



College of Alberta
Dental Assistants

Continuing Competence Program Policies

**Approved by Council
November 3, 2006**

**Revised
September 20, 2013**

The *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation* provides the basis by which the Continuing Competence Program (CCP) must operate.

The following policies were developed to complement the *Regulation* by defining operational terms of reference for the College and its members. The pertinent *Regulation* is appended to these policies for quick reference.

“Regulated member” as defined in the CADA By-laws is a person whose name is entered in the Regulated Member Register under the *Regulation* and who provides the professional service of a dental assistant described in the *Act*.

Policies

1. Annual CCP participation is mandatory for all regulated members.
 - a) New registrants are expected to begin participating during their initial registration cycle.
2. The CCP Learning Module Quiz is a one-time mandatory exercise for all regulated members.
 - a) New registrants are expected to successfully complete this quiz during their first registration cycle.
3. Each regulated member is required to complete an annual self-assessment based on the Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants.
 - a) Areas deemed “not applicable” may be omitted in subsequent years if the member’s practice remains the same.
 - b) Competency areas “B” (Safety) and “K” (Professionalism) must be assessed annually.
 - c) Specific competencies under areas “B” and “K” identified through self-assessment as “developmental” or “desire to enhance” should have a higher learning priority over other areas with similar ratings.
4. Prior to the annual registration renewal deadline, each regulated member is required to submit an acceptable proposed learning plan for the upcoming registration cycle.
 - a) The Competence Director or their delegate will review proposed learning plans for compliance with the following criteria.

An acceptable proposed learning plan contains:

- a plan year
- a minimum of two clearly stated valid learning objectives
- a related competency number for each objective
- proposed learning activities for each objective.

A valid learning objective will:

- relate directly to the Competency Profile For Alberta Dental Assistants
- state a clear learning/enhancing focus
- compliment the practitioner’s area of practice or relate to a future career goal.

- b) Failing to submit a proposed learning plan, submitting an incomplete proposed learning plan, or submitting a proposed learning plan which requires further development will result in remedial action.

Incomplete learning plans may consist of:

- missing entries
- missing learning focus.

Learning plans requiring further development may consist of:

- vague learning objectives
- vague or missing learning activities.

- c) The additional registration renewal fee may be assessed if an acceptable proposed learning plan is not received by the renewal deadline. Failure to meet CCP requirements by the last day of the registration cycle may result in suspended registration and not being eligible to renew a practice permit.
5. Regulated members must complete a minimum of two learning objectives during each registration cycle (in whole or part) which they hold a valid practice permit.
- a) Individual learning objectives may not be repeated within a five-year period. It will be up to the member who wishes to repeat a learning objective to identify and verify the significant changes or reasons for revisiting an area. The Competence Committee will review and take into consideration significant changes in products, procedures or research conclusions when a member wishes to repeat a learning objective within a five-year period. It is the responsibility of the member to receive written approval from the Competence Committee prior to undertaking this learning.
- b) Any combination of CPR and/or First Aid and/or AED training or recertification may be considered one (1) learning objective and may only be used once every 5 years.
- c) Only one of the four individual competencies under area K-4 (Personal Wellness) of the Competency Profile may qualify as a learning objective once every 5 years. *Activities such as yoga, meditation, dieting and fitness training are important lifestyle activities and CADA encourages members to uphold lifestyles that promote personal wellness, however, the purpose of the Continuing Competence Program is to ensure that all dental assistants maintain at the very least and, preferably, enhance or improve their competence within their area of practice as it relates to public safety in the delivery of professional services.*
- d) Completed learning objectives qualify only for the plan year in which they were completed.
- e) Effective December 1, 2013, the CADA Jurisprudence Quiz must be completed at least once every 5 years. It may be considered as one (1) learning objective once every 5 years.
6. Learning Plans are meant to help the dental assistant focus on their individual education and competency needs. The member will have the right to change their learning focus during the current year if:
- Area of practice changes
 - New career goals are identified and immediately pursued
 - New technology, new procedures or new products directly affecting the member's practice require new or further education and/or training
 - Research identifies new areas of education/skills
 - Legislation/regulation changes
 - Education in their first learning area choice is not accessible during the year.

7. The following chart outlines acceptable Learning Activities and Verification of Learning:

Learning Activity	Verification of Learning
<p>Courses designed to enhance the regulated member's professional competence</p>	<p>Certificate of completion or participation, official transcript or letter including name of participant, title of course, sponsor, presenter, and date, or Verification of Learning Form, or signed Learning Plan Form</p>
<p>Teaching or presenting an approved continuing competence activity to a dental group</p>	<p>Verification of completion and evaluation of activity by participants obtained, or Verification of Learning Form, or signed Learning Plan Form</p>
<p>Participating in a study club</p>	<p>Brief summary of the purpose of the study club, methods of study, findings or conclusions, or Verification of Learning Form, or signed Learning Plan Form</p>
<p>Successfully completing an examination recognized by the Council This would be indicative of the member's desire to learn, remain competent and/or enhance their professional practice or further their career.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Board Exam • Successful completion of examination for course offered by course provider 	<p>Certificate or letter indicating the organization, type of examination and the status (pass/fail)</p>
<p>Successfully completing advanced training or examinations This may include such activities as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthodontic Assistant Module • Preventive Dentistry Module • Modules developed to enhance and/or expand the area of dental assisting practice. <p>This training or examination must be completed through a recognized institution.</p>	<p>Certificate or letter of successful completion</p>
<p>Attending formally organized sessions or activities sponsored or approved by the Council, including but not restricted to, professional development of regulated members, ethics or standards of practice Council <u>may</u> provide or approve the provision for members the opportunity to learn more about governance, professional ethics and/or professional standards of practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This <u>may</u> be in the form of seminars, correspondence course or any other method that Council deems effective for reaching the membership. • Any opportunities offered will be with the desire to raise the professional awareness of the members and to have more members better equipped to serve in many capacities within the organization. 	<p>Certificate or letter of completion, or Verification of Learning Form, or signed Learning Plan Form</p>
<p>Participating, preparing or presenting a research paper or abstract at an approved educational function Dental assistants are encouraged to participate in research and to share their knowledge with peers. The research may be done by an individual or group and findings may be presented in written format in a recognized, industry-related publication or in verbal presentation to a group using a variety of media.</p> <p>The presentation must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the subject • a clearly stated objective for the project • description of the process • discussion of the findings • conclusions drawn if appropriate • bibliography of resources. 	<p>Brief summary of the project including the subject, objective for the project, process, findings and conclusions and a summary of target audience evaluation</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Brief summary indicates 50 – 100 words</p>

<p>Publishing a paper in a peer-refereed journal Articles relating to dentistry, dental assisting, professional development, etc. that are published in a recognized journal.</p> <p>Individual articles should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearly stated objective • logically developed subject • clearly stated conclusions • bibliography and references. 	<p>Copy of Journal or letter of verification from publisher and Peer evaluation results (summary)</p>
<p>Conducting research and undertaking innovation that extends beyond the dental assistant's current practice Anticipating developments in industry and identifying the role of the dental assistant in the evolving health care system ensures the viability of the profession.</p> <p>Summary should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear objective • Collaboration with other professions where appropriate • Needs assessment if applicable • Conclusions drawn • Recommendations. 	<p>Summary of activity including objective, course of action, conclusions, next steps or need for expansion to Profile identified and supported/confirmed by the research</p>
<p>Undertaking self-directed study The dental assistant may choose a path of study that is less formal. This could include in-office skill refreshers, the use of textbooks, journals, or internet.</p>	<p>Brief statement of resources utilized including book titles, authors, edition numbers, and website addresses, or Verification of Learning Form, or signed Learning Plan Form</p>
<p>Successfully completing a challenge examination approved by the Council A member may challenge an existing examination if training has been received in any way that verification of curriculum, process or learning outcomes is not readily defined or substantiated. The member will be responsible for confirming the eligibility of this learning activity for program credits prior to undertaking it. The member is responsible for any fees associated with the challenge process. There may be both theoretical and practical requirements to meet.</p> <p>Eligible activities may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orthodontics • Scaling • Individual intra-oral skill applications. 	<p>Certificate or letter confirming successful completion</p> <p>Note: There may be issues surrounding the "challenge" process that should be addressed by the Registration Committee. This should be confirmed prior to beginning the activity.</p>
<p>Other activities approved by the Council Members may request that Council consider learning activities not specifically listed here to be accepted for Continuing Competence credit. Council will consider learning activities when the request and supporting information is received in written format addressing the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning objective • Type of activity • Sponsored or facilitated by whom • Target group of learners or participants • Summary of learning outcome • Evaluation of learning experience. 	<p>Any suitable Verification of Learning as listed in the above rows.</p>

Note: Verification of Learning is not required to be submitted until the CCP Audit. It is the responsibility of the individual member to retain their Verification of Learning until requested to submit to CADA.

8. To provide credible evidence of competence in dental assisting professional practice, each regulated member is required to obtain a minimum of 300 dental assistant hours “actively engaged in dental assisting practice” in the three years immediately preceding the application for annual registration renewal. Verification of hours must accompany CCP Audit submission.
 - a) “Actively engaged in dental assisting practice” implies that the professional services being performed by this member are directly connected to the dental industry (ei. dental assisting, dental hygiene, dental administration, health authorities, dental insurance, dental sales, dental labs, dental education, denture labs) and either require or benefit from dental assisting background.
 - b) A member may use employment and/or dental assisting volunteer hours to meet the requirement.
 - c) Volunteer hours would include such volunteer positions as board or committee commitments with local, provincial, or national dental assisting organizations. In addition, hours accumulated assisting in such service organizations as Kindness in Action, Dentists Without Borders, inner city dental relief clinics, etc. will be accepted.

To maintain a valid practice permit without the stated mandatory practice hours, regulated members must demonstrate competence by completing a minimum 7 hour in-school clinical refresher at a recognized educational institution or complete other requirements recommended by the Competence Committee and approved by Council.

9. The Remedial Process will be activated when necessary.

The purpose of the Remedial Process is to ensure that all members have the information and opportunity to comply with the Continuing Competence Program.

If the reasons for or the results of the member’s non-compliance are interpreted as a possible public safety issue or indicative of possible unprofessional conduct, the Competence Director may refer the matter to the Complaints Director for investigation.

10. Each regulated member will be selected for CCP Audit at least once every five years on a rotating basis determined by registration number. New registrants will be selected for CCP Audit following their initial registration cycle and then again as they fit into the regular rotation cycle. Extenuating circumstances will see members being audited more frequently.

All members selected for CCP Audit will be individually notified of audit. The notification will identify what the submission must include and the date by which the documentation must be received by CADA.

Submissions are to include:

- verification of successful completion of CCP Quiz
- completed learning plans and verification of learning for the preceding year plus an additional year, as identified in the notification
- verification of mandatory practice hour requirement
- effective December 1, 2014 verification of successful completion of CADA Jurisprudence Quiz within five years immediately preceding CCP Audit deadline
- verification of health care provider level, or equivalent, CPR certification for each year of audit.

Submissions are to be available to CADA by the deadline designated on the notification. Records will not be returned to members.

Audit reviews will be concluded within the same registration cycle.

An acceptable completed learning plan will contain:

- plan year
- minimum of two (2) clearly stated valid Learning Objectives
- related competency number for each objective
- completed learning activities for each objective
- clear results statement for each objective
- date of completion for each objective.

A clear results statement will:

- be a brief one or two sentence statement describing how this learning has enhanced or impacted your current practice or will benefit your long-term career goals.
- identify what you can do or explain because of the learning (i.e. I am now able to... I can now explain... I can now identify...)

11. Any regulated member selected for audit who fails to submit CCP records for review by the audit deadline, will be issued a notice of suspension and assessed the CCP Audit late fee.

- a) Failure to meet audit requirements during the time allotted in the notice of suspension will result in immediate suspension of the member's practice permit.

Suspension notification is also forwarded to known employers.

To reinstate, the member must submit outstanding audit requirements plus meet the current reinstatement requirements.

12. When the audit process identifies members who are not in compliance with the requirements, the Registrar may issue a notice of suspension and information for remedial actions.

- a) Remedial assistance will be provided in the form of:

- Reflective self-assessment mentoring
- Coaching
- Further education on the Continuing Competence Program
- Identification of learning opportunities accessible to the member.

- b) Failure to meet audit requirements through the remedial process during the time allotted in the notice of suspension will result in immediate suspension of the member's practice permit.

Suspension notification is also forwarded to known employers.

To reinstate, the member must submit outstanding audit requirements or complete an in-school clinical refresher course, plus meet the current reinstatement requirements..

13. The following Continuing Competence Program materials including policies and procedures will be reviewed for currency, relevancy, and effectiveness annually by Competence staff persons and/or the Competence Committee:

- Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants
- Self-Assessment
- Learning Plan Form
- CCP Website content

Recommendations will be presented to Council by the Competence Committee and any adjustments or revisions should be completed prior to the renewal notification being sent to members.

14. The *Health Professions Act* clearly requires Continuing Competence to be part of the renewal process for all health professionals.

By submitting a Proposed Learning Plan and application for registration renewal, regulated members are indicating compliance that they have completed an annual self-assessment, completed a minimum of 2 Learning Objectives during the current registration period, and met the mandatory practice hours requirement.

If a member fails to comply, the College will suspend the Practice Permit until such time as the member is able to meet the requirements of the Continuing Competence Program.

15. A member not satisfied with a decision regarding a Learning Plan or the results of a CCP Audit may appeal to the Competence Committee in writing to reconsider the decision. All appeals must be received prior to the registration renewal deadline to allow time for the matter to be reviewed, and the member to receive the results and meet all renewal requirements by the deadline.

The appeal decision of the Competence Committee will be final.

The CCP Policies are subject to change without notice; check the CADA Website www.abrda.ca for currency of policy.

APPENDIX

The following excerpts were taken directly from the Dental Assistants Profession Regulation (January 2006):

Continuing Competence

Continuing competence program

- 15(1)** Within 12 months following the coming into force of this Regulation, as part of the continuing competence program, regulated members must obtain on an annual basis 10 program credits.
- (2)** To obtain program credits, a regulated member may undertake the following developmental activities:
- (a) attending courses designed to enhance the regulated member's professional competence;
 - (b) teaching or presenting an approved continuing competence activity to a dental group;
 - (c) participating in a study club;
 - (d) successfully completing an examination recognized by the Council;
 - (e) successfully completing advanced training or examinations;
 - (f) attending formally organized sessions or activities sponsored or approved by the Council concerning the functions of the Council, including, but not restricted to, professional development of regulated members, ethics or standards of practice;
 - (g) participating, preparing or presenting a research paper or abstract at an approved educational function;
 - (h) publishing a research paper in a peer-refereed journal;
 - (i) conducting research and undertaking innovation that extends beyond the dental assistant's current practice;
 - (j) undertaking self-directed study;
 - (k) successfully completing a challenge examination approved by the Council;
 - (l) other activities approved by the Council.

Continuing competence program rules

- 16(1)** The Council may recommend rules governing
- (a) eligibility of an activity to qualify for program credits,
 - (b) the number of program credits earned for a particular activity,
 - (c) requirements that members participate in a specified number of professional development activities,
 - (d) limits on the number of program credits that can be earned from specific activities,
 - (e) the transfer of credits earned in one year to the following year, and
 - (f) the continuing competence program.
- (2)** The rules recommended under subsection (1) and any recommended amendments to those rules must be distributed by the Registrar to all regulated members for their review.
- (3)** The Council may establish the rules or amendments to the rules 30 or more days after the Registrar has distributed the recommended rules or amendments to the rules under subsection (2).

Rules distribution

17 The rules and any amendments to the rules established under section 16(3) must be made available by the College to the public, the Minister, regional health authorities and any person who requests them.

Annual form

- 18(1)** As part of the continuing competence program, regulated members must complete on an annual basis, in a form satisfactory to the Competence Committee,
- (a) a self-assessment,
 - (b) a learning plan, and
 - (c) a list of continuing competence activities undertaken and supporting documentation.
- (2)** A regulated member must, on the request of the Competence Committee, submit anything referred to in subsection (1) to the Competence Committee.

Review and evaluation

19 The Competence Committee must periodically select regulated members in accordance with criteria established by the Council for a review and evaluation of all or part of the member's continuing competence program.