

American Board of Operative Dentistry Certification

Dr. David Jones, Vice President, ABOD

The American Board of Operative Dentistry (ABOD) is dedicated to elevating the art and science of Operative Dentistry by encouraging the study of and recognizing excellence in clinical practice. Created in 1980, ABOD was originally composed of 18 members selected by the Executive Council of the Academy of Operative Dentistry (AOD). Selection was based on professional reputation and membership in AOD, and included a wide geographical distribution and various practice settings.

The founding board members developed the existing organizational structure, a Constitution, and By-laws. They also established a rigorous certification program – including written, clinical, and oral examinations – designed to evaluate and establish expertise, not merely competence, in clinical judgment, diagnosis and treatment planning, and hands-on skill. These criteria are still used today to recognize those pursuing excellence in Operative Dentistry. Eligibility to challenge the board includes: Membership in the Academy of Operative Dentistry, four years of post-dental school clinical practice experience, and completion of a recognized master's level training program in Operative or Restorative Dentistry.

Since ABOD's founding nearly 35 years ago, only 87 dentists have been certified in Operative Dentistry. Current membership includes practicing dentists from the private sector, academia, and the U.S. military, as well as a growing number of international dentists, all distinguishing themselves as leaders in organized dentistry. Of the 120 dentists currently serving on the Review Board for the Operative Dentistry journal, 22 are ABOD members. Seven have received the AOD Award of Excellence,

two have received the Hollenback Memorial Prize, and ten have served as AOD President. Within the military, two ABOD members have served as Flag Officers, four as commanding officers, and eight as specialty leaders. Nearly every ABOD member has held a dental school faculty appointment, some international, with ten serving as Department Chairs or Program Directors and two as Dean of their schools. Ongoing active participation in the functions of the board following certification is highly encouraged as well. Interest in ABOD certification has increased worldwide in recent years. In fact, the number of international applicants now far exceeds the number of American applicants.

The American Dental Association (ADA) has not recognized a new dental specialty for over a dozen years and Operative Dentistry does not currently fit qualifications for full specialty status. However, in 2010 the ADA created a new recognition status, Interest Area in General Dentistry. Interest areas are recognized by the ADA “to protect the public, nurture the art and science of dentistry, and improve the quality of care.” The ADA will consider granting this status “in those fields where advanced knowledge and skills are essential to maintain or restore oral health.” Application for Interest Area status involves much the same rigorous process as full specialty recognition and requires sponsorship by the Academy of Operative Dentistry as the parent organization. Designation as an interest area will formalize accreditation for advanced educational programs in Operative Dentistry and recognizes the contributions of Board Members. ABOD is the first organization to apply for this status. The ADA decision is expected to be made by mid-2015.

The Board strives to emulate the integrity, professionalism, and pursuit of excellence demonstrated by the Founding members. ABOD Executive Council and Business Meeting sessions are open to any members who wish to attend and are held in conjunction with the annual Academy meeting. All AOD members are urged to consider pursuing ABOD

certification. For complete information regarding eligibility and the certification process, please see the ABOD web page: <https://www.academyofoperativedentistry.com/american.html>. Questions can also be sent to the Secretary of the Board at ABOD_Sec@comcast.net.