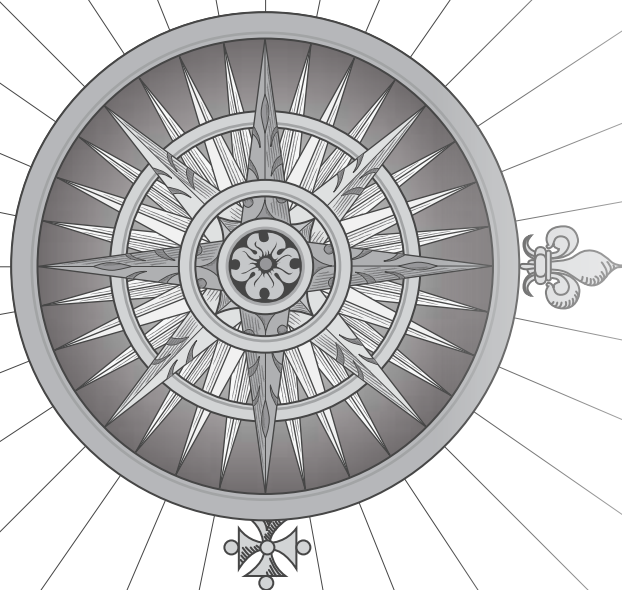


Charting Your Course

AACD Releases Accreditation Module

Tiffany Stronghart



Achieving Accreditation in the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (AACD) is a pivotal moment in a cosmetic dentist's or laboratory technician's career. It is a badge of honor, a sign of high skill level and commitment to the field.

But the journey along the way is rigorous and not to be taken lightly. That is why the AACD has developed a new online "dashboard"—the Accreditation module—to help members in the process (MIPs) by giving them a streamlined way to chart their progress (Fig 1).

The module makes MIPs' administrative part of the Accreditation process smoother so that they can focus on doing great dentistry, instead of paperwork. With the more technical aspects of the Accreditation process made easier through the module's tracking functions, the AACD hopes that more members will be encouraged to begin and complete their journey toward Accreditation (Fig 2).

The Accreditation process starts when an individual passes the Accreditation Written Examination. After passing the written exam, he or she has five years to complete the process. Dentists are required to submit and pass five case types; laboratory technicians are required to submit and pass three case types. After the cases are completed, the Accreditation candidate must pass an oral exam at the AACD's Executive Office in Madison, Wisconsin.

It is a badge of honor, a sign of high skill level and commitment to the field.



Figure 1: Dashboard of module upon login for a dentist in the process of Accreditation.



Figure 2: Example of a Case Type I progress check, indicating completed steps and those yet to be completed .

The module is available to AACD member dentists and laboratory technicians who are in the process of Accreditation, and it is also available to non-AACD members. AACD members log into the module through My AACD, the AACD's online member community.

With the module, users can easily determine where they are in the Accreditation process. They can see when they took and passed the written exam, when their five years comes to a conclusion, which cases they have submitted, and any remaining requirements left to fulfill. If they have not yet passed the written exam, they can register and pay for it through the module.

Upon logging into the module, the user will see three categories: Written Examination, Clinical Case Submissions, and Oral Examination (Fig 1). An overall progress bar is located at the top of the screen to let members know how far they have come and what steps remain in each category.

One of the module's biggest benefits is that it allows MIPs to submit their cases and other materials online.



Figure 3: Example of case images uploaded to the module, with file names and descriptions.

When a user hovers over the Written Examination, Clinical Case Submission, or Oral Examination categories with the mouse, they will see an explanation of each requirement and how the requirement must be fulfilled. For instance, the case submission category provides detailed information about how a user must submit case materials and what photo formats are required. When users click on the case types, they are provided with a printable guide explaining how the case will be judged by Accreditation Examiners.

One of the module's biggest benefits is that it allows MIPs to submit their cases and other materials online, significantly decreasing the amount of time normally needed to physically mail materials to the AACD Executive Office (Fig 3). It is a huge benefit for international members, who may normally have to schedule several days or weeks for their case submission materials to arrive at the AACD Executive Office on time. Instead

of dropping case submission materials in the mail, a user can simply upload files to the module. When a user has successfully uploaded images or other materials, they can see a progress bar showing that the task is 100% complete, and will receive an immediate confirmation.

Another helpful feature of the module is the deadline reminders. The module displays upcoming case submission deadlines, and any future events or reminders relevant to the Accreditation process. The reminders aim to keep MIPs on track to achieving their Accreditation goals.

While the clinical steps in actually achieving Accreditation have not become easier, the administrative work for MIPs is now greatly simplified thanks to the module. Members in the Accreditation process can rest easy, knowing that some of their tasks are just a "click" away.

// It is a huge benefit for international members, who may normally have to schedule several days or weeks for their case submission materials to arrive at the AACD Executive Office on time. //



Ms. Stronghart earned a Master's degree in journalism from the University of Wisconsin—Madison. She is a communication specialist at the AACD Executive Office in Madison.

Disclosure: The author did not report any disclosures.