



## Draft FDI POLICY STATEMENT

### Continuing Education via eLearning

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#### 2 **CONTEXT**

3 Continuing education (CE), also referred to as continuing professional education  
4 (CPE) or continuing professional development (CPD) or continuing competency, is  
5 an essential component of life-long learning that enables oral health professionals  
6 to maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills so that they can comply with the most  
7 current professional standards and the changing needs and demands of the public.  
8 Traditional CE methods include reading professional journals, attending courses and  
9 conferences and participating in study groups. With recent and continuous advances  
10 in information and communication technology (ICT) and learning management  
11 systems (LMS), it has become convenient to access educational materials via the  
12 internet. As the quality of these materials varies greatly, it is necessary to establish  
13 reference norms and general principles and guidelines to ascertain the quality of  
14 remotely-accessed CE materials.

#### 15 **SCOPE**

16 This policy statement will offer basic guidance and recommendations to oral health  
17 professionals as it relates to accessing and conducting CE via various modalities of  
18 ICT and LMS.

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#### 20 **DEFINITION**

21 **eLearning**<sup>1</sup> is defined as learning conducted via electronic media, typically on the  
22 internet.

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#### 24 **PRINCIPLES**

25 CE is a basic professional duty for oral health professionals. The best available  
26 resources should be used to update foundational knowledge, techniques and skills  
27 based on current best available evidence in response to the changing needs of the  
28 public. Criteria and principles that support the use of technology and educational  
29 design to foster active learning and provide opportunities for self-assessment  
30 should also be observed<sup>2</sup>. Good sources of reference are available<sup>3</sup>.

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#### 32 **POLICY**

33 With the advances in ICT and LMS, the internet can be a convenient source of CE  
34 resources and other useful information. However, in a similar manner to any  
35 traditional CE material, eLearning must also adhere to the following principles and  
36 norms:

- 37 • Any educational materials should be scientifically sound and evidence-based  
38 without any bias.
- 39 • Users must be aware that some educational materials may be opinion-based,  
40 especially where they relate to choices of clinical care and the use of specific  
41 techniques and materials. The presenter may share his/her subjective  
42 preference when performing a procedure.
- 43 • CE providers and presenters must declare to all participants their conflicts of  
44 interest. When this information is not obviously available, CE participants should  
45 request a conflict of interest statement from the presenter and/or provider.
- 46 • The name(s) of the individual(s) conducting the course should be disclosed with  
47 contact details to enable viewers to comment and ask questions.
- 48 • Any information presented, regardless of its source, must not be claimed to be,  
49 or accepted as, the definitive authority even if it is based on current scientific  
50 principles and evidence since different studies sometimes yield different results.
- 51 • Where disputes arise from CE materials, expert advice should be sought.
- 52 • Regulatory bodies may choose to accept CE credits only from sources that have  
53 been accredited by them.
- 54 • Users must be aware that learning online cannot substitute for certain in-class  
55 courses such as hands-on courses and case studies that require active  
56 interactions from participants.
- 57 • There should be a mechanism to assure the quality of eLearning material  
58 through feedback from participants.
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## 60 **KEYWORDS**

61 Continuing education, continuing professional development, information &  
62 communication technology, learning management systems, online education,  
63 webinar, internet, eLearning, life-long learning.

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## 65 **DISCLAIMER**

66 The information in this Policy Statement was based on the best scientific evidence  
67 available at the time. It may be interpreted to reflect prevailing cultural sensitivities  
68 and socio-economic constraints.

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## 70 **REFERENCES**

71 <sup>1</sup> Oxford Living Dictionary

72 <sup>2</sup> American Dental Association Technical Report No. 1090 For Adoption and Augmentation of the  
73 Quality Matters Design Standards for Online and Blended Courses, General Standards 5 & 6”

74 <sup>3</sup> Kavadelle A & al. Eur J Dent Educ 17 (Suppl. 1) (2013) 45–54

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