

# Specialization in Dentistry

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## Preamble

It has been common for individual practitioners within the dental profession to seek and obtain advanced education, experience and specific focused competencies. This has occurred due to the demands placed upon individual practitioners by the populations they serve and because of unique skills and aptitudes of individual dentists. Consequently, as with other caring professions, specialization in Dentistry has occurred as a natural evolutionary process across several disciplines of the dental profession.

The transition toward specialization in all health care fields often presents the developing profession with challenging concerns and issues. Creative solutions to these concerns will strengthen the integrity and cohesiveness of the profession as long as the welfare of patients remains as the focal point.

FDI acknowledges that vast differences in approach to dental specialization may exist in different countries. This may be due to diverse regulations, legislation, history, demographics or culture and therefore the *FDI Statement Regarding Specialization in Dentistry* should be seen as an overview of the guiding principles of recognition of dental specialties.

## Definition of Dental Specialization

Dental Specialization is the formal acquisition, the ongoing maintenance and the continual improvement of comprehensive knowledge and experiencebased competencies by a dentist in a specific discipline (specialty) of dentistry.

## General Principles of Specialization

1. The establishment of a dental specialty must address a clear health need. When designating a dental specialty to provide care in response to a clear health need, the new designation should insure that the scope of one specialty is not subsumed by another. A dental specialty is appropriately established only by the dental profession.
2. The process leading to the Establishment and Recognition of a Dental Specialty should be a clearly defined and legally sanctioned activity. This recognition process is best developed through comprehensive collaboration between regulatory, professional and educational bodies.
3. The Dental Specialties (as with Dentistry in general) should be regulated via legal, statutory or professional authority.
4. In order to be publicly recognised by a specific Dental Specialty designation, the individual dentist's successful acquisition of the required knowledge and experience based competencies should be founded upon a formal programme of education, training and experience identified by the individual possessing an advanced educational degree, diploma or fellowship in that specialty.

5. The relationships between Dental Specialists, General Dental practitioners and other health care providers should harmoniously and collaboratively promote interactive learning and the best possible care of the patients they collectively serve. Establishment of dental specialties does not limit the right of the general dental practitioner to practice the full range of dental disciplines appropriate to the profession.