



College of Alberta
Dental Assistants

Program Approval Policies

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Background Information

The College of Alberta Dental Assistants (the College) was proclaimed under the *Health Professions Act* (the Act) on January 1, 2006. In accordance with the Act, the College has the authority to approve dental assisting programs and education courses in Alberta¹.

In 2003 the College's Program Approval Task Force (the Task Force) was established. The mandate of the Task Force was to develop and recommend to the College a comprehensive plan to approve all educational programs for dental assisting in Alberta. The Task Force reviewed all available and necessary materials to make recommendations.

The composition of the Task Force included a College Councillor to serve as Chairperson, representatives from each existing dental assisting program in Alberta, the School Committee Liaison representative to Council, and the Canadian Dental Assistants' Association representative to Council. The Executive Director and Registrar were also members.

In March 2006, Council approved the Task Force's recommendations. In the spring of 2006, work to develop the policies that would define program approval based on the approved recommendations began. In November 2006 the Program Approval Policies were approved by Council, and came into effect.

Overview

Council approves the program approval policies. Council delegates program approval-related tasks to its appointed Registration Committee to support and enhance the work of Council.

Note: This is a dynamic document, and is subject to change by the College without notice.

Pre-requisites for entry to a dental assisting program and evaluation criteria are set by the school offering the program. The schools are responsible to ensure that pre-requisites are reasonable to promote student success and to support the scope of the profession.

The College participates in all Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) site visits to programs in Alberta. It also supports the CDAC through an annual grant.

The College sends an observer to all National Dental Assisting Examining Board (NDAEB) Clinical Practice Evaluation sessions in Alberta. It also holds a director seat on the NDAEB board.

¹ Health Professions Act (2000), s.3(1)(f)

Program Approval

PAP1 Approval of Programs

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Policy Type: Program Approval | Policy Number: PAP1 |
| Approval Date: November 29, 2014 | Scheduled Review: September |
| Revised Date(s): | |

Policy Statement

The College approves Alberta dental assisting programs and education courses for the purposes of registration requirements² through a Council motion.

Indicators

- (1) Council may:
 - (a) prescribe Provisionally Approved Program status or Approved Program status; and,
 - (b) utilize recognized third-party organizations to assist with the administration of its program approval processes.

² Health Professions Act (2000), s.3(1)(f)

Program Approval

PAP2 Provisionally Approved Program Status

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Policy Type: Program Approval | Policy Number: PAP2 |
| Approval Date: November 29, 2014 | Scheduled Review: September |
| Revised Date(s): | |

Policy Statement

Provisionally Approved Program status may be granted to a proposed dental assisting program in Alberta that is in the process of meeting the requirements for Approved Program status.

Indicators

- (1) Council may consider provisional approval of a new dental assisting program in Alberta when:
 - (a) a complete proposal with supporting documentation is submitted; and,
 - (b) the Registrar has reviewed the proposal and deemed it as meeting the requirements as determined and described by Council below.

The Proposal

- (2) The proposal will be in writing and include:
 - (a) A letter of intent. It will identify the nature of the request; institution name; contact information of the institution and contact person regarding the proposal; the proposed program name; the proposed start date of the first cohort of students; and information about any existing program that this proposed program may be replacing.
 - (b) A copy of the proposed program mission statement and program outcomes. The two must be aligned and mutually supportive.
 - (c) An entire copy of the proposed program curriculum. It should include course outlines with name, description, outcomes, pre/co-requisites, course hours, delivery method, evaluation procedures, and completion requirements.
 - (d) An explanation of how the curriculum adequately covers the current College-authorized, entry-to-practice intraoral skills including foundational knowledge to support the skills, as well as current infection prevention and control standards, the fundamental principles of dental assisting, chair side assisting and laboratory and administrative skills.
 - (e) A description of how the proposed program will ensure students are provided with appropriate learning experiences to demonstrate students completing the program are competent and safe to practice, at minimum, the current Alberta entry-to-practice intraoral skills.
 - (f) A description of the proposed program student evaluations.
 - (g) The length of the proposed program (weeks and hours) including total student clinic instruction time, theory instruction time and practicum time. Provide a draft time table and course delivery schedule.
 - (h) The proposed program faculty to student ratios for theory instruction and clinical instruction.

- (i) Maximum enrolment number at the time of implementation and maximum enrolment number following the initial cohort. Include the number of student intakes each calendar year.
- (j) The criteria for admission and a description of the admissions process.
- (k) A description of the organizational structure for the administration and operation of the proposed program.
- (l) A description of the required qualifications of program faculty. Dental assistants employed as faculty in the program must hold registration with the College and should have completed or be pursuing formal training in education/facilitation methods.
- (m) A description of how the proposed program will ensure student access and availability to practicum offices for similar clinical learning experiences.
- (n) An outline of the proposed program's physical resources (i.e. theory and clinic space, student change rooms, patient waiting area, washrooms).
- (o) A description of the operations of the clinic including patient management; clinical care; clinic administration.
- (p) An outline of the health and safety provisions and patient care and quality assurance protocols.
- (q) A copy of the proposed program or parent institute's policies that identify and address student concerns.
- (r) A copy of the proposed program advisory committee terms of reference.
- (s) Verification that the proposed program graduates will be eligible to sit the NDAEB written examination.
- (t) A statement that the institution is aware the proposed program must apply for accreditation with the CDAC as soon as it is permitted to do so as per CDAC policy.
- (u) A statement that the institution is aware that programs holding a College program approval status must attend and participate in an annual "dental assisting program" meeting hosted by the College and that the program is required to provide an annual program report³.
- (v) A statement that the institution is aware that prior to accepting enrolment into the proposed program it must provide the College with confirmation that the program is recognized by the appropriate Ministry of Education branch in Alberta.
- (w) A statement that the institution is aware they must clearly identify to applicants that graduates of their program are required to successfully complete the NDAEB clinical practice evaluation to be eligible for registration with the College.

Process

- (3) The Registrar receives the proposal.
- (4) The Registrar through consultation with the Registration Committee will confirm that the proposal meets the proposal requirements as set by Council.
- (5) The Registrar will invite the program representative to present to Council.
- (6) The Council will consider the Registrar's recommendation.

³ Appendix: Annual Program Report Template

- (7) The Council will consult with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education and consider the comments from those Ministers⁴.
- (8) The Council will make its final decision for provisional program approval.
- (9) The Registrar will notify the program representative of the Council's decision.
- (10) Provisionally Approved Programs must:
 - (a) Be recognized by the appropriate branch of the Ministry of Education in Alberta prior to accepting enrolment in the program. Provide the College with confirmation.
 - (b) Submit a progress report with evidence of meeting outstanding requirements to the College registrar at least every six months.
 - (c) Apply to the College for approval of any major proposed changes with respect to curriculum content (i.e. additions/deletions), program delivery, prerequisites for entry to the program, faculty to student ratios, enrolment numbers and program length.
 - (d) Achieve CDAC accreditation status within three years following the date Provisionally Approved Program status was granted. Provide the College with confirmation of status.

⁴ Health Professions Act (2000), s.132.1

Program Approval PAP3 Approved Program Status

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Policy Type: Program Approval | Policy Number: PAP3 |
| Approval Date: November 29, 2014 | Scheduled Review: September |
| Revised Date(s): | |

Policy Statement

Approved Program status may be granted to an Alberta dental assisting program that has met the requirements as determined by Council.

Indicators

- (1) Council may consider approved status of an Alberta dental assisting program when the dental assisting program meets the requirements as determined and described by Council below.
- (2) Approved Programs must:
 - (a) achieve and maintain accreditation with the CDAC;
 - (b) provide the College with a completed Annual Program Report⁵;
 - (c) attend and participate in the annual “dental assisting program” meeting hosted by the College;
 - (d) maintain approval by the appropriate branch of the Ministry of Education in Alberta;
 - (e) obtain written approval from the College to offer intraoral continuing education courses which result in the consideration of addition to scope of practice; and,
 - (f) apply to the College for approval of any major proposed changes with respect to curriculum content (i.e. additions/deletions), program delivery, prerequisites for entry to the program, faculty to student ratios, enrolment numbers and program length.

⁵ Appendix: Annual Program Report Template

Program Approval

PAP4 Removal of Approved Status

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Policy Type: Program Approval | Policy Number: PAP4 |
| Approval Date: November 29, 2014 | Scheduled Review: September |
| Revised Date(s): Nov 25, 2017 | |

Policy Statement

The College may remove the approval of an Alberta dental assisting program or education course for the purposes of registration requirements⁶ through a Council motion.

Indicators

- (1) Council may consider removing approval of a dental assisting program for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to:
 - (a) the College is provided with notice of closure;
 - (b) the program fails to meet or maintain program approval requirements;
 - (c) the program fails to provide evidence of progress towards meeting outstanding requirements; or,
 - (d) a concern is raised regarding the safety of students and or patients.

Process

- (2) Notice of closure.
 - (a) The College receives notice of closure.
 - (b) The Registrar confirms the closure or pending closure.
 - (c) The Registrar notifies the Council.
- (3) Program fails to meet or maintain approval requirements.
 - (a) The Registrar identifies a gap in requirements.
 - (b) The Registrar will serve notice of remedial process to the program.
 - (c) Failure to meet the remedies will result in notice of recommendation to Council for removal of program approval status.
 - (d) The Council will consider the Registrar's recommendation.
 - (e) The Council will consult with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education and consider the comments from those Ministers⁷.
 - (f) The Council will make the final decision for removal of program approval.
 - (g) The Registrar will notify the program representative of the Council's decision.

⁶ Health Professions Act (2000), s.3(1)(f)

⁷ Health Professions Act (2000), s.132.1

- (4) Concerns regarding a program.
 - (a) The Registrar receives the concern in writing.
 - (b) The Registrar will contact the program representative to discuss the concern.
 - (c) The program will have the opportunity to present their position.
 - (d) The Registrar and the program representative will determine remedial steps and timeframes for compliance.
 - (e) The program representative will report to the Registrar as requested on compliance.
 - (f) The Registrar will report to Council and receive Council feedback.
 - (g) The Registrar, considering Council feedback, will determine any further steps.
 - (h) Failure to meet the remedies will result in notice of a recommendation to Council for removal of program approval.
 - (i) The Council will consult with the Minister of Health and the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education and consider the comments from those Ministers⁸.
 - (j) The Council will make the final decision for removal of program approval.
 - (k) The Registrar will notify the program representative of the Council's decision.
- (5) Graduates of programs whose approval is removed may be deemed ineligible for registration.

⁸ Health Professions Act (2000), s.132.1

Post-Graduate Course Approval

PAP5 Approval of Orthodontic Education Courses

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|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Policy Type: Program Approval | Policy Number: PAP5 |
| Approval Date: May 27, 2018 | Scheduled Review: |
| Revised Date(s): December 20, 2018 | |

Policy Statement

Educational courses designed to produce at minimum entry-level competency in the performance of orthodontic procedures will be considered for College Council-approved course status if the educational courses or program meets the College's theoretical and clinical criteria and requirements as identified in the *Approval of Orthodontic Education Courses Policy*.

Theoretical Course Content

- (1) The theoretical component of the course or program must include at minimum the following content:
 - (a) orthodontic terminology
 - (b) classifications of malocclusion
 - (c) common etiologies of malocclusion
 - (d) goals of orthodontics and indications for treatment
 - (e) indications for orthodontic treatment
 - (f) treatment mechanics:
 - (i) mechanics of orthodontic /orthopaedic/surgical movement
 - (ii) general mechanics of appliance action
 - (iii) fixed appliances and their mechanics of action
 - (iv) band and bond structure
 - (v) properties of archwires
 - (vi) removable appliances and their mechanics of action
 - (g) diagnostic records:
 - (i) orthodontic evaluation
 - (ii) photographs
 - (iii) radiographs
 - (iv) orthodontic impression taking
 - (v) centric occlusion wax bite
 - (vi) model trimming
 - (vii) bitefork and facebow registration
 - (viii) mounting articulated models

- (h) clinical procedures:
 - (i) separation
 - (ii) banding and debanding
 - (iii) bonding and debonding
 - (iv) archwires
 - (v) ligatures
 - (vi) self-ligating brackets
 - (vii) power products and accessories
 - (viii) checking appliance integrity and initial fit of appliances including:
 1. determining the preliminary fit of removable appliances prior to final fitting and/or adjustment by a dentist
 2. determining the preliminary fit of bands prior to final fitting and/or cementation by a dentist
 3. determining the preliminary fit of fixed appliances prior to adjustment and cementation by a dentist
- (i) patient instruction:
 - (i) the care and use of orthodontic appliances
 - (ii) oral hygiene and disease control
 - (iii) elastic placement
 - (iv) proper eating habits and patient cooperation
 - (v) orthodontic emergencies

Pre-clinical and Clinical Course Content

- (2) The pre-clinical and clinical components of the course or program must include at minimum the following content:
 - (a) patient placement for exposure of extra-oral radiographs such as hand/wrist and cephalometric images
 - (b) obtaining intra-oral and extra-oral photographs
 - (c) place and remove separators
 - (d) determine the preliminary fit of removable appliances prior to final fitting and/or adjustment by a dentist
 - (e) select and fit orthodontic bands to determine the preliminary fit of bands prior to final fitting by a dentist
 - (f) place and remove oral isolation devices in preparation for cementing and bonding procedures
 - (g) preparation of the teeth for banding and bonding procedures
 - (h) manipulation and application of materials for bonding and banding procedures
 - (i) cement orthodontic bands
 - (j) place and bond orthodontic brackets and bondable attachments
 - (k) remove excess banding cement and bonding adhesive with hand (or ultrasonic, if authorized) instruments and or slow speed rotary handpiece
 - (l) checking integrity of bands, bonds, attachments, etc.

- (m) place, ligate and remove archwires which have been formed by a dentist
 - (i) using individual or chain elastomeric ligatures, wire ligature ties (separate and continuous) and self-ligation mechanisms;
 - (ii) trim and or bend distal ends of archwires
- (n) remove bands, brackets and bondable attachments with hand instruments
- (o) provide patient instruction regarding:
 - (i) the care and use of orthodontic appliances
 - (ii) oral hygiene and disease control
 - (iii) elastic placement
 - (iv) proper eating habits and patient cooperation
 - (v) orthodontic emergencies
- (p) apply non-medicinal material such as wax or lip bumper to reduce irritating orthodontic components
- (q) determine the preliminary fit of fixed appliances prior to adjustment and cementation by a dentist or dental assistant

Additional Course Requirements

- (3) For entrance to an orthodontic education course, the course provider must seek evidence from the course applicant to demonstrate they hold current registration with authorization to perform the entry-to-practice skills.
- (4) There must be evidence that students receive sufficient experiences in both the pre-clinical and clinical settings to attain competence. The clinical session must be a minimum of 24 hours including instruction, practice, and evaluation.
- (5) The orthodontic course must be delivered as a component of an accredited dental assisting program or as a continuing education course delivered by:
 - (a) an accredited faculty of dentistry;
 - (b) an accredited dental assisting program; or
 - (c) an accredited dental hygiene program.
- (6) The orthodontic program must be taught by oral health practitioners who are registered/licensed/certified and authorized to provide orthodontic procedures in the jurisdiction where they hold registration/licensure/certification. In accordance with the *Health Professions Act*, persons teaching clinical courses in Alberta must be registered with the appropriate Alberta regulatory authority (e.g. CADA, ADA+C, CRDHA).
- (7) The orthodontic program must be held in a properly equipped dental environment which will permit the students to use the techniques being taught to achieve an acceptable entry-level of competence for the performance of orthodontic procedures.
- (8) There must be evidence of appropriate evaluation in both the theory (written examination) and clinical components to ensure students have learned the necessary material and can perform these orthodontic procedures to clinical competency.
- (9) The facilitator to student ratio for clinical course components should be one facilitator to six students at the most.

- (10) Course providers must issue students with evidence of successful completion of the orthodontic course (e.g. transcript from dental assistant program, certificate of completion from continuing education course). A dental assistant will only be considered a graduate of an orthodontic program education upon successful completion of both the theoretical and clinical aspects of the program.

Application for Orthodontic Education Course Approval

- (11) The Council will consider Orthodontic Education Course Approval status upon application. Educational institutions in Alberta who offer an orthodontic educational course that meets the criteria set out in the College's *Approval of Orthodontic Education Courses Policy* must apply for course approval.
- (12) The Council will consider course approval when a complete application with supporting documentation is submitted and the Registrar has deemed it as meeting the requirements.
- (a) Documentation to be submitted to the Registrar:
 - (i) completed application;
 - (ii) detailed course information, including copies of course outlines, timetables, course syllabus, and course workbooks or manuals;
 - (iii) a description of the teaching methods, learning activities and evaluation criteria;
 - (iv) evidence that the faculty who will be teaching the program are authorized to provide orthodontic procedures;
 - (v) a description of the equipment, instruments and material available to the support the course and current orthodontic practice; and
 - (vi) a description of facilitator to student ratio for clinical course components.
 - (b) Processing of applications
 - (i) Each application for approval will be reviewed on an individual basis.
 - (ii) The Registrar may request additional information and or evidence in order to determine whether the submission meets the requirements.
 - (iii) If the Registrar is satisfied that the applicant has met the requirements, a recommendation will be made to the Council for their next scheduled meeting.
 - (iv) If the Registrar is not satisfied that the applicant has met the requirements, the applicant will be notified of deficiencies and offered the opportunity to submit further information or evidence.
 - (v) Review and approval of submissions may take up to 12 weeks. If the application and information provided is incomplete or additional information or evidence is required, the process may take longer.

College Council-Approved Orthodontic Courses

- (13) Orthodontic courses delivered as a component of an accredited dental assisting or dental hygiene program or as a continuing education course by the following educational institutions with an accredited education program are considered College Council-Approved:
- (a) Columbia College Orthodontic Module, approved December 20, 2018

- (14) To maintain College Council-Approved orthodontic course status, the course must:
- (a) provide the College with reporting, on request;
 - (b) permit the College to observe clinical sessions, on request; and,
 - (c) before making any significant changes with respect to curriculum content or program length, the approved orthodontic course or program must consult with the College and consider its comments.

Definitions

- (15) For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:
- (a) “Accredited” means accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada.
 - (b) “Appliance” means any temporary, provisional, or long-term fixed or removable device designed to influence the shape and/or function of the stomatognathic system.
 - (c) “Orthodontic appliance” means any device used to influence the growth or the position of teeth and jaws (e.g. holding arches, bands, headgear, activator, bionator, palatal expansion device, etc.).
 - (d) “Periodontal appliance” means any device used to immobilize and stabilize loose teeth (e.g. splint); reduce occlusal trauma caused by bruxism (e.g. nightguard) or treat TMJ disorders.
 - (e) “Preliminary fit” means the initial try-in or placement of an appliance prior to final fitting and/or adjustment by a regulated member of the Alberta Dental Association and College.

Appendix
Annual Program Report Template
November 2016

| Reporting Requirement | Program Response |
|---|-------------------------|
| State the educational institution and program name. | |
| State the name and contact details of the key program contact person. | |
| State the reporting year. | |
| State the program's current Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada accreditation status. | |
| State the current program theory, clinical and practicum hours. | |
| Describe the current faculty complement. | |
| Describe the current program admission requirements. | |
| State the number of program graduates during reporting year. | |
| Identify and describe any substantial changes during reporting year to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curriculum • how students are prepared or evaluated for practice • clinic operations • other i.e. facilities, learning resources | |
| Provide NDAEB statistics for the reporting year. | |
| Identify and describe any anticipated substantial changes for the upcoming reporting year to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curriculum • how students are prepared or evaluated for practice • clinic operations • other i.e. facilities, learning resources | |
| Identify the number of program intakes planned for the current reporting cycle (include dates). | |
| State the maximum number of students enrolled per intake. | |
| Provide any additional comments and / or information. | |