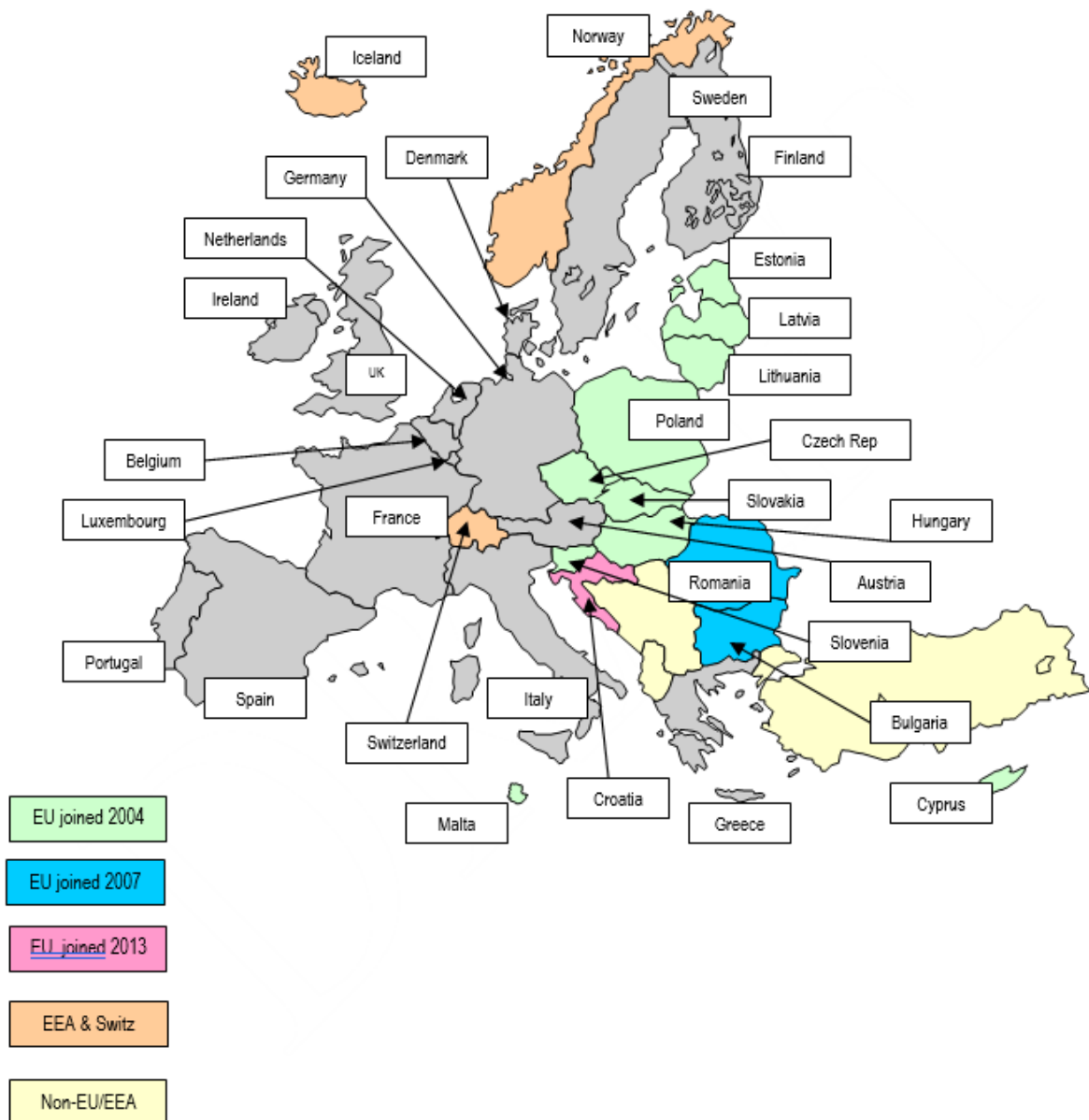


Council of European Dentists

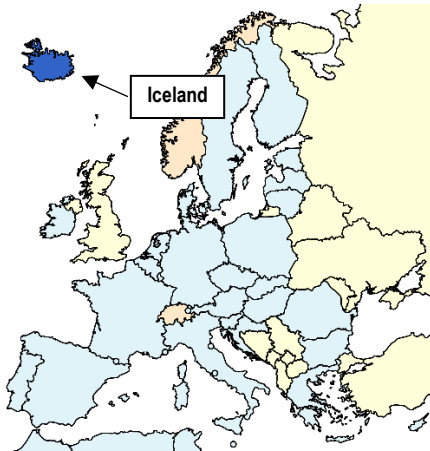
MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

Iceland





Iceland



In the EEA since	1994
Population (2025)	389,444
GDP PPP per capita (2024)	67 179
Currency	Icelandic Króna (ISK) 148,20 ISK = 1€
Official language	Icelandic
The Icelandic healthcare system is strongly centralised under the Ministry of Health. It is based on a universal health coverage model, with most healthcare services delivered within the public system and financed through general taxation. Healthcare services are generally subsidised by the state, with co-payments at the point of service; however subject to caps to limit out-of-pocket expenditure. Care is not entirely free at the point of delivery, including for accident and emergency services. Oral healthcare is not included in the general benefits package, except for children, pensioners, and individuals with chronic illnesses, serious diseases, or congenital conditions. Approximately 98% of dentists practise in private settings.	
Number of dentists (active)	325
(Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab)	83
Members of Dental Association	323
12 dental specialities are recognised in Iceland, with 100% of specialists trained overseas. CPD is mandatory by ethics. Dental auxiliaries are well established.	

Date of last revision: 23 January 2026

Government and healthcare in Iceland

260.363 people, representing over 64% of the total population, live in the greater Reykjavik area, the capital of Iceland, and the rest of the population live mostly near the coast.

Iceland is a democratic republic with a parliamentary system, governed by a President, with a ceremonial role, a prime minister and a unicameral Parliament, known as the Alþingi. The Alþingi is governed by 63 members, elected for a 4-year term. The country is divided into 7 districts, each responsible for the delivery of healthcare services at the local level.

Iceland follows a universal health coverage model, with all legal residents entitled to a package of health services through a universal health insurance system. Iceland uses a mix of public and private healthcare providers, with an integrated purchaser-provider model. The Government is therefore both the main buyer and owner of healthcare institutions and services, with a strong majority of public healthcare services managed by the State. The system is mainly funded through general taxation.

A majority of primary care services are operated by public healthcare centres, except for dental care, which remains primarily operated by private practices (99%). The share of private services has however seen a progressive rise overall, with 75% of private healthcare services covered by the public health insurance system (please see the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, 2023).

The Ministry of Health oversees policymaking and the execution of the health policy in Iceland. The Directorate of Health is the department under the Ministry of Health responsible for the supervision and regulation of healthcare services, as well as health promotion and the improvement of public health.

The Iceland Health (or *Sjúkratryggingar*) covers all residents (all people legally residing in Iceland for at least 6 months, with nationals from Nordic countries, EEA countries, the United

		Year	Source
% GDP spent on all healthcare	8,99%	2023	Statistics Iceland
% of this spent by government	84%	2025	OECD

Kingdom or Switzerland entitled to coverage from the obtention of a residency title).

Oral healthcare is not included under the national health insurance for the general adult population.

Dental care is covered only for [parts of the population](#), including children, adults with severe disabilities, diseases or accidents and for pensioners. Dental conditions as serious consequences of birth defects, diseases or accidents are covered up to 80% for adults, and up to 100% for conditions occurring before the age of 18 and treated between the ages of 18 and 30. In 2025, 75% of basic oral healthcare costs were covered under the healthcare system for pensioners over 67 and individuals with chronic disabilities. This includes general and regular check-ups and analyses, dental repairs, root fillings, periodontal care, extraction of teeth and dentures. The public health insurance also partly reimburses dentures for older people. This includes up to 75% costs for dentures and treatments carried out by dentists and dental technicians every six years, with regular maintenance.

Children up to 18 years old are entitled to free dental care. However, an annual attendance fee of 3.500 ISK (€24) applies. This includes general dentistry services such as examinations, analysis, x-rays, regular check-ups, dental repairs, root fillings, periodontal care and dental extraction. To obtain these services, children must however be registered with a family dentist.

The Icelandic healthcare system also emphasises on preventive care, with a range of public health initiatives aimed at promoting healthier lifestyles and preventing chronic conditions. These initiatives include anti-smoking campaigns, obesity prevention and mental health programs, especially towards young people.

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Education and Training

Iceland offers undergraduate dental studies, included a master's degree and the possibility to pursue in doctoral studies.

One dental school offers undergraduate dental studies, the University of Iceland, with the programme divided between the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Odontology. The undergraduate dental degree trains a limited number of 8 dentists for every promotion. There were 69 students across all promotions in 2025-2026.

Year of data	2025
Number of schools	1
Student intake	8
Number of graduates a year	8
Gender balance (% of female students)	85
Duration of studies	6

Dental studies in Iceland are divided into several steps: To access dental school, students must provide a certificate from the Icelandic matriculation examination (stúdentspróf), proving the completion of secondary school.

Admission to the first semester of dental studies is based on a competitive entrance exam organised in June. 40 students are then selected to start the first semester of studies. A second competitive exam is held at the end of the first semester of dental studies, with only 8 final students allowed to carry on with the undergraduate dental programme. Students must obtain a total of 360 ECTS credits.

Undergraduate dental studies last 6 years, with 3 years for the BS degree in Odontology and 3 years for the Cand. Odont. Qualification, leading to the possibility for the graduate student to register as a qualified dentist.

The dental programme under the Faculty of Odontology is therefore divided into two phases: pre-clinical training and clinical training.

A recent structural shift has faded out of the 6 year-system of Cand.Odont. in favour of a 3-year B.S programme (180 credits) and a 3-year Candidate programme (180 credits).

To study dentistry in Iceland, students must have a minimum proficiency of B2 level in Icelandic language, as the undergraduate dental degree is partly taught in Iceland and English. There is an annual student fee of ISK 75 000 (= €500) to study at the University of Iceland.

Graduate students can pursue a master's research programme through a MS degree in Odontology (120 credits), followed by a PhD programme in Dentistry (180 or 240 credits), with minimum grades required for admission.

Registration

Upon graduation, dentists must register with the Directorate of Health under the Ministry of Health, as competent authority, which delivers a license to practice.

A dentist seeking recognition in Iceland should, therefore, approach the Directorate of Health – with an application. If the

applicant is a national of an EU/EEA Member State, and holds a dental qualification awarded on completion of training in a Member State, he/she is eligible to apply. Dentist may submit an application through the following [link](#).

Fee for registration/licence to practice	12.000-73.600 ISK
Yearly membership fee - optional (Icelandic Dental Association)	201,480 ISK (= 1.360 EUR)

It is not legally mandatory for dentists to register with the Icelandic Dental Association (TFÍ) to obtain authorization to practice. However, as part of the registration process, dentists must provide proof of a mandate given to the Icelandic Dental Association to negotiate contracts on his behalf. If the dentist is not a member, he/she must sign a framework agreement for electronic communications and for carrying out dental care to children and elderly.

Vocational Training (VT)

There is no mandatory vocational training in Iceland for graduate dentists. Clinical training is integrated into undergraduate studies, including in the 6th year of studies.

Language requirements

Applicants for registering as an independent dentist must provide proof of proficiency in the Icelandic language, as well as knowledge of the Icelandic health legislation. No specific level is legally required, and dentist must not take a specific exam.

When an applicant for a licence to practise dentistry in Iceland does not have a licence from an EU/EEA country the Directorate of Health is obliged to consult the Faculty of Odontology of the University of Iceland for evaluation of the applicant's dental knowledge and competence.

If it is evident that the applicant's education does not meet the minimum standards required by Directive 2005/36/EC, with subsequent amendments, the Faculty of Odontology will recommend that the applicant take a standardised, written examination (the INBDE) and undergo an assessment of practical/clinical skills. Please contact the Directorate of Health for further information.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD is not legally mandatory, but only for dentists contracted under Iceland Health and is carried out by the Icelandic Dental Association (TFÍ). The association offers CPD programmes through seminars, lectures, international and national in-person events, online activities, the reading of peer-reviewed journals and scientific books and by carrying out research activities.

Following a contract established in 2013 between the Iceland Health and the Icelandic Dental Association for the dental treatment for children under the age of 18 years old, contracted dentists are obliged to fulfil a minimum of 75 hrs of CPD every three years. This requirement was maintained in the dental care contract that entered into force in 2024 and is an obligation for dental treatments carried out to 3 categories of the population, including treatment for pensioners (since 2018), for adults with severe disabilities, diseases or accidents (since 2019), and children (since 2024).

The name of the continuing education project is “Active Continuing Education for Icelandic Dentists” (ACEID), and a Professional Committee is appointed to oversee the continuing education system. Dentists presenting confirmation of having attended courses, congresses and lectures recognised by the ACEID board acquire points for accumulation of units within ACEID.

Specialist Training Requirements

Students may specialise in a specific topic as general dentists, by carrying out a [master's programme](#) offered by the University of Iceland. This programme is aimed at carrying out research in dentistry by continuing in doctoral studies.

However, for graduates interested in obtaining the title of a dental specialist, students must carry out specialisation training outside of Iceland.

Iceland officially recognised and delivers licences to practice for 12 dental specialties. Recognised specialties include:

- Orthodontics
- Endodontics
- Paediatric Dentistry
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Oral Radiology
- Oral Surgery
- Dental Public Health
- Operative Dentistry
- Occlusion Dentistry
- Oral Medicine
- Geriatric Dentistry.

The Faculty of Odontology offers postgraduate training at master's and doctoral level, but it has no clinical specialist training programmes. Specialist training courses are only available at universities outside Iceland.

To get a specialist licence from the Directorate of Health, training must be at least 3 years at an approved institution, by the University of Iceland and the Directorate of Health.

Workforce

Dentists

Iceland has a small but steadily growing dental workforce, shaped by the country's limited training capacity of 8 dentists per year and a reliance on foreign-qualified dentists, including from EU and EEA countries.

The number of dentists has seen a recent increase in the past decade, going from 269 dentists in active practice in 2012 to 325 dentists in active practice in 2025. 50% of new dentists in Iceland are foreign-trained.

Year of data	2025
Total Registered	505
In active practice	325
Dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhab)*	83
Percentage female*	53%
Foreign-trained dentists	19%
*Active dentists only	

About 75% of practising dentists live, and work, in the Greater Reykjavík area. 99% of dentists in Iceland practice in the private sector.

The number of registered dentists includes all dentists alive who have, at some time or another, been registered as dentists. They may be retired or not working as dentists.

The Directorate of Health is the competent authority responsible for carrying out quality oversight of dental practices and oral healthcare. This authority follows, for example, national public health indicators for filled teeth (FT) to determine the quality and impact of dental care services for children.

Movement of dentists across borders

Many Icelandic-trained dentists choose to work abroad, particularly in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and other European countries, while some foreign-trained dentists are registered but do not practise in Iceland.

Specialists

100% of dental specialists qualify overseas, in EU or EEA countries, as well as the United States.

Twelve specialties are recognized in dentistry in Iceland (listed below). All specialists work in private practice, although some do part-time work at the dental school and at the National Hospital. Additionally, Oral Maxillofacial Surgery is also recognised as a medical speciality.

Year of data	2025
Oral Surgeons	NA
Orthodontists	15
Endodontists	3
OMFS (medical specialty)	6
Paediatric Dentists	5
Periodontologists	4
Prosthodontists	6
Dental Public Health Specialists	3
Oral Medicine	1
Oral Radiologists	1
Operative Dentists	4
Occlusion Specialists	1

Geriatric Dentists	1
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Patients may go directly to a specialist, without the need for a referral from a primary dentist.

Auxiliaries

Three categories of dental auxiliaries are recognised in Iceland, including technicians, chairside assistants and hygienists. All dental auxiliaries must register with the Directorate of Health and be granted a licence to practice.

Year of data	2025
Technicians	123
Chairside assistants	386
Hygienists	45
(15 active hygienists)	

Dental Technicians

Dental technicians are responsible for constructing dental prosthetics and orthodontic appliances based on dentists' prescriptions.

Dental technicians carry-out a [3-year B.Sc. degree program](#) in Dental Technology at the University of Iceland, with competitive entrance exams at the end of the first semester. Only 5 places are available a year. Practical training is carried out through industry placements either in Iceland or abroad.

They have to obtain a licence by registering under the Directorate of Health. Dental technicians are usually self-employed, working in their own laboratories or workshops, without supervision.

Clinical dental technicians are the only professionals allow to take dental impression on patients. However, in 2025, the number of clinical dental technicians only amounted to 2.

Dental Chairside Assistants

Dental chairside assistants must carry out 3 years of study and obtain a licence from the Directorate of Health, before practicing. This includes four academic semesters carried out in an upper secondary school, followed by two semesters of workplace training with some academic involvement at the Faculty of Odontology of the University of Iceland.

Dental assistants assist the dentist in daily tasks, including booking patients, sterilisation of equipment, assistance with clinical work. They usually practice in dental clinics, health institutions, pedagogical and educational institutions.

Dental Hygienists

There is no training programme available for dental hygienists in Iceland. Most hygienists complete a three-year programme at universities in the Scandinavian countries. The Directorate of Health decides which foreign diplomas are recognised and grants licences to dental hygienists to practise. Dental hygienists may administer local anaesthetics, provided this is included as part of their education, as is the case for those trained in Scandinavia. Dental hygienists bear their own legal responsibility for their work. They must, however, practise under the supervision of a dentist.

Most Icelandic hygienists are members of the Association of Dental Hygienists. They are paid by salaries or fees. They must register and obtain a licence from the Directorate of Health.

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

National dental association and information centre	
Tannlæknafélag Islands - Icelandic Dental Association Síðumúli 35 108 Reykjavík Iceland Tel: +354 57 50 500 Email: tannsi@tannsi.is Website: http://www.tannsi.is	Other dental associations <i>These affiliated associations can be contacted through the Icelandic Dental Association.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society of Specialists • Icelandic Society of Paediatric Dentistry • Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons • Icelandic Orthodontic Society • Society of Forensic Odontology • Society for Oral Health of People with Special Needs • Young Dentists' Association • Northern Iceland Dental Association

Competent authorities

Ministry of Health <i>(Heilbrigðisráðuneytið)</i> Skúlagötu 4 101 Reykjavík Iceland Phone: +354 545 8700 Email: hmn@hmn.is Website: https://www.government.is/ministries/ministry-of-health/	Directorate of Health <i>(Embætti landlæknis - Grants licences to practice for healthcare professionals)</i> Katrínartún 2 105 Reykjavík Kt. 710169-5009 Iceland Phone: + 354 510 1900 Email: mottaka@landlaeknir.is Website: https://island.is/en/o/directorate-of-health
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Main Professional Journal The Icelandic Dental Journal The Icelandic Dental Journal, by the Icelandic Dental Association Email: ritstjorn@tannsi.is Information can be found at: https://tannlaeknabladid.is/
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Dental Schools:

University of Iceland - Faculty of Odontology University of Iceland Faculty of Odontology Office Læknagarður, 2nd floor Sæmundargata 2 102 Reykjavík Iceland Tel: + 354 525 4895 Email: odontology@hi.is Website: https://english.hi.is/about-ui/schools-and-faculties/school-health-sciences/faculty-odontology Dentists graduating each year (on average): 8 Number of students (2025-2026): 69
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