

— THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF DENTISTS TARTAN —

A WOVEN IDENTITY IN COLOR AND SYMBOL

Tartan is far more than a decorative “plaid.” Properly understood, it is a structured textile design created by weaving bands of colored yarn in the warp and weft so that every stripe crosses every other stripe, producing both pure color blocks and subtle intermediate tones where colors intersect. Over centuries, tartan has become a recognized way to carry identity—first for communities and regions, and now for institutions and associations that wish to express their purpose in a visible, enduring form.

That is precisely why a tartan is appropriate for the American College of Dentists (ACD). The College is a fellowship—earned, conferred, and then lived out through service. A tartan gives that fellowship a shared visual language: something that can be worn at convocations and gatherings, displayed in fabric, accessories, and gifts, and immediately recognized as “ours.” In an era of rapidly changing logos and brand palettes, tartan functions as a dignified, heritage-style emblem—distinctive, memorable, and deeply collegial.

WHY THESE COLORS BELONG TO THE ACD

The ACD’s official colors are lilac and American rose—a pairing with deep dental meaning and long College history. Lilac is not simply attractive; it is historically tied to dentistry itself. In academic and professional tradition, lilac was established as dentistry’s color in the late nineteenth century and remains closely associated with dentistry’s identity and emblematic use. American rose, paired with lilac, gives warmth and distinction—an honorific palette that reads immediately as ceremonial.

To ground those signature colors, the tartan is set against a rich field of Old Glory Blue, with Old Glory Red and white introduced as crisp, clarifying accents. Together, these elements deliberately echo the Stars and Stripes of the American flag—appropriate for a national honor society whose Fellows serve across the country and represent dentistry at its best.

STRUCTURE, MEANING, AND THE ACD’S OWN ARCHITECTURE

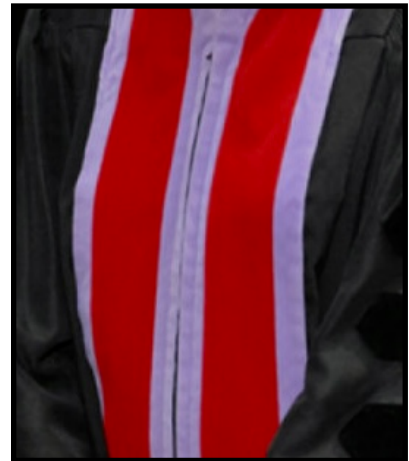
The ACD is organized into eight Regencies, which provide geographic leadership and fellowship structure across the United States. The College also speaks of its four pillars—named explicitly in ACD materials as ethics, professionalism, leadership, and excellence.

In the tartan, that dual structure—four and eight—appears in a deliberately symbolic feature: a red/white/red/white zone rendered in houndstooth, with an overall 4-by-4 houndstooth thread structure. This accomplishes several things at once:

- It is a clear visual nod to the flag’s striping (red and white).
- It quietly encodes the College’s “4 and 8” governance and fellowship architecture (pillars and Regencies).
- It introduces houndstooth as an intentional dental metaphor: a pattern of “teeth” within the cloth—subtle, intelligent, and profession-specific.

THE CONVOCAION SASH, WOVEN INTO THE SETT

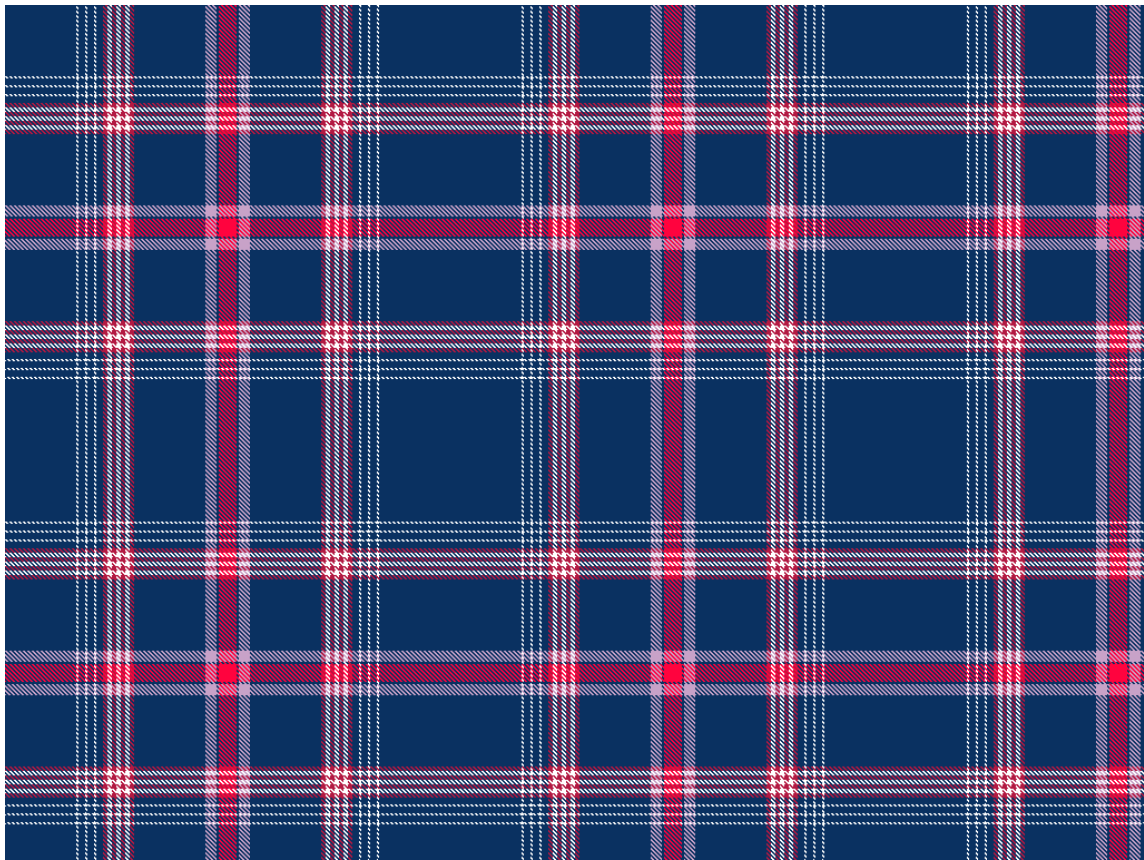
Finally, the lilac/rose/lilac section was designed to reference one of the most meaningful moments in the life of a Fellow: convocation. Each of the two lilac stripes is made up of 10 threads adding up to 20 in total, signifying the year 1920, when the ACD was founded. The colors mirror the look and spirit of the ACD convocation sashes—those distinctive bands of color worn as dentistry’s leaders are welcomed into fellowship and recommit themselves to the College’s ideals. This portion of the tartan is meant to feel ceremonial at first glance: lighter, brighter, and immediately associated with honor, membership, and occasion.



A TARTAN THAT BUILDS BELONGING—AND VISIBILITY

A good tartan is both beautiful and usable. It should read well at a distance, reward closer attention, and remain dignified across products—from neckwear and scarves to banners and apparel. It also serves a practical purpose: when Fellows wear it, the College becomes more visible. It sparks conversation, invites questions, and—importantly—creates a quiet but real sense of camaraderie: a reminder that each Fellow stands not alone, but within a community shaped by shared standards and shared service.

This ACD tartan was designed to be unmistakably American, unmistakably dental, and unmistakably ACD—uniting the College’s historic colors with national symbolism, and weaving its pillars, Regencies, and ceremonial life into a single, coherent sett.



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