed introduction of a specialist register in the DRO. A summary of the changes in the guidelines approved by the Council over the years is at **Appendix A**.

3. All applications for permission to use specialist titles from registered dentists will be considered by the Council upon the recommendation of its Credentials Committee which was set up to, inter alia, vet the applications. Under the existing guidelines adopted by the Council in 2004, only a Fellow of the HKAM and the CDSHK, or an applicant whose qualification which at the discretion of the Council is deemed to be of equivalent status, would be considered for the granting of specialist titles by the Council. All applicants also have to satisfy the continuing education requirements set by HKAM and CDSHK.

4. As at 1 December 2005, there are 138 registered dentists who have been given approval by the Dental Council to use specialist titles in

7 specialties. Many of those given permission to use specialist titles before the setting up of the HKAM in 1993 subsequently became fellows of the HKAM and the CDSHK.

5. Currently there are only 8 dentists, who have been given approval to use specialist titles by the Dental Council, but are not in possession of a HKAM and CDSHK fellowship. They had met the criteria set by the Council at the time when they applied to use the specialist titles and are therefore eligible to continue using the specialist titles notwithstanding that, for various reasons, they did not become fellows of the HKAM and the CDSHK. The higher dental qualifications obtained by these 8 specialist dentists are shown at **Appendix B**.

6. All dentists who were given approval to use specialist titles by the Dental Council had been duly vetted to conform to the prevailing experience and academic requirements of the profession at the time of application. Like that of other professionals, such criteria must change with time to meet the need and development of the profession.

7. In order not to cause undue hardship to dentists who aspire to become specialists before enactment of the proposed legislative amendments, the Dental Council does not consider imposing a cut-off date for granting specialist titles appropriate nor conducive to the development of the profession.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
December 2005

**Summary of guidelines for vetting applications to use specialist titles
issued by Dental Council since 1982**

Year	Qualification requirement	Other requirements	Practice Restrictions
1982	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possess a higher qualification relating to the specialty after a recognizable educational programme of at least 2 years in duration; and 2. Eligible to embark on such specialist practice in the country from which he originally obtained the higher qualification; and 3. Been engaged in full-time general dental practice for not less than 2 years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only dentists in the private sector could apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once accredited as a specialist and authorized to use a specialist title, the dentist's practice must thereafter be limited exclusively to the specialty applied for.
1991	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1(a) A higher qualification gained by a formal training of at least 2 years in duration; or 1(b) A period of training and clinical experience at an advanced level as appropriate to the specialty for at least 2 years (clinical experience must have been under supervision and guidance of at least one 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only dentists in the private sector could apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once accredited as a specialist and authorized to use a specialist title, the dentist's practice must thereafter be limited exclusively to the specialty applied for. ● Mixed practice – a specialist

Year	Qualification requirement	Other requirements	Practice Restrictions
	<p>person with advanced knowledge) and experience related to the specialty concerned and post-training period of practice experience of not less than 3 years; or</p> <p>1(c) Any applicant who satisfies the Council that he has substantial experience in a particular field; and</p> <p>2. Been engaged in full-time general dental practice for not less than 1 year.</p>		<p>should practise in partnership with, or in association with, or employ any dentist, only after duly informing the Council to this effect.</p>
1997	Same as those adopted in 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only dentists in the private sector could apply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Once accredited as a specialist and authorized to use a specialist title, the dentist's practice must thereafter be limited exclusively to the specialty applied for.
2001	<p>1(a) Fellow of HKAM and Fellow of CDSHK in the relevant specialty; or</p> <p>1(b) Any other qualification which at the discretion of the Council is deemed to be of equivalent status with the HKAM and CDSHK Fellowships; or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only dentists in the private sector could apply. 	Nil

Year	Qualification requirement	Other requirements	Practice Restrictions
	<p>1(c) A higher qualification after 2 years formal training and post-training practical experience of not less than 3 years under the supervision of an experienced clinician acceptable to the Council; or</p> <p>1(d) A period of training and clinical experience at an advanced level as appropriate to the specialty for not less than 2 years (clinical experience must have been under supervision and guidance of at least one person with advanced knowledge and experience relating to the specialty concerned) and post-training practical experience of not less than 3 years under the supervision of an experienced clinician acceptable to the Council; and</p> <p>2. Been engaged in full-time general dental practice for not less than 1 year.</p>		
2003	In addition to those adopted in 2001, all applicants have to meet the continuing education requirements set by the HKAM and CDSHK.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All dentists could apply, irrespective of whether they are in the private sector or the public sector (i.e. Government and the 	Nil.

Year	Qualification requirement	Other requirements	Practice Restrictions
		University)	
2004	<p>1(a) Fellow of HKAM and CDSHK in the relevant specialty; or</p> <p>1(b) Any other qualification which is deemed by the Council to be of equivalent status with the HKAM and CDSHK fellowship; and</p> <p>2. Meeting the continuing education requirements set by the HKAM and CDSHK; and</p> <p>3. Been engaged in full-time general dental practice for not less than 1 year.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All dentists could apply, irrespective of whether they are in the private sector or the public sector (i.e. Government and the University) 	Nil.

**List of qualifications held by specialist dentists who are not in possession of a
HKAM and CDSHK Fellowship**

Specialist title approved in	Higher dental qualifications obtained	Remarks
1982	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Science, University of Nebraska, USA 1982 ● Certificate in Orthodontics, University of Nebraska, USA 1982 	A Fellow of CDSHK but not HKAM
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Certificate in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Cook County Hospital, USA 1979 ● Fellow in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Royal College of Dentists of Canada 1982 	
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Science, University of London, UK 1991 ● Fellow of Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, Australia 1994 	
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fellow of Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, Australia 1990 ● Master of Dental Science, University of Melbourne 1991 ● Master of Dental Surgery, University of Sydney, Australia 1992 ● Doctor of Philosophy, University of Hong Kong 1996 	
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diploma in Orthodontics (Eastman Dental Centre) USA 1996 	Formal approval given in 2001 after 3 years' post-training period of practice experience from

Specialist title approved in	Higher dental qualifications obtained	Remarks
		1997 to 2001
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Master of Dental Surgery, University of Hong Kong 1996 	Formal approval given after 3 years' post-training period of practice experience from 1999 to 2001
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fellow of Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, Australia 1996 ● Master of Medical Science with a major in Odontology, Karolinska Institute, Sweden 1998 ● Licentiate Degree in Odontological Toxicology, Karolinska Institute, Sweden 1999 ● Doctor of Philosophy, Karolinska Institute, Sweden 2000 	Formal approval given in 2004 after 3 years' post-training period of practice experience from 2000 to 2003
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fellow of Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons, Australia 1989 ● Fellow in Dental Surgery of the Royal College of Surgeons of England 2002 ● Master of Clinical Dentistry in Prosthodontics, University of London, UK 2002 ● Membership in Restorative Dentistry of the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow 2004 	