



SINGAPORE DENTAL COUNCIL

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TO: ALL DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

FOR COMPLIANCE - RULES ON THE PROPER DISPLAY OF TITLES / DESIGNATIONS / QUALIFICATIONS BY DENTAL PROFESSIONALS

Patients and members of the public may refer to a dental professional's titles / designations / qualifications for information on his experience and expertise when choosing a dentist for consultation and treatment. As such, it is important that dental professionals display their titles / designations / qualifications accurately and appropriately.

2 The Singapore Dental Council (SDC) would therefore like to remind all dental professionals to comply with Sections 31¹ and 31A² of the Dental Registration Act (Cap 76) (DRA) when displaying their titles, designations and qualifications in any medium or form. Attention is also drawn to sections 5.4.2³ and 5.4.6⁴ of the SDC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines 2018. Please refer to Annex A.

3 Dental professionals must ensure that any title, designation and qualification on any card, letter, stationery, nameplate, signboard, placard, circular, handbill or any notice displayed at any premises and via all modes of social media / medium used for the practice of dentistry conforms to the following:

I. Titles

Dental professionals' titles should generally reflect the register in which they are listed:

- a) Dental professionals listed in the "Register of Dentists" or the "Register of Temporarily Registered Dentists" may use the title of: *Dentist*. Dental professionals listed in the "Register of Oral Health Therapists" may use the title of: *Oral Health Therapist*.
- b) In addition, or as an alternative to the titles listed in paragraph 1(a) (above), dentists who are listed in the "Register of Specialists" can use the title of
 - i. *Dental Specialist in* followed by the name of their specialty
E.g. Dental Specialist in Orthodontics, or

- ii. Use their approved specialist title from among the list in Annex B.

Under Section 31A of the DRA, a dentist may not describe himself as a specialist in a branch of dentistry unless he is registered with the SDC as a specialist in that area of practice.

- c) Dentists practicing other branches of dentistry that are not yet Dental Specialists Accreditation Board-recognized specialties but have training and qualifications similar to Basic Specialty Training can list one of these areas as their "*Clinical interest*". However, only the following areas may be listed as clinical interests: Oral Medicine, Oral Pathology, Oral/Dental Radiology, Special Needs Dentistry.

For example: Clinical interest – Oral Pathology

- d) The addition of a title: Practitioner, Consultant, Therapist or other descriptive (either as a prefix or suffix) cannot be used in conjunction with an area of clinical interest, except for those listed in Annex B. For example, the description "Practitioner in Dental Implantology" or "Senior Consultant in Cleft and Craniofacial Orthodontics" WILL NOT BE ALLOWED. Please refer to Annex C for examples of titles and designations approved for display by the Council.

- e) Dental professionals will be allowed to display titles accorded in the National Day Awards.

For example: "PBM" (for Public Service Medal)

II. Designations

Designations used should reflect a dental professional's official appointment in a Hospital, Institution or Clinic. In addition, while one may use titles and designations such as:

- Registrar, Senior Registrar, Associate Consultant, Consultant and Senior Consultant; or
- Assistant Professor, Adjunct Associate Professor, Associate Professor, Professor

as part of their salutation, dental professionals should only display such designations if:

- a) The designation is currently valid and not a past appointment.
- b) The designation represents a substantive (not temporary/acting) appointment. For overseas universities, there must be a letter of verification.
- c) Only professorial designations associated with accredited Dental Faculties of accredited Universities in Singapore may be placed before the names of the dental professionals.
- d) All other designations must be stated underneath the dental professional's name only.

Please refer to Annex C for examples of how titles and designations should be displayed.

III. Qualifications

Dental professionals will only be allowed to display qualifications (whether dental or otherwise) that:

- a) Are entered against their name in the “Register of Dentists”, “Register of Temporarily Registered Dentists” (i.e. for the purposes of teaching and research), “Register of Specialists” or the “Register of Oral Health Therapists”, and
- b) Are listed in Singapore Dental Council (SDC)’s List of Displayable Additional Qualifications. The List of Displayable Additional Qualifications can be found at <http://www.healthprofessionals.gov.sg/sdc>. Dental professionals must apply for approval from the SDC to add other postgraduate qualifications to the List.

4 Apart from the requirements set out in the DRA, section 5.4.2 of the SDC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines 2018 requires dental professionals to provide information about their qualifications (approved by SDC), areas of practice, practice arrangements and contact details in accordance with the following standards: factual, accurate, verifiable, without extravagant claims, not misleading, not sensational, not persuasive, not comparative, and not disparaging. In addition, the publicity must not be offensive, ostentatious or in bad taste or otherwise undermine the dignity of the profession.

5 This standard also applies to all information that dental professionals put on the Internet, for instance, on their websites (see section 5.4.6 of the SDC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines 2018 in Annex A).

6 Notice is hereby given to all dental professionals to comply with the SDC Ethical Code and Ethical Guidelines 2018, as well as Sections 31 and 31A of the DRA when displaying or using titles, qualifications and / or designations. This Directive takes effect from 1 September 2019. Dental professionals found contravening these rules will be subject to regulatory proceedings under the DRA.

Yours sincerely,



ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR CHNG CHAI KIAT
REGISTRAR, SINGAPORE DENTAL COUNCIL

DENTAL REGISTRATION ACT (CAP 76):

¹ Use of qualification and title

31.—(1) A registered dentist or registered oral health therapist shall not use any qualification other than the qualifications which are entered in the Register of Dentists in respect of him, or which have been approved by the Council for his use.

(2) A registered dentist whose name appears in the first division of the Register of Dentists shall not use any title, addition or designation other than —

- (a) the title, addition or designation which has been approved by the Council for his use; or
- (b) if his name has been entered in a list referred to in subsection (6) in respect of a title prescribed under subsection (5), the prescribed title.

(3) A registered dentist whose name appears in the second division of the Register of Dentists shall not use any title, addition or designation other than that of “registered dentist”, “dentist” or, if his name has been entered in a list referred to in subsection (6) in respect of a title prescribed under subsection (5), the prescribed title.

(4) Any registered dentist or registered oral health therapist who contravenes subsection (1), (2) or (3) may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under Part V and for the purposes of that Part, such contravention shall be deemed to be an act which brings disrepute to the profession of a registered dentist or registered oral health therapist, as the case may be.

(5) If the Council is of the opinion that any branch of dentistry has become so distinctive that it would be for the convenience of the public or of the dental profession that registered dentists qualified to practise, or practising, in that branch of dentistry should use a distinctive title, the Council may, with the approval of the Minister, make regulations to prescribe appropriate titles and conditions under which they may be used.

(6) In the case of any prescribed title, regulations may provide —

- (a) for a list to be kept by the Council of the names of registered dentists who are qualified under such regulations to use that title; and
- (b) for any registered dentist who is so qualified to be entitled to have his name entered in the list.

(7) For the purposes of this section, “use”, in relation to any qualification, title, addition or designation, includes to exhibit or publish the qualification, title, addition or designation in any card, letter, stationery, nameplate, signboard, placard, circular, handbill or any notice displayed by the registered dentist concerned at any premises used by him for the practice of dentistry.

² False assumption of title of specialist

31A.—(1) A registered dentist who is not registered under section 14C as a specialist in a branch of dentistry shall not —

- (a) practise dentistry or that branch of dentistry under the style or title of a specialist in that branch of dentistry, or under any name, title, addition or description implying that he is such a specialist or has any degree, qualification or experience in that branch of dentistry; or

(b) advertise or hold himself out as a specialist in that branch of dentistry.

(2) A registered dentist who contravenes subsection (1) may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under this Act.

ETHICAL CODE AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES 2018:

³ 5.4.2. Standards required of information

In general, dental practitioners may provide information about their qualifications (approved by SDC), areas of practice, practice arrangements and contact details. Such information should be factual, accurate, verifiable, without extravagant claims, not misleading, not sensational, not persuasive, not comparative, and not disparaging.

In addition, the publicity must not be offensive, ostentatious or in bad taste or otherwise undermine the dignity of the profession.

⁴ 5.4.6. Provision of Information through web sites

Healthcare organisations and individual practitioners may use websites to provide information to colleagues and the public. These websites may be about the healthcare organisation or dental practitioner or about a dental topic. The standards of information as spelt out in PHMC (Publicity) include the following:

- (a) Dental practitioners may advertise by providing neutrally toned and objective information about their SDC-registered qualifications, experience, areas of practice and their expertise in procedures. They must not include information that could mislead the public as to their registered qualifications, experience or expertise.
- (b) Dental practitioners must not use “before” and “after”, or even only “after” images or information for medical advertising in the public domain as anecdotal cases create unjustified expectations of the results of treatment, which may vary.
- (c) Advertising must not seek to unduly persuade beyond logic and reason through arousing intense curiosity or interest, or stimulating strong emotional reactions that may impair rational decision making about whether to seek healthcare services.
- (d) Advertising must not seek to induce ill-founded fear or insecurity about health or longevity, nor play on the public’s sense of self-esteem or generate overly critical perceptions or dissatisfaction with self, body image or physical attractiveness. Dental practitioners must not advertise using elements of glitz, glamour, style, famous locations, associations with celebrities and the entertainment or fashion world.
- (e) Dental practitioners must not offer financial inducements such as free or discounted examinations or treatments (outside of legitimate non-commercial health promotion activities). Dental practitioners must not lure patients through time-limited special offers, tie-ups with unrelated commercial entities (such as credit cards) or offering gifts or other material incentives, to persuade patients to take up their services. Dental

practitioners must not offer medical services and products as prizes or gifts in any context.

- (f) Testimonials are subjective and must not be used in advertising on any media where the dental practitioner has any control over the content about himself/herself. Dental practitioners must not ask or induce their patients or anyone to write positive testimonials about themselves in any media.
- (g) Dental practitioners must not disparage other dental practitioners or their practices in their advertising and must not give any impression that they and their practice are superior in any way when compared to other dental practitioners who provide similar services.

Dental practitioners who publish information on a website have the responsibilities to ensure that the information about themselves and their practices contained on the website and any hyperlinks from the website conform to these standards.

These websites must not be sponsored by any pharmaceutical or commercial companies.

As a wide array of textual and visual information can be placed on websites, the following guidelines are recommended: the websites must not have on its web pages or provide hyperlinks to commercial companies, testimonies from satisfied patients or colleagues. Photographs or video clips related to identifiable patients either directly or by inference, are not allowed without their prior consent.

Officially Recognised Dental Specialties in Singapore & their Specialist Titles

Dental Specialties		
No.	Specialty	Approved Specialist Title
1	Endodontics	Endodontist
2	Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery	Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon
3	Orthodontics	Orthodontist
4	Paediatric Dentistry	Paediatric Dentist
5	Periodontics	Periodontist
6	Prosthodontics	Prosthodontist
7	Dental Public Health	Public Health Dentist

Examples of Display of Titles and Designations Approved by SDC

(I) Appointments in Public or Private Institutions

1. Dr <<Name of Division 1 Dentist>>
Orthodontist
Senior Consultant
Dental Clinic
<<Name of Hospital>>
Singapore
2. Dr <<Name of Division 1 Dentist>>
Dental Specialist in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery **or** Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon
<<Name of Clinic>>
Singapore
Clinical interest – Oral Pathology
3. Mr or Mrs or Mdm or Ms <<Name of Division 2 Dentist>>
Dentist
<<Name of Clinic>>
Singapore
4. Mr or Mrs or Mdm or Ms <<Name of Oral Health Therapist>>
Oral Health Therapist
<<Name of Clinic>>
Singapore

(II) Professorship Titles

5. Professor <<Name of Division 1 Dentist>>
Dental Specialist in Endodontics **or** Endodontist
Professor and Senior Consultant
Discipline of Endodontics, Operative Dentistry and Prosthodontics
Faculty of Dentistry
National University of Singapore
National University Hospital
6. Dr <<Name of Division 1 Dentist>>
Dental Specialist in Periodontics **or** Periodontist
<<Name of Clinic>>
Singapore
Clinical Professor
Division of Constitutive and Regenerative Sciences
<<Name of College and University>>
<<State and Country of Origin of University>>