West Virginia University
Predoctoral Dental Education Program
Competencies for the Graduating Dentist
Revised October 16, 2024

West Virginia University School of Dentistry's competencies encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values that are required for independent, unsupervised practice to provide comprehensive care for patients in all stages of life and lived experiences. The twenty-four competencies are divided into five categories: Scientific and Critical Thinking (SCT), Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning (ADTP), Health Promotion and Case Management (HPCM), Community Health (CH), and Ethics and Professional Practice (EPP) which further delineate the scope of practice for an entry level dentist. Competency attainment through formative, summative, performance assessments, and experiences throughout the curriculum is described in detail in the Competency Document. Prior to graduation, the WVU School of Dentistry student must have demonstrated competency necessary to:

Scientific and Critical Thinking (SCT)

1a. Scientific Inquiry: Utilize scientific inquiry and current research as the basis for comprehensive care of patients.
1b. Critical Thinking: Employ critical thinking skills to evaluate professional literature to ensure evidence-based patient care.

Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning (ADTP)

2. Examination of the Patient: Perform an examination that collects the necessary information to assess and evaluate the patient's systemic and oral condition(s).
3. Diagnosis: Determine a differential, provisional, or definitive diagnosis for patients by interpreting and correlating findings.
4. Treatment Planning: Develop, present, and discuss individual treatment plans and obtain informed consent consistent with the patient's condition, interest, goals, and capabilities.

Health Promotion and Case Management (HPCM)

5. Disease Prevention: Provide evidence-based interprofessional care for patients that emphasizes prevention of oral diseases and supports overall systemic health.
6. Tobacco Cessation: Provide evidence-based tobacco cessation strategies.
7. Diversity Awareness: Recognize varied life experiences that impact interpersonal communications, conduct, and patient care.
8. Management of Pain and Anxiety: Employ techniques to manage orofacial pain and anxiety with consideration of the impact of prescribing practices and substance use disorders.
9. Caries Management: Assess and manage a patient's caries risk through interventions and behavior management.
10. Endodontic Therapy: Assess, treat, and/or refer diseases of pulpal and periradicular origin.
11. Periodontal Therapy: Assess, treat, and/or refer periodontal disease utilizing a non-surgical approach.
12. Surgical Therapy: Assess, treat, and/or refer conditions requiring surgical procedures on the hard and soft tissues.
13. Emergency Situations: Prevent, recognize, and manage dental and common medical emergencies that occur in the dental practice.

14. Occlusal/TMJ Disorders: Assess the temporomandibular joint, muscles of mastication, and occlusal interferences/dysfunction; treat or refer functional disorders of occlusal or non-occlusal origins.
15. Orthodontic Therapy: Assess, manage, or refer developmental or acquired abnormalities in esthetics or occlusion.
16. Oral Mucosal Conditions: Assess, treat, or refer oral mucosal diseases or disorders.
17. Restorative/Prosthodontic Therapy
    a. Restore missing or defective tooth structure to proper form, function, and esthetics, and promote soft and hard tissue health. This includes properly conveying laboratory instructions when necessary.
    b. Replace missing teeth and surrounding oral tissues to proper form, function, and esthetics, and promote soft and hard tissue health. This includes properly conveying laboratory instructions when necessary.
18. Implant Therapy: Assess, treat or refer patients who would benefit from dental implant prosthodontic therapy.
19. Assessment of Patient Treatment: Evaluate treatment outcomes and determine the prognosis and recall strategies.

Community Health (CH)

20. Community Engagement: Plan, implement, and evaluate evidence-based dental educational programs that address the needs of the community.

Ethics and Professional Practice (EPP)

21. Ethics: Discern and manage the ethico-legal issues of dental practice.
22. Professionalism: Demonstrate professional values and behaviors in all aspects of patient care, community engagement, and personal conduct.
23. Professional Practice: Possess the skills to transition from dental school to professional practice.
24. Scope of Practice: Recognize the complexity of patient treatment and identify when referral is indicated.