

AN ACT TO REGULATE THE PRACTICE OF DENTISTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 417, June 18, 1949

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/de68c17947c9/>

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

ARTICLE I.—Title of Act

SECTION 1. Title of Act—This Act shall be known as the "Dental Law."

ARTICLE II.—Board of Dental Examiners

SEC. 2. Creation and composition of Board.—Within thirty days after the approval of this Act, a Board of Dental Examiners shall be created composed of three members, one of whom is designated as chairman, to be appointed by the Secretary of Health and possessing the qualifications prescribed in section four of this Act.

SEC. 3. Powers vested in Board.—The Board of Dental Examiners is vested with authority conformably with the provisions of this Act, to administer oaths, to issue, suspend, revoke, or reissue certificates of registration for the practice of dentistry subject to the approval of the Secretary of Health. The Board shall have the power to investigate violations of this Act and for this purpose it may, under the hand of its Chairman and seal of the Board, issue summons, subpoena or subpoena duces tecum to violators of this Act and witnesses thereof, and compel their attendance, and to inspect dental schools and other establishments to see if the laws relating to dentistry are being enforced, and to discharge such other duties as the Board may deem necessary for the maintenance of efficient ethical and technical standards of the dental profession in the Philippines for the well-being of the public and the safeguarding of life and health.

The Board shall exercise the powers conferred upon it by this Act, shall from time to time look into the conditions affecting the practice of dentistry in the Philippines, and whenever necessary, recommend or adopt such measures as may be deemed proper for the advancement of the profession and for the vigorous enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 4. Qualifications of Board members.—The members of the Board shall, at the time of his appointment:

- Be a citizen of the Philippines and actually a resident thereof;
- Be a holder of a degree of either Doctor of Dental Medicine or Doctor of Dental Surgery conferred by a reputable and legally constituted university, college, school, or institute;
- Be at least thirty years of age;
- Be a duly registered dentist in the Philippines;
- Have had at least five years' practice of the profession immediately prior to his appointment; and
- Not a member of the faculty of any school, college or university where any branch of dentistry is taught, nor shall have, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary interest in such institution.

SEC. 5. Term of office.—The members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three years after their

appointment or until their successors shall have been appointed and duly qualified. The members of the first Board appointed under this Act shall hold office for the following terms: One member for one year, one member for two years, and the other member for three years. Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired term only. Each member of the Board shall qualify by taking the proper oath of office prior to entering upon the performance of his duties.

SEC. 6. Executive officer and secretary of the Board.—The Commissioner of Civil Service shall be the executive officer of the Board and shall conduct the examinations given by it. The secretary of the Boards of Examiners appointed under Act Numbered Four thousand seven shall also be the secretary of the Board of Dental Examiners. All records and minutes of the deliberations of the Board, including examination papers, shall be kept by the Bureau of Civil Service under the direct custody of the secretary.

SEC. 7. Compensation of the Board.—The members of the Board shall each receive as compensation a fee not exceeding ten pesos per capita of the candidates examined.

SEC. 8. Removal of Board members.—The Secretary of Health may remove any member of the Board for continued neglect of duty or incompetency, for commission or toleration of irregularities in the examination, or for unprofessional or dishonorable conduct, after having given the member concerned an opportunity to defend himself in a proper administrative investigation.

SEC. 9. Rules and regulations.—The Board may, subject to the approval of the Secretary of Health, and with the advice and consent of the Commissioner of Civil Service, adopt such rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 10. Annual report.—The Board shall submit an annual report to the Secretary of Health after the close of each fiscal year giving a detailed account of the proceedings of the Board during the year and embodying such recommendations as the Board may desire to make.

ARTICLE III.—Examination and Registration of Dentists

SEC. 11. Inhibition against practice of dentistry.—Unless exempt from registration, no person shall practice or offer to practice dentistry in the Philippines as defined in this Act without holding a valid certificate of registration as dentist issued by the Board of Dental Examiners.

SEC. 12. Scope of practice of dentistry.—A person shall be regarded to be practicing dentistry or rendering dental service, within the meaning and intent of this Act, who shall, for a fee, salary, or other reward or compensation, paid to him or through another, or even without such reward or compensation, perform any operation or part of an operation upon the human mouth, teeth, jaws, and surrounding tissues; or treat oral diseases or lesions or correct malpositions of the teeth: Provided, however, That this provision shall not apply to artisans engaged in the mechanical construction of artificial dentures or other oral devices, so long as none of such procedures is done inside the mouth of the patient, or to students of dentistry undergoing practical training in any legally chartered dental school or college under the direction or supervision of a member of the faculty duly qualified to practice dentistry in the Philippines; or to duly qualified dental hygienists serving as dentists' assistants who may be allowed to perform oral prophylaxis and such other procedures which the law regulating the practice of dental hygienists may permit; nor shall this section be construed to interfere with the legitimate practice of physicians and surgeons undertaken in conformity with the provisions of the Medical Law.

SEC. 13. Holding of examination.—Examination for candidates desiring to practice dentistry in the Philippines shall be given by the Board on the second Tuesday of June and December of each year in Manila or at such other place as may be deemed necessary and expedient by the Board, subject to the approval of the Commissioner of

Civil Service and the Secretary of Health.

SEC. 14. Examination required.—Except as otherwise specifically allowed under the provisions of this Act, all applicants for registration for the practice of dentistry shall be required to undergo an examination as provided for in this Act.

SEC. 15. Qualifications for examination.—In order to be admitted to the dentist examinations, an applicant must, at the time of filing his application therefor, establish to the satisfaction of the Board that:

- He is a citizen of the Philippines;
- He is at least twenty-one years of age;
- He is of good moral character and reputation;
- He had finished a standard four-year high-school course or its equivalent in a school, institute, college or university legally established and duly recognized by the Government: Provided, however, That two years after the approval of this Act and thereafter, students shall present as a requisite for admission to the first year of the college of dentistry Dental Student's Entrance Certificate, to be issued by the secretary of the Board of Dental Examiners, upon the payment of a registration fee of two pesos and the submission of satisfactory credentials acceptable to the Board, as evidence of the fulfillment of the requirements concerning the two-year pre-dental course as herein required ;
- He has received a diploma as either doctor of dental surgery or doctor of dental medicine from an institution, college or university duly accredited and legally constituted in which the following branches are taught during four years in regular nine-month courses: anatomy, histology, physiology, bacteriology, chemistry, dental materials, materia medica and therapeutics, anesthesia, toxicology, physical diagnosis, radiography, general pathology, oral pathology, oral surgery, operative technic, operative clinic, prosthetic technic, prosthetic clinic, crown and bridgework, dental anatomy, comparative dental anatomy, orthodontics, dental protozoology, dental ceramics, hygiene and sanitation, dental jurisprudence, dental economics and ethics and applied psychology. The term "school" as herein used includes colleges and universities or other institutions of learning. In order for a school to be considered duly accredited and legally constituted, within the meaning of this section, it must be incorporated in the Philippines in accordance with the Corporation Law, must follow the four-year course as herein provided for and, after due inspection thereof, it is authorized in writing by the Secretary of Education to confer the degree of "Doctor of Dental Surgery" or "Doctor of Dental Medicine" and issue the corresponding diplomas or if not having adopted the equivalent courses of studies as above specified it is recognized as reputable by the proper authorities of the country wherein it is established; and
- That he has duly covered and attended all the courses offered by the dental school whence he has graduated, as shown by the schedule of classes which must be submitted every semester or quarter by every dental school two weeks after classes have begun, to the Office of the Director of Private Schools.

SEC. 16. Scope of examination.—The examination for the practice of dentistry in the Philippines shall consist of both written and performance tests, the scope of which shall be determined and prescribed by the Board taking into consideration the teaching plan of all the dental schools legally constituted in the Philippines. It shall be the duty of the Board to prepare the schedule of subjects of the theoretical and practical examinations and to submit the same to the Secretary of Health for approval and to publish the same as approved at least two months before the date of the examination wherein they are to be used. Any alteration or amendment that may be made in said schedule shall likewise be approved by the Secretary of Health.

SEC. 17. Report of ratings.—The Board of Dental Examiners shall, within sixty days after the examination, report the ratings obtained by each candidate to the Commissioner of Civil Service, who shall with his recommendation

submit such ratings to the Secretary of Health for approval.

SEC. 18. Issuance of certificates.—Certificates of registration as dentist shall, upon the recommendation of the Board, be issued to any applicant who, in the opinion of the Board and after approval of his ratings by the Secretary of Health and payment of the registration fee as provided for in this Act, has satisfactorily met all the requirements specified in this Act.

Every certificate of registration shall show the full name of the registrant, have a serial number, and be signed by the members of the Board, the Secretary of Health, and the Executive Officer of the Board and shall be authenticated by the official seal of the Department of Health.

The issuance of a certificate of registration by the Board to the registrant shall be evidence that the person named therein is entitled to all the rights and privileges of a registered dentist while said certificate remains unrevoked or unsuspended.

SEC. 19. Exemptions from registration.—Registration shall not be required of dental surgeons of the Armed Forces of any foreign country which is allowed by law to operate in the Philippines while on duty as such for the members of said Armed Forces, and of dentists or oral surgeons from other countries called in for consultation.

SEC. 20. Fees for examination and registration.—Every applicant for examination for the profession of dentist shall pay an examination fee of fifty pesos and for registration, a fee of ten pesos.

SEC. 21. Refusal to issue certificates in certain cases.— The Board of Dental Examiners shall refuse to issue a certificate of registration to any person convicted by a court of competent jurisdiction of any criminal offense involving moral turpitude, and to any person guilty of immoral or dishonorable conduct, or of unsound mind, or to persons suffering from communicable or contagious diseases. In the event of such refusal, the Board shall give to the applicant a written statement setting forth the reason or reasons for its action, which statement shall be incorporated in the records of the Board.

SEC. 22. Revocation and suspension of certificates.—The Board shall also have the power to revoke or suspend the validity of a certificate of registration of a dentist for any of the causes mentioned in the preceding section, or for unprofessional conduct, malpractice, incompetency, or serious ignorance or negligence in the practice of dentistry, willful destruction or mutilation of a natural tooth of a person with the deliberate purpose of substituting the same by an unnecessary or unessential artificial tooth, for making use of fraud, deceit, or false statements to obtain a certificate of registration; for habitual use of intoxicating liquors or drugs causing him to become incompetent to practice dentistry; for the employment of persons who are not duly authorized to do the work which under this Act can only be done by persons who have certificates of registration to practice dentistry in the Philippines; for the employment of deceit or any other fraud with the public in general or some clients in particular for the purpose of extending his clientele; for making false advertisements, publishing or circulating fraudulent or deceitful allegations regarding his professional attainment, skill, or knowledge, or the methods of treatment employed by him: Provided, however, That the action of the Board in the exercise of this power shall be appealable to the Secretary of Health whose decision shall be final.

SEC. 23. Reissue of revoked certificate and replacement of lost certificate.—The Board may, after the expiration of five years from the date of revocation of a certificate of registration, for reasons it may deem sufficient, entertain any person whose certificate has been revoked, in the same manner as application for an original certificate and in doing so it may, in its discretion, exempt the applicant from the necessity of undergoing another examination. A fee of ten pesos shall be charged for the issuance of a new certificate in place of another previously revoked.

A new certificate of registration to replace any certificate lost, destroyed or mutilated may be issued subject to the

rules of the Board and a charge of five pesos shall be made for such issuance.

ARTICLE IV.—Sundry Provisions Relative to the Practice of Dentistry

SEC. 24. Prohibitions in the practice of dentistry-Penal provisions.—Any person who shall practice dentistry in the Philippines as defined in this Act, without a certificate of registration issued in accordance with the provisions of this Act or has been declared exempt, or any person presenting or using as his own the certificate of registration of another, or any person who shall give any false or forged evidence to the Board in obtaining a certificate of registration, or any person who shall impersonate any registrant of like or different name, or any person who shall use a revoked or suspended certificate of registration, or any person who shall assume, use, or advertise as a bachelor of dental surgery, doctor of dental surgery, master of dental surgery, licentiate of dental surgery, doctor of dental medicine, or dental surgeon, or append to his name the letters B.D.S., D.D.S., M.D.S., L.D.S., or D.M.D., without having been conferred such title or degree in a legally constituted school, college, university, or board of examiners duly authorized to confer the same, or advertise any title or description tending to convey the impression that he is a dentist, without holding a valid certificate of registration from the Board, or any person who shall violate any provision of this Act, shall be guilty of misdemeanor and shall upon conviction, be sentenced to a fine of not less than one thousand pesos nor more than five thousand pesos or to suffer imprisonment for a period of not less than one year nor more than five years, or both, in the discretion of the court.

SEC. 25. Display of name and certificate of registration.— Every registered practicing dentist shall display in a conspicuous place in the house or office where he practices, his name and surname and he shall further display his certificate of registration and a certificate of health in his office in plain sight of patients occupying his dental chair. Any owner or proprietor of a dental office or establishment is also under obligation to display in conspicuous places in the office or establishment the names and surnames of each and every one of the persons practicing dentistry in said office or establishment and to display the certificates of registration of each and every one of such persons in the same manner as hereinbefore provided.

SEC. 26. Foreign reciprocity.—Except in the case of persons otherwise exempt under the provisions of this Act, no dentist who is a citizen of a foreign country shall be granted any of the rights or privileges under this Act, unless the country of which he is a subject or citizen permits dentists who are Filipino citizens to practice within its territorial limits on the same basis as the subjects or citizens of such country.

SEC. 27. Enforcement of the Act by officers of the law.— It shall be the duty of all duly constituted officers of the law of the National Government, or of any provincial, city or municipal government, to enforce the provisions of this Act and to prosecute any person violating the same. The Secretary of Justice shall act as the legal adviser of the Board and render such legal assistance as may be necessary in carrying out the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 28. Act not affecting other professions.—This Act shall not be construed to affect or prevent the practice of other legally established professions in the Philippines.

ARTICLE V.—Final Provisions

SEC. 29. The sum of two thousand pesos is hereby appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated to be disbursed by the Secretary of Health in accordance with the provisions of this Act. All sums collected in accordance with this Act shall be paid into the National Treasury as part of the general funds thereof.

SEC. 30. All laws, parts of the laws, orders, ordinances, or regulations in conflict with the provisions of this Act, as pertain to the practice of dentistry shall be, and are hereby repealed.

SEC. 31. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, June 18, 1949.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.