

Accreditation Results
(Accreditation Results for School of Dental Education)

Faculty of Dentistry School of Dentistry, Tokushima University



Basic Information of the Institution	
Ownership: National	Location: Tokushima, Japan
Accreditation Status	
Year of the Review: 2024	
Accreditation Status: unaccredited	

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The School of Dentistry, Faculty of Dentistry, Tokushima University (hereafter “School”), in line with the university-wide philosophy of “striving for truth and the creation of knowledge based on the spirit of autonomy and self-discipline, inheriting and enhancing outstanding academic and cultural traditions, and contributing to the realization of a prosperous and healthy future society as a university open to the world,” sets forth the School’s educational and research objectives of “nurturing dentists with a broad range of knowledge beyond the field of dentistry and the latest treatment technique as well as the ethical standards required of medical professionals.” The School has established the three educational goals of 1) nurturing dentists possessing common sense and medical ethics; 2) the utmost respect for the dignity of life; and 3) the latest treatment techniques and a research mindset, and are working to foster dentists with comprehensive skills necessary for dental care.

To achieve these objectives and goals, the School has defined seven elements of competence and 41 specific goals (hereafter “competency”) as the achievement targets students should meet by the time of graduation based on the educational objectives. With this initiative, the School has clarified the expected learning outcomes, which is commendable. The School has established subject groups such as General Education, Dental Basic Medicine, Clinical Dental Medicine, and Comprehensive Practice and Lifelong Learning. It also utilizes diverse educational methods, including problem-based learning (PBL), team-based learning (TBL), role-playing and other forms of active learning, and online learning; and cultivates a research mindset through the Practice in Basic Sciences that provides students with opportunities to spend six months in a laboratory of their choice. Through these initiatives, the School has organized a systematic curriculum that allows students to take sequentially advanced courses as they progress to the next year. Starting with freshman students enrolled in AY2022, the School has used an outcome-based educational program in accordance with the Model Core Curriculum for Dental Education (AY2016 Revision) that responds to social needs and emphasizes consistency from pre-clinical education to clinical training, specialist education, and lifelong learning.

Most notable are the “Strike while the Iron is Hot” (SIH) Training Course - Introduction to Active Learning in the first-year general education and Interprofessional Education (IPE) programs that include first-year IPE and advanced-year IPE offered

jointly by the Faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmaceutical Sciences, with students participating from these faculties. These programs are highly commendable initiatives effective in encouraging students aspiring to become healthcare professionals to deepen their mutual understanding, develop the foundation for students to work together smoothly in teams to provide healthcare services in the future, and provide them with opportunities to learn team-based medical care in practice. Through off-campus clinical internships at community-based dental clinics, medical hospitals with dental departments, and nursing homes for the elderly, the School also allows students to gain hands-on experience as general clinical dentists essential for community healthcare. These initiatives, alongside Interprofessional Education, are distinctive efforts of the School in terms of nurturing dentists capable of meeting the needs of a super-aged society. As other initiatives, the School has established the Clinical Internship Working Group to provide opportunities for faculty members to take questions directly from clinical interns and to listen to their opinions, thereby seeking measures to achieve clinical internship-related reforms and identifying the factors that limit such reforms. The School has also made efforts to increase the ratio of female faculty members by utilizing university-wide initiatives to promote their appointment to senior positions within the faculty organization, which is a commendable effort that supports effective education respectful of diversity.

Despite the many strengths and distinctive features mentioned above, there are several areas of improvement the School needs to address. Most imperative is its faculty organization that has a significant impact on the quality of education.

In the dental education program, the number of full-time faculty members and professors is significantly below the requirements set by the Standards for Establishment of Universities. As of October 2024, the program faces a shortage of nine full-time faculty members (five of whom are professors), a situation that should be addressed immediately. In this regard, the School has already begun the selection procedures for some positions, including vacancies following the retirement of professors, in accordance with the selection schedule. It is also proceeding with the process of designating full-time faculty members working at the university hospital as core faculty members. The School is strongly urged to complete the hiring process swiftly and steadily. Furthermore, even though personnel issues are difficult for the Faculty of Dentistry to make its own decision because they are managed by the university-wide personnel management system, the School is strongly encouraged to implement flexible personnel measures to maintain the legally mandated numbers of full-time faculty members (core faculty members from AY2025) and professors to provide appropriate education. In doing so, the School should work to promote dental education reforms, review faculty allocation, and reflect the

appropriate faculty organization in the university-wide personnel plan.

There are several other areas of improvement that should be addressed. First, while syllabi are developed in accordance with the university-wide guidelines, the syllabi for some subjects lack the essential items. The School should enhance the system to review dentistry-specific items in the syllabi, such as model core curriculum numbers. The number of clinical cases handled by students in the clinical clerkships continues to be insufficient. To achieve its unique objective of “acquiring broad knowledge and the latest treatment techniques,” the School should adopt measures to ensure sufficient clinical competence at the time of graduation, including an initiative to increase the number of patients who participate in clinical training by improving the consent form.

To address these issues, the School is expected to embrace the results of this accreditation for schools of dental education and continue self-study activities to further ensure and enhance the quality of dental education (undergraduate program), thereby further developing the unique characteristics of its dental educational program.