

Accreditation Results
(Accreditation Results for School of Dental Education)

The Nippon Dental University School of Life Dentistry
at Tokyo Department of Life Dentistry



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: Private	Location: Tokyo, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2023	
Accreditation Status: accredited (Accreditation Period: April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2031)	

Accreditation Results for the Nippon Dental University, School of Life Dentistry at Tokyo, Department of Life Dentistry

The basic educational mission of the Nippon Dental University, School of Life Dentistry at Tokyo, Department of Life Dentistry, defined in the University Regulations is “to provide broad-based educational opportunities while simultaneously carrying out specialized research into, and providing medical knowledge of, the teeth, the jaw, and the mouth, based on a proper development of intellectual, moral, and practical capabilities. Furthermore, it is the University's mission to contribute to the development and well-being of human culture and assist in the creation of a healthy citizenry” while aiming to nurture dentists with the competence to provide dental care independently. To highlight the principle that “dentistry involves the study of life in general, and dental treatment involves medical treatment relating to life,” the Nippon Dental University has prefixed the names of every faculty and department with the word “life,” and formulated ten basic educational goals through thorough and extensive discussions and deliberations to ensure alignment with this principle.

To achieve its goals the School of Life Dentistry’s integrated six-year education program is designed to enable students to study each element of the dental education model core curriculum consisting of courses in the subject groups of basic dentistry, social dentistry, and clinical dentistry offered sequentially and across disciplines. The curriculum is managed by the five working groups of PBL Tutorial, Workshop, Communication, Clinical Skills, and Electronic Information, which play direct and indirect roles in their respective areas of responsibility in improving the curriculum, teaching methods, and learning assessment. The working groups also develop new pedagogical approaches, including the interactive class format adopted in all year levels to help improve students’ critical thinking skills and the strategy to enhance student engagement in lessons through administering tests at the beginning, during, and at the end of classes. Furthermore, all lecture materials are provided in digital formats and uploaded to the learning management system, allowing students to access these materials on their tablets and other devices not only during class but at all times.

Also of note, classes adopt instructional approaches designed to develop problem-solving skills, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), Learning through Discussion (LTD)-Based PBL (LBP), an upgraded version of PBL, and Team-Based Learning (TBL). A commendable aspect of the School’s student learning assessment is the year-level-based comprehensive exam developed by a team of teachers administered

in addition to the usual course-specific final exams, which ensures fair and stringent measurement of student performance.

Clinical clerkships are generally rotation-based, but the School concurrently uses the “patient-based care” training approach that puts each student in charge of a number of patients, providing an opportunity to treat the same patient from start to finish. Clinical students also participate in a three-day house-call clinical training where they provide care in patients’ homes and elderly care facilities under the supervision of teachers from the Oral Rehabilitation Department of the Nippon Dental University Hospital and the Nippon Dental University Oral Rehabilitation Tama Clinic. This is a highly commendable learning opportunity for students to gain experience in both oral care for patients requiring nursing care and dentistry aid.

Other notable features of the education program include the student exchange program with partner institutions, offered as an advanced curriculum component, and the School’s own grant-type scholarship program.

The faculty organization has been split into two groups: the undergraduate clinical program faculty with teachers focusing on teaching and research and the University Hospital department faculty with teachers focusing on teaching and seeing patients, thereby clearly delineating the faculty’s roles and responsibilities. This organizational structure of two faculty groups promotes the achievement of the School’s educational goals through more efficient management and coordination of duties. The School also offers commendable student support services to promote effective learning. For example, the School appoints a leader teacher and multiple sub-leader teachers for each year level whose roles are to assist students with academic or administrative concerns, and provides students with the teachers’ email addresses for easy access. For clinical training, certified psychologists are available to provide counseling.

There are several areas of improvement the School should address, however, despite the various strengths noted above.

First, the “patient-based care” method, a unique feature of the clinical clerkships course, was suspended in AY2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic, and although having been reinstated to some extent since AY2023, the practice is not implemented on a scale considered effective compared with the pre-pandemic days and requires the School’s greater commitment to return the course to a full scale.

Second, although the process to draw up and revise course syllabi is in place, the syllabi fail to include the teaching methods used in class, such as PBL, LBP, and TBL. A course syllabus acts as a contract between the School and the students enrolled in the course and plays a significant role in assuring the quality of education in terms of teaching

and learning assessment, among other things. As such, further efforts should be made to improve the quality of the syllabi.

Third, the School lacks a curriculum map that sequentially shows how each course aligns with the degree award policy. As a tool displaying the specific path guiding students admitted to the School in accordance with the Admissions Policy on their journey to achieving the expected learning outcomes of graduates specified in the degree award policy, a curriculum map plays an important role in enhancing student motivation for learning. It was reported that a curriculum map is now under development in response to a third-party evaluation recommendation. Work on the curriculum map should be completed as soon as possible to further improve the School's standard of education.

To improve these issues the School is advised to utilize the results of this accreditation for schools of dental education and continue its self-study efforts for improvement, while assuring and enhancing the quality of its undergraduate dental education and further developing the unique characteristics of its dental education program.