



# SINGAPORE DENTAL COUNCIL

## *Newsletter*

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### *Message From President*



Why another dental newsletter?

Many of us perceive the Dental Council as some backroom office in the Ministry of Health that emerge annually to extract the annual licensing fee from us. Worst still, some may even perceive the Council as some kind of bureaucratic bogeyman lurking in the background, ever ready to pounce on some poor unfortunate dentist who has committed the slightest infraction of the Dentists Act.

Obviously this is something that we would like to correct. It is with this in mind that Council has decided to publish a newsletter to inform members about the work of the Council and to keep them abreast on issues and challenges that currently confront the Council and the profession at large. We also hope that the newsletter will serve as a forum for members to air their views on things dental and provide us with valuable feedback.

Although the Dental Council is mainly involved in the licensing and regulation of dentistry in Singapore, I foresee that its role will change in the years ahead in response to changes in our society, in patient's expectation, as a result of globalisation of our economy, the greater facility for mass communication via the Internet, and particularly with the rapid development and application of sophisticated complex technology in the dental practice. Council would not only be concerned with safeguarding the standard of dental practice in Singapore. It has to foster a culture of continual learning and professional development in our practitioners and promote a reputation of an ethical, efficient and caring profession to our patients in Singapore as well as in the region. We have to envision the changes ahead and proactively plan for the future.

On behalf of the Council and the Editorial Board it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this inaugural issue of the Singapore Dental Council Newsletter and we look forward to your continued support of this publication.

**Dr Yip Wing Kong**  
President  
Singapore Dental Council

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# Proposed Guidelines on the Recognition and Registration of Additional Qualifications

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## Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of registration is to indicate to the public and to other practitioners that in addition to a primary qualification a dentist has acquired knowledge or skills which are available for the benefit of patients .

02



## Criteria for the Registration of Additional Qualifications

### 2.1 Acceptable Qualifications

- 2.1.1 Applications for registration of additional qualifications are approved if the Council is satisfied that the qualification in question either :

- (a) would in itself provide a title to registration if the holder was not already registered; or
- (b) has been generally recognised by this Council as being registrable as an additional qualification or
- (c) is a graduate qualification awarded after a programme of study or research in a subject directly relevant to some aspect of dentistry or medicine.

### 2.2 Awarding Bodies

- 2.2.1 The Council will only normally consider applications for recognition in relation to :

- (a) higher qualifications by examination or research awarded by a University of standing; or
- (b) qualifications awarded in recognition of completion of prescribed training and/or experience by Dental / Medical / Surgical Colleges and recognised institutions,

accredited specialty training programmes or American Specialty Board equivalent; or

- (c) honorary degrees and awards provided that the qualifications themselves are already registrable.

- 2.2.2 Honorary award by specialist or membership societies which are not normally awarded following examination will not be registered as such registration could be misleading to patients.

- 2.2.3 The Council will only accept applications for qualifications which are registrable in the country of the awarding body.

- 2.2.4 The Council will not accept any applications in relation to sub-degree qualifications (defined as courses of length less than that specified in Clause 2.3.1 below). While these sub-degree qualifications might be considered a valuable part of a programme of continuing professional education, they are not appropriate for formal recognition in the Register. The assessment and registration of sub-degree qualifications is not regarded as the business of the Council.

### 2.3 Length of Course

- 2.3.1 Applications may only be approved in relation to qualifications/higher degrees requiring a minimum of one year's full-time supervised education and/or training (i.e. 1500 hours) or an equivalent period of part-time study.

- 2.3.2 A qualification granted by a Dental / Medical / Surgical College should require the equivalent to 2 years' supervised education and/or training of 3,000 hours



*SDC seeks feedback, suggestions and opinions from all dentists regarding these proposed guidelines. If adopted, it will apply to the registration of all additional qualifications with SDC, without exception. Please send your responses in writing to reach SDC by 31st March 2004.*

## 2.4 Educational Requirements

- 2.4.1 Applications for the recognition of an additional qualification must demonstrate that the holder(s) of the qualification possesses a more extensive knowledge in a subject relevant to the practice of dentistry than would be required to obtain a registrable primary dental qualification.
- 2.4.2 Criteria and method of assessment used by the awarding body for conferment of the additional qualification should demonstrate sufficient academic rigour and due process e.g. continual assessment, examinations.

- (f) proof of recognition of qualification in country of awarding body;
- (g) can the qualification be displayed in the country of awarding body;
- (h) is the qualification conferred considered as accreditation as a specialist in the country of awarding body?
- (i) suggested abbreviation for additional qualification, if relevant (to provide evidence of the most widely recognised abbreviation for the qualification in the country of awarding body);

- 3.1.2 The application will be processed by the Council and it must be satisfied that the criteria listed have been fully met.

## 3.2 General Recognition

- 3.2.1 For qualifications that have previously been accepted by the Dental Council for General Recognition, the applicant need only write to the Registrar and submit a certified true copy of the relevant degree certificates.

- 3.2.2 General Recognition follows scrutiny of the relevant curriculum, methods of assessment, regulations etc of the additional qualification and the Council being satisfied that the quality and relevance of the degree to the practice of dentistry is assured.

- 3.2.3 Qualifications which have not been awarded General Recognition, (for example, postgraduate degrees from foreign universities of non-first world countries) may still be recognised by Council; but must be assessed in each and every case. When a degree which does not have general recognition has been recognised at some time in the past, this does not set a precedence.

## 03 Application Procedures for Registration

### 3.1 Individual Recognition

- 3.1.1 An individual dentist seeking to register an additional qualification should apply in writing to the Dental Council using the prescribed forms. The application should include :
- (a) a certified true copy of the certificate confirming the award of the qualification;
- (b) syllabus: subjects, length of study, abstract of thesis (if relevant);
- (c) does the conferring body / academy require a certain number of years of practice before the candidate is eligible;
- (d) method of assessment (e.g. whether the candidate had to sit for a postgraduate specialty exam) and the criteria on which it is awarded;
- (e) awarding body;



# Dental Council Elections – Non Voting of Members

The 2nd SDC elections were held from 4 to 10 April 2003 by tele-voting. Despite postal as well as telephone reminders, only 994 (93.1%) of the 1068 eligible voters fulfilled their obligations and voted.

A total of 74 dentists did not vote. This compares with 51 dentists who did not vote in the previous election, an increase of 23 non voters. Out of the 74 non-voting dentists, 27 were studying or working overseas during the valid voting period. This left a balance of 47 non-voting dentists who were in Singapore during the valid voting period.

As the valid voting period was within 4 to 10 April 2003, well during the SARS period, some non-voters provided evidence of extenuating circumstances for their failure to vote. However, Council takes a dim view of non-voters giving trivial reasons for their failure to vote. Telephone voting precludes the need for undue inconvenience to voters and Council was disappointed with the high number of non-voters at this election.

Dentists are reminded of Paragraph 5 (1) and 5 (2) of the Dentists Act 1999.

*5. (1) Every registered dentist whose name appears in the first division of the register and who is resident in Singapore shall vote for the election of members of the council at such time and in such manner as may be prescribed.*

*5. (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Act, a person who is required to vote and fails to do so shall not be entitled to apply for a practicing certificate under Section 17, unless he satisfies the Registrar that he has a good and sufficient reason for not voting or unless he pays to the Council a penalty prescribed by the Council.*

Dentists are also reminded that as provided by the Act, the penalty for failure to vote shall be S\$500.

## First Announcement

Compulsory Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all dentists in Singapore is set to be launched in 2005. Actual launching dates will be announced later and all dentists will have access to the full details of compulsory CPD in Singapore.

Compulsory CPD means that dentists must satisfy the minimum requirements or will not have their Annual Practising Certificates renewed. SDC will work very closely with the various course organisers to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for all dentists to satisfy the minimum requirements.

Do look out for the full, detailed article on compulsory CPD as soon as it is finalised.

## Request for email addresses

The recent outbreak of SARS emphasised the need for a quick and efficient way to communicate with dentists in Singapore. In this respect, the Singapore Dental Council would like to request that all dentist provide the SDC with their email addresses. This will ensure that critical and important information can be quickly and efficiently disseminated to all members in the shortest time possible.

In the same instance, the Singapore Dental Council would also like to remind all dentists that they must keep the SDC informed of any changes in their correspondence addresses so that important mail from SDC can accurately reach its intended recipients. This was obvious in the recent compulsory voting exercise, when some dentists were not contactable by mail and telephone.

Please provide your updated particulars and email addresses to the SDC official corresponding address or by email to our Administrative Manager at [YEE\\_Yoke\\_Chun@dentalcouncil.gov.sg](mailto:YEE_Yoke_Chun@dentalcouncil.gov.sg)





One of the first few things that the new Council elected in 2003 decided to do was to form the Committee for Professional Communication. One common feedback received from dentists about the SDC is the lack of information about SDC and its duties and functions. Council decided that the Committee for Professional Communication should strive to bridge this gap between Council and dentists.

The SDC Newsletter hopes to serve as a platform to reach out to dentists. Reaching out with information. Reaching out with upcoming changes. Reaching out with feedback, and reaching out with its duties and functions. As Editor, I will try to reach out further. I welcome letters to the Editor as any decent newsletter would. Your feedback is valuable as it allows Council, through this Newsletter, to remain relevant to dentists in Singapore.

Changes are abound and dentistry is no exception. The proposed guidelines for Registration of Additional Qualifications are featured here. For that Council is indebted to the Committee's Chairman Assoc Prof Keson Tan Beng Choon and its members. Soon, we hope provide a detailed guide on the impending compulsory CPD for all dentists in Singapore. Again the CPD Committee Chairman Prof Chew Chong Lin and its members are working tirelessly to finalise all details and ensure a smooth implementation. Much of the work of Council is done by the unselfish contribution of many hours by the committees and its members and for that Council records its appreciation.

Finally, Council would like to welcome Ms Yoke Yee Chun who joined SDC as Administrative Manager in December 2003. She will be assisted by Ms Norisah Ahmad and Mr Mak Kan Chew.

Dr Shahul Hameed  
Editor

## >> Letters to SDC

The Singapore Dental Council (SDC) welcomes letters and feedback to the Council and the Editor. SDC, however, reserves the right to print and edit letters, as they appear in the SDC Newsletter. We ask that all letters are duly signed and contain the correspondent's name, address and contact number.

Here we reproduce a letter by Dr Asha Karunakaran and its reply.

*"It has been my observation that patients only really begin to understand the correct way of using a brush or floss when the technique is demonstrated to them in their own mouths.*

*I would like to know if Dental Surgery Assistants (DSAs) are allowed to demonstrate Oral Hygiene techniques intra-orally without the dentist being present.*

*I ask this to make sure that I do not inadvertently transgress the rules of the Dentists' Act"*

Dr Asha Karunakaran

### Reply >>

Dear Dr Asha

Thank you for your letter seeking clarification regarding DSAs and demonstration of Oral Hygiene techniques.

The Singapore Dental Council has further reviewed this issue and would like to inform you that DSAs are allowed to demonstrate Oral Hygiene techniques intraorally, as an educational process, without the dentist being present.

Prof Chew Chong Lin  
Registrar



# SINGAPORE DENTAL COUNCIL BOARD MEMBERS

<b>President</b>	Dr Yip Wing Kong		
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	Dr Shahul Hameed	Assoc Prof Jennifer Neo	Dr Go Wee Ser

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## COMMITTEES

### Complaints Committee

The Complaints Committee will be formed on an ad-hoc basis, with a council member chairing each committee.

Dr Chung Kong Mun	Dr Loh Kai Woh Ronald	*Mr Low Wee Ping
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\* Lay Panel Members

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### Committee for Professional Communication

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Members	Dr Adeline Wong Ms Yee Yoke Chun

### Specialist Dental Register Committee

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Mr Lim Eric	Executive Director, M/s Chemical Industries(FE) Ltd
Mr Low Wee Ping	Legal Officer Grade 2 GRE
A/Prof Lye Lin Heng Irene	Dy Director, Asia-Pacific Centre for Env. Law (Faculty of Law, NUS)
Mrs Noorhayati Kassim Quek	Vice President, Citibank NA
A/Prof Tan Cheng Han	Senior Counsel, Dean of the Faculty of Law, NUS
Mr Wee Leong How	Executive Vice-President HR/Corporate Relations, SPH