

What are Entrustable Professional Activities or EPAs?

A unit of professional practice, defined as tasks or responsibilities to be entrusted to the unsupervised execution by a trainee once they have attained sufficient specific competence. This informs not only what is expected of the trainee but also defines the tasks in dental practice.



Origins of EPAs in Dentistry

Prior to 1986, accreditation and student performance was based upon evaluating the educational process and what institutions were teaching, i.e., what students were taught. Clinically, how many you completed? In 1986, CODA formally adopted an outcomes-assessment standard, i.e., Competency Based Education. In 1997, ADEA adopted the Competencies for the New Dentist and revised them in 2008 as Competencies for the New General Dentist. This often focused on what students knew how to do. Entrustable Professional Activities focuses on if you **trust** that they can predictably perform and solve problems as a dentist?

The process of developing EPAs for dentistry followed the publication by the AAMC of the 13 Core Entrustable Professional Activities for Entering Residency in 2014. After pilot projects were completed, medicine has adopted EPAs for predoctoral medical education. As a result of the success of using EPAs in predoctoral education, many residency programs have adopted EPAs to measure the progress of their residents to develop

independence and competence. Predoctoral dental education is similar to a hybrid model between predoctoral medical education and residency. To graduate from dental school, a student needs to demonstrate competence in procedures that are the tasks completed every day in dental practice. Therefore, adopting EPAs to assess readiness for practice is a logical next step.

The ADEA Compendium of Clinical Competency Assessment was established in 2018 initially in order to develop a new pathway to clinical licensure. Its foundational concept stated, “the assessment of student performance over time by multiple faculty, calibrated to use a standardized rubric, including the evaluation of independence, while providing care to many patients of varying complexity.”