



Lynn Fitch
ATTORNEY GENERAL
OPINIONS AND POLICY

September 11, 2026

Denny Hydrick
Executive Director, Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners
715 S. Pear Orchard Road, Suite 200
Ridgeland, Mississippi 39157

Re: Universal Recognition of Occupational Licenses Act

Dear Mr. Hydrick:

The Office of the Attorney General has received your request for an official opinion.

Background

According to your request, applicants for Mississippi dental hygiene licensure under the Mississippi Dental Practice Act, Mississippi Code Annotated §§ 73-9-1, *et seq.*, must graduate from a CODA-accredited dental hygiene program, pass the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination, and pass a Board-approved clinical examination. In Alabama, there are two educational pathways to obtain a dental hygiene license. The first pathway is the traditional route, which requires graduation from a CODA-accredited program. However, in the second, the Alabama Dental Hygiene Program, the participants do not graduate from an accredited dental hygiene program, do not take a national dental hygiene board examination or equivalent, and do not meet the educational requirements for licensure established by the Mississippi Dental Practice Act. Miss. Code Ann. §§ 73-9-1, *et seq.*

Questions Presented

1. Does the Mississippi State Board of Dental Examiners (“Dental Board”) have any authority to analyze an applicant’s qualifications in determining whether the Alabama dental hygiene license qualifies as a similar scope of practice to a Mississippi dental hygiene license as required for licensure pursuant to Section 73-50-2, the Universal Recognition of Occupational Licenses Act (“UROLA”)?
2. Does the Dental Board have any authority, pursuant to Section 73-50-2(3)(b), to require that an applicant under UROLA meet the same educational and examination standards as those seeking initial licensure in Mississippi pursuant to Sections 73-9-23 and 24?

Brief Response

1. The Dental Board has the authority to make the factual determination of whether the UROLA licensing conditions have been met, including the “similar scope of practice” requirement in Section 73-50-2(3)(a).
2. Section 73-50-2(3)(b) requires that there be “minimum education requirements and, if applicable, work experience, examination and clinical supervision requirements in effect, and the other state verifies that the applicant met those requirements in order to be licensed *in that state*.” (emphasis added.) Thus, the Dental Board does not have the authority to require that an applicant under UROLA meet the same educational and examination standards as those seeking initial licensure in Mississippi pursuant to Section 73-9-23 and 24. However, if applicable, the Dental Board may require applicants to pass a jurisprudential examination pursuant to Section 73-50-2(5) prior to certification.

Applicable Law and Discussion

Under Mississippi law, a dental hygienist is defined as “an individual who has completed an accredited dental hygiene education program, passed the national dental hygiene board and is licensed by the State Board of Dental Examiners to provide, as an auxiliary to the dentist, preventive care services including, but not limited to, scaling and polishing.” Miss. Code Ann. § 73-9-5(1). However, the UROLA offers an alternate path to certification for eligible applicants and provides that “[n]otwithstanding any other provision of law, an occupational licensing board *shall* issue a license or government certification” if the applicant meets certain listed conditions. Miss. Code Ann. § 73-50-2(3) (emphasis added). Section 73-50-2(3) lists six conditions that must be met for an applicant who is licensed in another state to receive a Mississippi license:

- (a) The applicant holds a current and valid license in good standing in another state in an occupation with a similar scope of practice, as determined by the occupational licensing board in Mississippi, and has held this license from the occupational licensing board in the other state for at least one (1) year; and
- (b) There were minimum education requirements and, if applicable, work experience, examination and clinical supervision requirements in effect, and the other state verifies that the applicant met those requirements in order to be licensed in that state; and
- (c) The applicant has not committed any act in the other state that would have constituted grounds for refusal, suspension or revocation of a license to practice that occupation in Mississippi at the time the act was committed, and the applicant does not have a disqualifying criminal record as determined by the occupational licensing board in Mississippi under Mississippi law; and
- (d) The applicant did not surrender a license because of negligence or intentional misconduct related to the applicant's work in the occupation in another state; and

(e) The applicant does not have a complaint, allegation or investigation pending before an occupational licensing board or other board in another state that relates to unprofessional conduct or an alleged crime. If the applicant has a complaint, allegation or investigation pending, the occupational licensing board in Mississippi shall not issue or deny a license to the applicant until the complaint, allegation or investigation is resolved, or the applicant otherwise satisfies the criteria for licensure in Mississippi to the satisfaction of the occupational licensing board in Mississippi; and

(f) The applicant pays all applicable fees in Mississippi.

As shown, if an applicant meets all of the conditions for licensure under UROLA, the Dental Board does not have authority to require the applicant to also meet the educational and licensure qualifications for dental hygienists established by the Mississippi Dental Practice Act. This said, the Dental Board does maintain authority in making the factual determination of whether the UROLA licensing conditions have been met, including the “similar scope of practice” requirement in Section 73-50-2(3)(a). Additionally, if applicable, the Dental Board may require applicants to pass a jurisprudential examination pursuant to Section 73-50-2(5) prior to certification.

If this office may be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

LYNN FITCH, ATTORNEY GENERAL

By: */s/ Beebe Garrard*

Beebe Garrard
Special Assistant Attorney General