



Public consultation document

November 2016

Consultation on proposed entry level competencies for conscious sedation endorsement

Public consultation

The Dental Board of Australia (the Board) is releasing this public consultation paper on the proposed entry level competencies (the proposed competencies) for endorsement for conscious sedation.

This document will be published on the Board's website.

Your feedback

You are invited to provide feedback by email using the template published with this document to dentalboardconsultation@ahpra.gov.au by close of business on Friday 13 January 2017.

You are welcome to supply a PDF file of your feedback in addition to the Word (or equivalent) file, however we request that you do supply a text or Word file. As part of an effort to meet international website accessibility guidelines, AHPRA and the Board are striving to publish documents in accessible formats (such as Word), in addition to PDFs. More information about this is available at www.ahpra.gov.au/About-AHPRA/Accessibility.aspx.

How your submission will be treated

Submissions will generally be published unless you request otherwise. The Board publishes submissions on its websites to encourage discussion and inform the community and stakeholders. However, the Board retains the right not to publish submissions at their discretion, and will not place on their website, or make available to the public, submissions that contain offensive or defamatory comments or which are outside the scope of the consultation.

Before publication, the Board will remove personal or identifying information from submissions, including contact details.

The views expressed in the submissions are those of the individuals or organisations who submit them and their publication does not imply any acceptance of, or agreement with, these views by the Board.

The Board will accept submissions made in confidence. These submissions will not be published on the website or elsewhere. Submissions may be confidential because they include personal experiences or other sensitive information. Any request for access to a confidential submission will be determined in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (Cwlth), which has provisions designed to protect personal information and information given in confidence.

Please let the Board know if you do not want your submission published, or want all or part of it treated as confidential.

Overview

The Board is consulting on entry level competencies for endorsement of registration in an approved area of practice: conscious sedation.

The Board has developed these proposed entry level competencies to clearly establish the minimum competency standards expected of applicants for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation.

The threshold competency standards would be expected of any:

- a. applicant with an approved qualification, or
- b. applicant with another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification.

Purpose of the proposal

The Board has developed these proposed entry level competencies to enable:

- consistent and transparent assessment of applications for endorsement of registration in conscious sedation
- consistent application of threshold entry level competency standards for endorsed dentists in conscious sedation, and
- the accreditation of programs study leading to endorsement.

Context

Conscious sedation is a technique used in dental practice to induce a depression of consciousness during which patients are able to respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation.

Only dentists, including dental specialists, whose registration is endorsed for conscious sedation, can use this technique in their practice. Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), the Board has developed the [Endorsement for conscious sedation registration standard](#) (the registration standard) which sets out the requirements for applying for endorsement and renewal of endorsement and the requirements for practice as an endorsed conscious sedation practitioner.

The Board has published some [FAQs](#) related to this endorsement.

The requirements for application for endorsement include the completion of an approved program of study or another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to, or are based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification.

There are over 21,000 registered dental practitioners nearly 16,000 of these are dentists. Of these 16,000 dentists, 95 are endorsed to practise in the area of practice of conscious sedation (as of 1 July 2016).

Proposal

The proposed competencies describe the threshold level of competence expected of applicants for endorsement of registration in the conscious sedation area of practice.

The proposed competencies build on the competencies of general dentists.

Domains

The five domains of the competency document are based on the domains listed in the *Professional Attributes and Competencies of the Newly Qualified Dentist* developed by the [Australian Dental Council](#).

The domains represent the broad categories of professional activity that occur in the conscious sedation area of practice. Professional practice in this area requires the integration of multiple competencies across all of the domains.

The domains are:

1. **Professionalism:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have the knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgment, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner.
2. **Communication and social skills:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will be able to interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to dental and non-dental audiences.
3. **Critical thinking:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have the expert, cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex information, problems, concepts and theories and research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice.
4. **Scientific and Clinical Knowledge:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have a body of knowledge that includes the extended understanding of recent developments in this area of practice and its professional practice, as well as knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to this area of practice and its professional practice
5. **Patient care:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will, with a high level of personal autonomy and accountability, be able to apply highly specialised knowledge and skills within this area of practice. This includes clinical information gathering, diagnosis and management planning, clinical treatment and evaluation.

Options statement

Option 1: status quo

There are currently no specific entry level competencies for endorsed conscious sedation dentists. This prevents from ensuring that all applicants for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation meet the minimum professional standards.

The Board does not consider status quo to be a sustainable or viable option for the future.

Option 2: development of entry level competencies

The development of entry level competencies will allow for:

- consistent and transparent assessment of applications for endorsement of registration in conscious sedation, including assessment of qualifications that are not approved by the Board
- consistent application of threshold entry level competency standards for endorsed dentists in conscious sedation, and
- the accreditation of programs study leading to endorsement.

The Board is of the view that option 2 is preferable.

Questions for consideration

The Board is inviting feedback on proposed competencies, specifically:

1. Is the purpose of the proposed competencies understood?
2. Is the content and structure of the proposed competencies clear?
3. Does any of the content need to be changed or removed? If so, provide details
4. Do you think that the competencies should only include those specific to the practice of conscious sedation (i.e. those in addition to the ones expected of general dentists)?

5. Do you have any other comments on the proposed competencies?
6. How often do you think the competencies should be review? E.g. every three years, every five years

Attachments

- Attachment 1 Entry level competencies for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation
- Attachment 2 Board's statement of assessment against the COAG principles for best practice regulation - entry level competencies for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation



Conscious sedation endorsement

November 2016

Entry level competencies for endorsed conscious sedation dentist

This document describes the *entry level competency standards* expected of applicants for endorsement of registration in the conscious sedation area of practice.

Domains

The five domains of the competency document are based on the domains listed in the Professional Attributes and Competencies of the Newly Qualified Dentist developed by the Australian Dental Council.

The domains represent the broad categories of professional activity that occur in the conscious sedation area of practice. Professional practice requires the integration of multiple competencies across all of the domains.

The domains are:

1. **Professionalism:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have the knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgment, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner.
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4. **Scientific and Clinical Knowledge:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have a body of knowledge that includes the extended understanding of recent developments in this area of practice and its professional practice, as well as knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to this area of practice and its professional practice
5. **Patient care:** On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will, with a high level of personal autonomy and accountability, be able to apply highly specialised knowledge and skills within this area of practice. This includes clinical information gathering, diagnosis and management planning, clinical treatment and evaluation.

Definition

The [Endorsement for conscious sedation registration standard](#) provides the following definitions:

Conscious sedation¹ is a drug-induced depression of consciousness during which patients are able to respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation. Interventions to maintain a patent airway, spontaneous ventilation or cardiovascular function may, in exceptional circumstances, be required. Conscious sedation may be achieved by a wide variety of drugs including propofol, and may accompany local anaesthesia. All conscious sedation techniques should provide a margin of safety that is wide enough to render loss of consciousness unlikely.

¹ Defined in *Guidelines on Sedation and/or Analgesia for Diagnostic and Interventional Medical, Dental or Surgical Procedures* (PS09 2014) Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists (ANZCA)

Conscious sedation is a specific dental procedure that is part of procedural sedation.

Endorsement refers to the provisions of the National Law (sections 15 and 98) that permit the Ministerial Council, on the recommendation of a National Board, to approve an area of practice for 98 of the National Law provides that the Board may:

(1) ... in accordance with an approval given by the Ministerial Council under section 15, endorse the registration of a registered health practitioner registered by the Board as being qualified to practise in an approved area of practice for the health profession if the practitioner—

(a) holds either of the following qualifications relevant to the endorsement—

(i) an approved qualification;

(ii) another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification; and

(b) complies with an approved registration standard relevant to the endorsement.

(2) An endorsement under subsection (1) must state—

(a) the approved area of practice to which the endorsement relates; and

(b) any conditions applicable to the practice by the registered health practitioner in the approved area of practice.

Domain	Competencies
<p>1. Professionalism On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have the knowledge and skills to demonstrate autonomy, expert judgement, adaptability and responsibility as a practitioner.</p>	<p>A graduate endorsed conscious sedation dentist is expected to be competent in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> recognising personal limitations and scope of the endorsement and knowing when to refer or seek advice appropriately practising with personal and professional integrity, honesty and trustworthiness providing patient-centred care, including selecting and prioritising treatment options that are compassionate and respectful of patients' best interests, dignity and choices relevant to the area of practice (i.e. conscious sedation) understanding the limitations, barriers and issues which may arise from the local environment or the patients' cultural background understanding and applying the moral, cultural, ethical principles and legal responsibilities involved in the provision of conscious sedation as part of dental care to individual patients, communities and populations displaying appropriate professional behaviour and communication skills towards all members of the dental team, health practitioners assisting, and referring health practitioner/s understanding and applying of legislation relevant to practise as an endorsed dentist demonstrating professional growth and development through research and learning supporting the professional development and education relevant to the endorsement for all members of the dental and/or health community, and using a system approach to safety and quality in health care understanding regulatory requirements relevant to conscious sedation recognising the importance of continuing professional development relevant to the endorsement
<p>2. Communication and Social Skills On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will be able to interpret and transmit knowledge, skills and ideas to dental and non-dental audiences.</p>	<p>A graduate endorsed conscious sedation dentist is expected to be competent in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> identifying and understanding a patient's expectations, desires and attitudes when planning and delivering treatment under conscious sedation communicating effectively with patients, their families, relatives and carers in a manner that takes into account factors such as their age, intellectual development, social and cultural background and relevant to the endorsement communicating effectively in all forms of health and legal reporting interpreting and communicating knowledge, skills and ideas to the dental team and other health professionals understanding and demonstrating high level of human factor skills providing pre and post-operative instructions to a patient or carer with regard to sedative techniques
<p>3. Critical Thinking On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have the expert, cognitive and technical skills in a body of knowledge or practice to independently analyse critically, reflect on and synthesise complex</p>	<p>A graduate endorsed conscious sedation dentist is expected to be competent, relevant to conscious sedation, in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> critically evaluating scientific research and literature, products and techniques to inform evidence based practice synthesizing complex information, problems, concepts and theories developing and embracing evidenced based and team centered management, and algorithmic approaches to emergency management

Domain	Competencies
<p>information, problems, concepts and theories and research and apply established theories to a body of knowledge or practice</p>	
<p>4. Scientific and clinical knowledge On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will have a body of knowledge that includes the extended understanding of recent developments in this area of practice and its professional practice, as well as knowledge of research principles and methods applicable to this area of practice and its professional practice</p>	<p>A graduate endorsed conscious sedation dentist is expected to be competent in the knowledge of, relevant to conscious sedation, the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> historical and contemporary literature scientific basis of conscious sedation including the relevant biological, medical and psychosocial sciences preoperative patient assessment techniques different states of altered consciousness as with conscious sedation the limitations and risks of the various techniques used to induce conscious sedation appropriate use in the clinical setting of various techniques used to induce conscious sedation pharmaceutical agents relevant to conscious sedation, the various routes of administration, reversal and the management of side effects the pre eminent place of non technical skills and human factors in preventing and managing emergencies management of acute medical emergencies, including cardiac arrest, collapse, anaphylaxis and other medical emergencies in a clinical setting relevant equipment used in monitoring and management of medical emergencies in a clinical setting the recovery and discharge criteria for a patient who has undergone conscious sedation relevant regulations, policies and guidelines
<p>5. Patient care On graduation an endorsed conscious sedation dentist will, with a high level of personal autonomy and accountability, be able to apply highly specialised knowledge and skills within this area of practice. This includes clinical information gathering, diagnosis and management planning, clinical treatment and</p>	<p>A graduate endorsed conscious sedation dentist is expected to be competent, relevant to conscious sedation, in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> selecting appropriate patients and patient-specific procedures obtaining and recording patient informed consent for the use of conscious sedation performing a preoperative patient assessment various techniques used in the clinical setting to induce conscious sedation administering advanced forms of local analgesia administering pharmaceutical agents used across all routes of administration including management of side effects use and management of all forms of relevant equipment used in the monitoring and management of medical emergencies in a clinical setting displaying high level, acute crisis management in emergencies managing acute medical emergencies including cardiac arrest, collapse, anaphylaxis and other medical emergencies in the dental surgery managing the post-operative needs and discharge of their patients

Domain	Competencies
evaluation.	



Statement of assessment against the COAG principles for best practice regulation

Entry level competencies for endorsed conscious sedation practitioners - preliminary consultation

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) has *Procedures for the development of registration standards, codes and guidelines* which are available at: www.ahpra.gov.au

These procedures have been developed by AHPRA in accordance with section 25 of the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* as in force in each state and territory (the National Law) which requires AHPRA to establish procedures for the purpose of ensuring that the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme (the National Scheme) operates in accordance with good regulatory practice.

Below is the Dental Board of Australia's (the Board) assessment of its proposed entry-level competencies for endorsed conscious sedation practitioners (the proposed competencies) against the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Principles for Best Practice Regulation.

The term 'competencies' covers the combination of the minimum knowledge, understanding, skills and attributes expected of any graduate of an Australian program leading to endorsement or any overseas practitioner trained in conscious sedation applying for endorsement. Education providers offering courses leading to endorsement are expected to demonstrate that the learning outcomes of their curriculum address these competencies. These competencies will also be used to assess whether other qualifications are substantially equivalent or based on similar competencies, to an approved qualification.

Conscious sedation is a technique used in dental practice to induce a depression of consciousness during which patients are able to respond purposefully to verbal commands or light tactile stimulation.

Only dentists, including dental specialists, whose registration is endorsed for conscious sedation can use this technique in their practice.

Under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law as in force in each state and territory (the National Law), the Board has developed the [Endorsement for conscious sedation registration standard](#) (the registration standard) which sets out the requirements for applying for endorsement and renewal of endorsement and the requirements for practice as an endorsed conscious sedation practitioner.

The Board has published some [FAQs](#) related to this registration standard.

The Board has developed these proposed entry level competencies to clearly establish the minimum competency standards expected of applicants for endorsement of registration for conscious sedation.

The threshold competency standards would be expected of any applicant with an approved qualification or with another qualification that, in the Board's opinion, is substantially equivalent to, or based on similar competencies to, an approved qualification.

The proposal takes into account the COAG Principles for Best Practice Regulation

Board assessment

In developing the proposed competencies for consultation, the Board has taken into account the *COAG Principles for Best Practice Regulation*.

The Board makes the following assessment specific to each of the COAG Principles expressed in the

AHPRA procedures.

COAG Principles

A. Whether the proposal is the best option for achieving the proposal's stated purpose and protection of the public

Board assessment

Overall, the Board has taken care not to propose unnecessary regulatory burdens that would create unjustified costs for the profession or the community.

The entry level competencies for endorsed conscious sedation practitioners will assist the Board in ensuring that only dentists who are suitably trained and qualified can have their registration endorsed to practice in the approved area of practice of conscious sedation.

The Board considers that the entry level competencies meet the Board's mandate of protecting the public by describing the expected threshold level of competence for safe practice and transparent, consistent and rigorous assessment for endorsed conscious sedation practitioners.

B. Whether the proposal results in an unnecessary restriction of competition among health practitioners

Board assessment

The number of dentists including dental specialists that have been granted an endorsement on their registration for conscious sedation (endorsed practitioners) is low. There are 91 endorsed practitioners for about 21,000 dental practitioners. The entry level competencies for endorsed conscious sedation practitioners are not expected to impact on the current levels of competition among practitioners.

The competencies assist the Board in meeting the objectives and guiding principles of the National Health and Medical Research Council including to enable the continuous development of a flexible workforce, responsive and sustainable Australian health workforce and to enable innovation in the education of, and service delivery by, endorsed practitioners.

The development of the proposed entry-level competencies will provide clarity for education providers looking to develop a program for endorsement for conscious sedation. Over time, this has the potential to increase the training opportunities for dental practitioners looking to include this area of practice in their practise and this would increase the consumers' access to services.

C. Whether the proposal results in an unnecessary restriction of consumer choice

Board assessment

Conscious sedation supports the delivery of dental treatment in patients who may benefit from the reduced state of consciousness during this care for a range of reasons including special needs, age and apprehension of undergoing dental treatment.

The Board considers that the proposed entry level competencies will support consumer choice by ensuring that only suitably qualified and trained practitioners can have their registration endorsed to practise in this area. This would allow for better access to services including for apprehensive patients or aged care patients.

Practitioners with additional training and competence are identifiable on the public register which assists the public to make better informed choices about their dental care.

D. Whether the overall costs of the proposal to members of the public and/or registrants and/or governments are reasonable in relation to the benefits to be achieved

Board assessment

As indicated above, the number of currently endorsed practitioners is very small. It is not anticipated that a substantial increase will occur in the short term.

The Board does not anticipate that the proposed entry level competencies will change the overall costs to the public, registrants or governments. Rather, the potential to increase the number of training opportunities may reduce costs for practitioners over time.

E. Whether the requirements are clearly stated using ‘plain language’ to reduce uncertainty, enable the public to understand the requirements, and enable understanding and compliance by registrants

Board assessment

The Board has written the proposed entry-level competencies in plain English and when read in conjunction with the registration standard will help practitioners to understand the requirements when applying for endorsement of registration.

It is also considered that members of the public or employers, who wish to obtain information on the competency standards expected of an endorsed practitioner, will easily access and understand the expected competencies. The competencies once finalised will be published on the Board’s website.

F. Whether the Board has procedures in place to ensure that the proposed registration standard, code or guideline remains relevant and effective over time

Board assessment

The Board will continue to monitor the environment and respond to any issues which arise in relation to the endorsement of registration more broadly. If any new evidence emerges the Board will work to ensure the competencies continue to be relevant and workable.

The Board is committed to closely monitoring the implementation of the endorsed conscious sedation competencies to ensure the anticipated transparency and efficiencies are realised.