

Accreditation Results
(Accreditation Results for School of Dental Education)

Okayama University
Dental School



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

Accreditation Results for Okayama University Dental School

Okayama University Dental School provides an interdisciplinary dental training program with the unique objectives to “facilitate progress in the dental medicine by turning out excellent dentists,” “provide high quality dental care to the nation,” and “conduct innovative research and develop cutting-edge dental care” in accordance with Okayama University’s vision to “create and establish a new paradigm for the sustainable development of the world” aimed at addressing the challenges for humans to coexist with nature in a number of fields including the environment, energy, food supply, the economy, health, security, and education by transforming the existing body of knowledge into innovative ideas.”

To achieve its objectives the Dental School seeks to enroll highly qualified students through such steps as establishing an exclusive admissions category for applicants with International Baccalaureate qualifications and opening the door to talented international students and Japanese students with diverse backgrounds. The Dental School’s education program offers an integrated six-year dental education curriculum with distinctive features designed to prepare students not only for their National Dentistry Examination to become a licensed dentist after graduation, but also to become medical practitioners and researchers who can address global challenges by developing the competencies expected of bachelor’s degree holders as stipulated in Okayama University’s degree award policy. Highly notable components of the curriculum include courses aiming to develop research and global mindsets, such as the Practice in dental sciences, Okayama University Dental School Short-Term Study Abroad Exchange Program (ODAPUS) for undergraduate students, and various practical training opportunities, including tutorial practical training with sessions using a geriatric patient simulator or held in care facilities, perioperative management training, and clinical training involving home-care patients.

Furthermore, Practice for self-expression, Designing everything, and How to start volunteer launched anew in the specialized subject category are unique and commendable educational initiatives. The use of distinctive teaching strategies in medical professionalism training, such as the Team-Based Learning (TBL) model and the World Café method of active learning, are noted as creative instruction approaches. With respect to clinical clerkships, efforts are made to facilitate close communication between faculty members and students by, for example, having student representatives sit in on Working

group for clinical training as observers.

The Dental School has established the Advanced Research Center for Oral and Craniofacial Sciences (ARCOCS) and the Center for Promotion of Dental Education and International Collaboration to promote interdisciplinary and international research stemming from oral science; it also strives to train skilled dental researchers through organizing monthly ARCOCS seminars, forging partnership agreements with overseas dental schools and universities, and conducting various international exchange activities based on these alliances, which are all remarkable efforts of the Dental School's faculty organization. With respect to student support, the Dental School's library is open 24 hours a day as a study space for students, which is a commendable form of learning support.

There are several areas of improvement the Dental School should address, however.

First is the inconsistent use of terminologies such as "mission," "purpose," and "educational philosophy" in publications, depending on the target readers. Second, with respect to clinical clerkships, there are discrepancies in the descriptions of clinical training between different versions of the patient information document. The document should be revised to avoid confusing patients. Third, the syllabi are inconsistent in format and style and should be revised to improve their readability for students, teachers, and other parties. The fourth area of improvement is student admissions. The Dental School follows appropriate interviewing practices, such as requiring interview panels to include women and ensuring that interview questions are free from biases to enhance their objectivity, but further improvements should be made to standardize the interview process by, for example, establishing internal rules on the selection criteria of the interviewers. Fifth, with regard to faculty organization, efforts to improve the quality of teachers are insufficient, with only limited faculty development (FD) sessions being held. A greater effort should be made to enhance the quality of education by actively implementing teaching improvement strategies and assessing their effectiveness.

As described above, the Dental School has a variety of unique features but also a number of issues that need to be addressed. To improve these issues the Dental 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 program and further developing its unique characteristics.