Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants

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Edmonton, Canada

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# Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants

## Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A:</strong></td>
<td>Foundational Knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-1:</td>
<td>Anatomy and Physiology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-2:</td>
<td>Pathology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-3:</td>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-4:</td>
<td>Pharmacology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-5:</td>
<td>Oral Health</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-6:</td>
<td>Dental Terminology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B:</strong></td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-1:</td>
<td>Needles and Sharps</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-2:</td>
<td>Hazardous Materials</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-3:</td>
<td>Radiation and Lasers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-4:</td>
<td>Workplace Safety</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-5:</td>
<td>Emergencies</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C:</strong></td>
<td>Treatment Support Procedures</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-1:</td>
<td>Infection Prevention and Control</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-2:</td>
<td>Client Information and Assessment</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-3:</td>
<td>Chairside Assisting</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-4:</td>
<td>Client Records</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-5:</td>
<td>Assisting in the Administration of Anesthesia and Pain Control</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-6:</td>
<td>Drugs and Materials</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-7:</td>
<td>Laboratory</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D:</strong></td>
<td>Dental Equipment and Technology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-1:</td>
<td>Radiology</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-2:</td>
<td>Digital Imaging</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-3:</td>
<td>Dental Lasers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-4:</td>
<td>Instrument and Equipment Care</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-5:</td>
<td>Emerging Technologies</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E:</strong></td>
<td>Clinical Procedures</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-1:</td>
<td>Intra-Oral Dental Assisting</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-2:</td>
<td>Dental Assisting Orthodontics</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-3:</td>
<td>Dental Assistant Scaling</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-4:</td>
<td>Post-Treatment Care</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-5:</td>
<td>Public and Community Health</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents

F: Oral Health Education and Promotion ..................................................22
   F-1: Nutrition and Oral Health ..............................................................22
   F-2: Addictions and Oral Health ............................................................22
   F-3: Counselling ................................................................................23

G: Communications and Interpersonal Skills ..............................................24
   G-1: Communicating ...........................................................................24
   G-2: Teaching and Mentoring .................................................................25
   G-3: Collaboration and Teamwork .........................................................26
   G-4: Conflict Management ..................................................................27
   G-5: Third Party Communication ..........................................................27
   G-6: Critical Thinking ..........................................................................28

H: Practice Management .........................................................................29
   H-1: Office Procedures ..........................................................................29
   H-2: Information Systems ......................................................................30
   H-3: Human Resources .........................................................................31
   H-4: Service Quality ............................................................................32

I: Professionalism .....................................................................................33
   I-1: Legislation .....................................................................................33
   I-2: Professional Conduct ......................................................................33
   I-3: Accountability and Responsibility .................................................33
   I-4: Governance ..................................................................................34
   I-5: Leadership ....................................................................................35
   I-6: Fitness to Practice ..........................................................................35
   I-7: Professional Boundaries .................................................................36
   I-8: Organization and Time Management ............................................37
   I-9: Adaptability ..................................................................................38
   I-10 Research ......................................................................................38
Introduction

This Competency Profile includes the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes required by Registered Dental Assistants (RDA) in Alberta. No one dental assistant will possess all the competencies described in this document. Each RDA will possess a set of competencies specific to their workplace, setting or practice. In addition, the degree of proficiency of each competency will vary with different dental assistants.

The competencies defined in the Profile may be attained by dental assistants in many different ways. Some competencies will be acquired through formal education. Other competencies may be gained through experience and/or on-the-job training. Some competencies are gained through advanced training, education and/or certification.

Purpose of the Profile

The purpose of this Profile is to:

- outline the competencies for the Alberta dental assistants’ profession;
- provide a foundation for the College of Alberta Dental Assistants’ continuing competency program;
- serve as a guideline for the development of competency assessment tools and methods, performance management systems, and dental assistant job descriptions;
- provide a reference for the RDA’s ongoing self-assessment of competence;
- provide direction to post-secondary institutional programs regarding essential curriculum components;
- serve as a reference to inform employers and other stakeholders of the competence and potential of dental assistants in the dental care team; and,
- provide baseline information and reference for long-term manpower planning for dental and health care.

The profile is NOT intended to:

- be inclusive of all possible competencies required by dental assistants; some competencies may have been inadvertently missed;
- represent the competencies that ALL dental assistants must achieve;
- specify obligations and/or requirements of dental assistants for third party agencies or any other outside party; and
- be permanent, but must be updated on a regular basis as requirements and technologies change.

Future of the Document

This Competency Profile is meant to be a “living document;” it will evolve and change as dental practice evolves and changes. The College of Alberta Dental Assistants welcomes comments and suggestions so that the document can be continuously improved and refined.
A: FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

A-1: Anatomy and Physiology

A Dental Assistant will:

A-1-1 Identify the structures and functions of the body and its systems.
A-1-2 Identify the anatomy of the head and neck.
A-1-3 Describe and locate structures of the oral cavity and face.
A-1-4 Identify and describe tooth morphology of the human dentition.
A-1-5 Identify and describe the innervations of the oral cavity.
A-1-6 Identify the terminology, alignment and mechanics related to dental occlusion.
A-1-7 Identify and describe human growth and development.

A-2: Pathology

A Dental Assistant will:

A-2-1 Demonstrate a knowledge of oral pathology.
A-2-2 Demonstrate a knowledge of systemic diseases.
A-2-3 Observe, assess and express possible concerns to the dentist relating to use of medications and/or underlying medical conditions.
A-3: Microbiology

A Dental Assistant will:

A-3-1 Identify characteristics of micro-organisms.

A-3-2 Explain basic characteristics of micro-organisms and their role in the transmission of disease.

A-3-3 Identify diseases related to bacteria, spores, viruses, fungi and protozoa and prions.

A-3-4 Identify transmissible diseases.

A-3-5 Identify modes and routes of disease transmission.

A-4: Pharmacology

A Dental Assistant will:

A-4-1 Understand the classifications of drugs and how medications affect dental procedures.

A-4-2 Access and utilize drug reference materials.

A-4-3 Recognize and understand the common effects and interactions of therapeutic, non-prescription, nutraceutical, prescription and controlled drugs on client* care and safety issues.

A-4-4 Recognize the purpose and process of recording medications including dosages and frequency taken.

A-4-5 Demonstrate knowledge of the indications for pre-medications prior to dental treatment.

* The term “client” in this Competency Profile refers to an individual, patient (or their designated representatives), families, and groups.
A: FOUNDATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

A-5: Oral Health

A Dental Assistant will:

A-5-1 Understand the elements of oral health such as:
- function
- aesthetics
- absence or presence of disease

A-5-2 Demonstrate knowledge of maintaining oral health through:
- dietary analysis
- proper nutrition
- home care
- regular dental examinations
- fluoride therapy
- recommended treatment

A-6: Dental Terminology

A Dental Assistant will:

A-6-1 Identify and describe areas of dentistry such as:
- General
  - restorative
  - public and community health
- Specialty
  - endodontics
  - oral and maxillofacial surgery
  - orthodontics
  - pediatric
  - periodontics
  - prosthodontics
  - geriatric
  - public and community health
  - forensics

A-6-2 Utilize professionally acceptable medical / dental terminology, classifications and abbreviations used in documenting, reporting and communicating.

A-6-3 Demonstrate knowledge of basic tooth-numbering systems.
B: SAFETY

B-1: Needles and Sharps

A Dental Assistant will:

B-1-1 Handle and dispose of needles and sharp instruments, in accordance with site-specific policy, to prevent injury.

B-1-2 Adhere to protocol in the event of needle-stick and sharp instrument injury.

B-2: Hazardous Materials

A Dental Assistant will:

B-2-1 Recognize, apply and monitor appropriate procedures, in accordance with current guidelines, for the labeling, handling, storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials and biomedical wastes such as:

- radiographic processing solutions
- amalgam waste
- disinfecting and sterilizing solutions
- lead waste
- sharps

B-2-2 Demonstrate a general knowledge of toxicity of dental materials.

B-3: Radiation and Lasers

A Dental Assistant will:

B-3-1 Monitor radiograph and laser equipment:

- registration of equipment
- quality control measures
- preventive maintenance
- compliance with radiography regulations and guidelines, i.e., dosimeter use

B-3-2 Apply and monitor the effectiveness of procedures to ensure radiation and laser safety for clients and operators.
B-4: Workplace Safety

A Dental Assistant will:

B-4-1 Comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act.*

B-4-2 Utilize controls to identify and reduce risk of physical injury to oneself and others such as:
- hazard and exposure assessment (chemical, biological)
- safe handling, use and disposal of instruments and equipment
- safe lifting and transferring of loads (client, equipment)
- use of personal protective equipment (footwear, eyewear, headwear, and radiation protection as necessary)
- application of ergonomic techniques to reduce body stress and injury

B-4-3 Utilize strategies to identify and reduce risk of psychological injury to oneself and others such as:
- adhering to employer policy and procedures
- using non-violent crisis intervention, conflict management
- following procedures for reporting and documenting
- knowing rights and responsibilities under legislation
- knowing safe and appropriate responses to incidents or potential incidents
- knowing support services available in the event of an incident involving violence or harassment
- being aware of workplace violence and risk factors
B: SAFETY

B-5: Emergencies

A Dental Assistant will:

B-5-1 Identify and interpret signs and symptoms of medical conditions that may require emergency care.

B-5-2 Adhere to site-specific procedures in the event of a dental or medical emergency with clients or staff.

B-5-3 Participate in the administration of emergency care following protocol for emergency situations in the dental office.

B-5-4 Be prepared and respond to emergencies by demonstrating an ability to:

- maintain emergency and first aid kits
- recognize and report physiological changes
- initiate Emergency Medical System (EMS)
- apply first aid
- administer CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation)
- use defibrillation devices
- alert operator to emergency and follow instructions / procedures
- record emergency incidents

B-5-5 Adhere to site-specific procedures for threatening events such as:

- bomb reports / scares
- violent / abusive / threatening individuals
- terrorist attacks / robberies / invasions

B-5-6 Adhere to site-specific procedures for weather-related events such as:

- floods
- earthquakes
- tornadoes and hurricanes
C-1: Infection Prevention and Control

A Dental Assistant will:

C-1-1 Comply with site-specific infection prevention and control protocols.

C-1-2 Clean and reprocess instruments and equipment.

C-1-3 Disinfect equipment and surfaces.

C-1-4 Monitor and keep records of the reprocessing of instruments and equipment.

C-1-5 Utilize personal protective equipment such as:

- gloves
- safety glasses / goggles
- masks
- protective clothing / footwear

C-1-6 Place and remove protective barriers.

C-1-7 Purge water lines.

C-1-8 Respect recommendations for annual, current and appropriate personal immunizations for dental assistants.
C: TREATMENT SUPPORT PROCEDURES

C-2: Client Information and Assessment

A Dental Assistant will:

C-2-1 Greet, seat, position and relate to the client.

C-2-2 Obtain personal, medical and dental history in compliance with legal requirements.

C-2-3 Recognize importance of client’s personal, medical and dental history and understand its relevance to dental treatments.

C-2-4 Obtain vital signs:

- know purpose and methods of obtaining vital signs
- know normal ranges of pulse, blood pressure, temperature and respiration for various types of clients
- take and record
  - pulse rate
  - blood pressure
  - temperature
  - respiration rate
  - blood oxygen levels

C-2-5 Perform an oral inspection with the use of examination instruments such as:

- mouth mirror
- explorer

C-2-6 Chart / record dental conditions.

C-2-7 Know and adhere to confidentiality and client consent requirements such as:

- client consent (preferably written) should be obtained for the release of any client information to, or the obtaining of any client information from another dentist, the client’s physician or authorized representative
- a record of any inter-practitioner communication (letters, notes of telephone conversations, reports) retained as part of the permanent client record

C-2-8 Communicate the client’s condition to the supervising healthcare professional:

- knowledge of the significance of client information
- ability to assess, interpret and communicate pertinent information to appropriate persons

C-2-9 Recognize signs of suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.

C-2-10 Report suspected abuse to the appropriate authorities as required by jurisdictional regulations.
C: TREATMENT SUPPORT PROCEDURES

C-3: Chairside Assisting

A Dental Assistant will:

C-3-1 Identify and describe applications and properties of dental instruments, equipment and materials.

C-3-2 Review treatment records to prepare instruments, equipment, materials and operatory for specific dental procedures.

C-3-3 Communicate treatment options to the client.

C-3-4 Confirm consent has been obtained prior to commencing treatment.

C-3-5 Provide pre-treatment instructions.

C-3-6 Maintain visibility and accessibility for operator.

C-3-7 Perform oral evacuation and instrument transfers.

C-3-8 Monitor, report and respond to client’s condition.

C-3-9 Assist with dental procedures such as:
   - restorative
   - oral and maxillofacial surgical
   - endodontic
   - periodontal
   - prosthodontic
   - orthodontic
   - temporomandibular joint dysfunction
   - forensic
   - pediatric
   - geriatric
     - adjusting appointments, recall and maintenance to suite elderly clients
     - altering treatment modalities and protocols to accommodate aging
     - providing care to clients in extended care facilities
   - sleep apnea

C-3-10 Assist with the management of clients with special needs:
   - Patient Transfer Protocol
   - modify the operatory to accommodate clients with special needs
   - adapt procedures according to physical needs and mobility limitations
   - provide information and instructions with consideration of cognitive level and communication ability

C-3-11 Dismiss client at conclusion of appointment.
C-4: Client Records

A Dental Assistant will:

C-4-1 Maintain well-organized, legible, readily accessible and understandable client records that adhere to regulations and general record keeping principles.

C-4-2 Include in the client record the findings of a comprehensive dental examination.

C-4-3 Maintain a record of significant findings of all supporting diagnostic aids, tests or referrals.

C-4-4 Support the diagnosis and treatment plan with a complete and accurate clinical record such as:

- statements that identify the chief complaint
- listing of services to be performed for client
- diagnosis recorded in client record
- the overall condition of teeth and supporting structures noted

C-4-5 Record progress notes that provide a complete and comprehensive description of the client’s ongoing care.

C-4-6 Include referral documentation in the client record.

C-4-7 Have a systematic notification procedure for the ongoing care of clients as it relates to the completion of treatment, postoperative checks and treatment follow-up.

C-4-8 Include notes regarding the financial arrangements and agreements made with the client and/or guardian in the client record.
C-5: Assisting in the Administration of Anesthesia and Pain Control

A Dental Assistant will:

C-5-1 Assist during the administration of local anesthesia:
  - prepare and manage local anesthetic setup, including the assembling the local anesthetic syringe
  - apply topical anesthetic
  - monitor the client
  - instruct client about numbness

C-5-2 Assist during the administration and monitoring of nitrous oxide / oxygen sedation:
  - prepare and check nitrous oxide and oxygen sedation equipment
  - select and place a mask of appropriate size on the tubing
  - have patient put on the mask, and adjust the fit
  - tighten the tubing once it is comfortable for the client
  - monitor the client
  - instruct the client on the sensations they may experience

C-5-3 Assist during the administration and monitoring of conscious, general and intravenous sedation:
  - prepare and check sedation equipment
  - monitor the client
C: TREATMENT SUPPORT PROCEDURES

C-6: Drugs and Materials

A Dental Assistant will:

C-6-1 Reconstitute drugs with water or saline (not with any other drugs).
C-6-2 Draw up drugs out of a vial or ampoule into a syringe.
C-6-3 Mix and manipulate dental materials.

C-7: Laboratory

A Dental Assistant will:

C-7-1 Pour stone study models.
C-7-2 Trim study models.
C-7-3 Mount study models on articulator.
C-7-4 Coordinate external laboratory processes.
C-7-5 Maintain removable appliances.
C-7-6 Fabricate customized trays such as:
  • whitening trays
  • custom sports guards
  • acrylic impression trays
A Dental Assistant will:

D-1-1 Demonstrate knowledge and understand applications of radiology in dental health care.

D-1-2 Prepare the client for radiograph such as:
- remove obstructions that may interfere with diagnostic image
- position the client
- place lead protection on client
- instruct and manage client for radiography

D-1-3 Select radiographic techniques such as:
- types of radiographs
- x-ray machine settings, such as milliampere (mA), kilovoltage peak (kVp) and exposure
- intra-oral film position
- degrees of angulation
- select film size
- assemble and position equipment and film for exposure

D-1-4 Expose radiographs.

D-1-5 Process and evaluate radiographs:
- radiograph integrity
- quality assurance monitoring procedures
- identify and correct exposure and processing errors

D-1-6 Mount and label processed radiographs.

D-1-7 Trace and measure cephalometric radiographs.

D-1-8 Duplicate radiographs.
A Dental Assistant will:

D-2-1 
Demonstrate knowledge of digital imaging techniques:
- radiographs
- impressions

D-2-2 
Demonstrate knowledge of the uses and applications of photographic images in dental practice.

D-2-3 
Demonstrate ability to take quality photographs such as:
- select suitable camera
- adjust lighting
- use appropriate exposure settings
- use appropriate perspectives for intra-oral and facial photos
- evaluate quality of images

D-2-4 
Obtain client consent prior to taking the photographs.

D-2-5 
Know and follow office procedures for printing and documenting photographs.

D-2-6 
Adhere to office protocol for storing photographic images with the client records.

D-2-7 
Ensure that privacy and confidentiality protocols are followed in the storage, use and sharing of the photographic images.
D: DENTAL EQUIPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

D-3: Dental Lasers

A Dental Assistant will:

D-3-1 Utilize dental lasers for caries detection, tooth whitening and curing dental materials:

- indications and contra-indicators of dental lasers
- types, methods and benefits of dental laser treatment
- technology and documentation used to monitor performance of sterilizers
- rationale for dental laser usage
- risks associated with dental lasers
- dental personnel safety issues
- client safety issues
- isolation techniques
- appropriate time of treatment
- proper cleaning, sterilization and maintenance of equipment

D-3-2 Demonstrate the appropriate use of dental lasers:

- select and use appropriate armamentarium
- apply standard precautions including PPE for operator and client
- identify site to be treated
- apply isolation techniques
- manage client as required
- advise client of post-treatment care
- clean, sterilize and maintain equipment according to manufacturer’s instructions
- monitor the performance of the equipment

D-4: Instrument and Equipment Care

A Dental Assistant will:

D-4-1 Maintain dental instruments and equipment such as:

- perform minor instrument repairs
- lubricate equipment
- clean instruments and equipment

D-4-2 Perform troubleshooting in accordance with equipment-specific protocols.

D-4-3 Identify and arrange for support and service when unscheduled maintenance or repair / replacement of instruments and/or equipment is required.
D-5: Emerging Technologies

A Dental Assistant will:

D-5-1  Be knowledgeable of developments and trends in technology in general, and those designed for healthcare / dental applications.

D-5-2  Be able to critically evaluate new technologies as to their potential benefits and risks to dental practice and personal use.

D-5-3  Consult with employer and other team members prior to testing or implementing new technologies in their practice setting.

D-5-4  Obtain additional training in new technologies that are implemented to ensure safe, effective and efficient use.

D-5-5  Participate in quality assurance and evaluation activities related to implementation of new technologies in their practice setting.

D-5-6  Teach, mentor and supervise other members of the team in the safe and effective use of a new technology tool or process.
E-1: Intra-Oral Dental Assisting Procedures

A Dental Assistant will:

E-1-1 Perform selective coronal polishing with a slow-speed handpiece.
E-1-2 Apply pit and fissure sealant(s).
E-1-3 Evaluate pit and fissure sealants(s) and adjust occlusion with a slow-speed handpiece.
E-1-4 Apply anti-cariogenic agents.
E-1-5 Apply desensitizing agents.
E-1-6 Apply disclosing agents, interpret and record results.
E-1-7 Assess and record oral hygiene indices.
E-1-8 Perform caries detection procedure utilizing an electronic caries detection device, and document observations for assessment by the dentist.
E-1-9 Perform periodontal probing.
E-1-10 Identify through dental probing special problems such as:
   • poor margins on restorations
   • pocket depths
   • abundant accumulation of calculus
E-1-11 Record periodontal probing findings for assessment by an authorized dental health professional.
E-1-12 Apply tooth whitening systems.
E-1-13 Place and remove periodontal dressings.
E-1-14 Apply topical anesthetics.
E-1-15 Place and remove isolation material such as:
   • dental dams
   • cotton rolls
   • dry angles
E-1-16 Place and remove matrices and wedges.
E-1-17 Apply treatment liners and bases.
E-1-18 Apply acid etching and cavity bonding.
E-1: Intra-Oral Dental Assisting Procedures

A Dental Assistant will:

E-1-19  Place provisional restorations and remove excess material with hand instruments or a slow-speed handpiece.

E-1-20  Evaluate provisional restorations and adjust occlusion with hand instruments or a slow-speed handpiece.

E-1-21  Obtain impressions.

E-1-22  Evaluate impression quality and disinfect impression.

E-1-23  Perform facebow registration.

E-1-24  Take bite registrations.

E-1-25  Fabricate occlusal rim.

E-1-26  Perform pulp vitality testing.

E-1-27  Place and remove gingival retraction cord.

E-1-28  Fabricate provisional coverage such as crowns and bridges.

E-1-29  Place provisional coverage and remove excess material with hand instruments or a slow-speed handpiece.

E-1-30  Evaluate provisional coverage placement and adjust occlusion with a slow-speed handpiece.

E-1-31  Assist with dental implants: (place and remove copings / torqueing) ?????
E: CLINICAL PROCEDURES

E-2: Dental Assisting Orthodontics

A Dental Assistant will:

E-2-1 Place and remove separators.
E-2-2 Fit and adjust orthodontic appliances and bands.
E-2-3 Apply direct and indirect bracket and attachment bonding materials.
E-2-4 Place orthodontic appliances and bands, and remove excess material with hand instruments or a slow-speed handpiece.
E-2-5 Place and remove adapted archwires.
E-2-6 Place and remove ligatures:
E-2-7 Remove orthodontic appliances and excess cement and bonding material with hand instruments or a slow-speed handpiece.
E-2-8 Remove orthodontic bands, brackets and attachments and excess cement and bonding material with hand instruments or a slow-speed handpiece.
E-2-9 Apply non-medicinal material to reduce irritating orthodontic components.
E-2-10 Adjust (cut) orthodontic archwires for client comfort.

E-3: Dental Assistant Scaling

A Dental Assistant will:

E-3-1 Evaluate periodontal scaling instruments for appropriate sharpness.
E-3-2 Perform periodontal scaling instrument sharpening.
E-3-3 Perform periodontal scaling within the guidelines of an authorized dental assistant.
E: CLINICAL PROCEDURES

E-4: Post-Treatment Care

A Dental Assistant will:

E-4-1 Provide post-treatment instructions such as:
- explain specific oral health care requirements
- explain potential post-treatment complications
- advise client about drug implications
- advise client of after-hours emergency post-operative treatment such as dentist on call, hospital emergency room and walk-in clinics

E-4-2 Follow up with client care such as:
- assess severity of symptoms
- communicate with client
- ask pertinent questions relating to such topics as pain management and medication
- advise client to return to dental office for post-operative analysis
- inform clients of available emergency services such as dentists on call and emergency facilities

E-4-3 Assess soft tissue for signs of healing, infection or complications.

E-4-4 Perform suture removal.

E-4-5 Polish amalgam restoration with slow-speed handpiece using rubber tips and cups.
E: CLINICAL PROCEDURES

E-5: Public and Community Health

A Dental Assistant will:

E-5-1 Provide oral health care programs in a community health setting such as:
- community health and social programs and financial assistance programs
- effective communications skills
- conduct and support oral health care promotion programs
- counsel individuals/groups on dental health
- perform protocols for follow-ups

E-5-2 Conduct dental surveys such as:
- oral health data compilation, collation, analysis and interpretation
- oral health status indices such as decayed, exfoliated, filled teeth (deft), decayed, missing, filled teeth (DMFT) and Community Periodontal Index of Treatment Needs (CPITN)
- Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP) and the Health Information Act
- design and distribute appropriate surveys
- compile, collate, analyze and interpret data

E-5-3 Perform screenings such as:
- oral examination process
- oral health status indices such as deft/DMFT and CPITN
- oral health data compilation, collation, analysis and interpretation
- identify dental and oral disease
- record accurate screening results
- compile reports of screening data

E-5-4 Present and coordinate treatment options such as:
- alternate avenues of communication if language barrier exists, such as interpreter or written translation services
- fluoride use and options
- identify obvious dental diseases which require the intervention of a dentist
- utilize positive and effective communication skills to facilitate collaboration with parents/guardians
- respect and promote professional relationships with clients of other cultures
- counsel families on the importance of dental health and instruct/encourage appropriate daily oral hygiene measures
- refer families to suitable dental office based on their specific needs, such as area, specialty practice, language capabilities
- follow protocols for appropriate and effective contact post-screening
F-1: Nutrition and Oral Health

A Dental Assistant will:

F-1-1 Understand the importance of nutrition to health.

F-1-2 Demonstrate knowledge of systemic and localized effects of nutrition to oral health.

F-1-3 Demonstrate knowledge of current nutritional requirements for various age groups.

F-1-4 Demonstrate knowledge of dietary factors for caries prevention.

F-1-5 Recognize the presentations of poor nutritional health and be able to refer to an appropriate health care provider.

F-1-6 Recognize nutritional needs and associated oral health risks of various types and ages of clients.

F-1-7 Demonstrate knowledge of the effects of nutritional supplements on oral health.

F-1-8 Recognize eating / nutritional disorders.

F-1-9 Analyze client nutrition and provide nutrition counseling and interventions.

F-2: Addictions and Oral Health

A Dental Assistant will:

F-2-1 Demonstration knowledge of the effects of addictions on oral health.

F-2-2 Demonstrate knowledge of resources available to assist with treatment of addictions.

[This competency cluster may be developed further and documented here].
F: ORAL HEALTH EDUCATION & PROMOTION

F-3: Counselling

A Dental Assistant will:

F-3-1 Demonstrate knowledge of fundamentals of client-specific oral hygiene instruction such as:

- special needs clients
- oral hygiene aids
- oral manifestations of pregnancy

F-3-2 Provide oral hygiene instruction and information including but not limited to:

- knowing and describing the periodontal disease process and the factors affecting its development and progress
- knowing and describing the caries process and factors affecting its development and progress
- applying the principles of instruction and learning to individuals and groups
- developing oral hygiene goals using client-centered approach
- selecting and demonstrating oral care aids to achieve goals
- evaluating outcomes of instruction, providing feedback and making necessary modifications
- demonstrate oral self-care techniques
- advise client of appropriate prevention and removal of stain
- give instruction for prosthesis and appliance care
- instruct use of oral self-care products

F-3-4 Advise client on consequences of oral habits such as:

- identify symptoms of a particular habit
- advise on oral injury prevention such as use of mouthguards
- guide client agent towards positive treatment
- provide literature and resources

F-3-5 Provide dietary counselling such as:

- determine client’s dietary habits
- describe effects of diet on oral health care
- judge client’s comprehension
- identify and discuss client’s priorities

F-3-6 Provide community education services such as:

- demonstrate products
- interpret audience reaction
- adjust presentation to audience response
- operate audio-visual equipment
- evaluate presentations
G-1: Communicating

A Dental Assistant will:

G-1-1 Know how the communication process is used within the dental process and provision of effective dental care.

G-1-2 Utilize effective communication to establish, maintain and close interpersonal relationships.

G-1-3 Know the importance of self-awareness and feedback to effective communications.

G-1-4 Establish effective relationships employing both verbal and nonverbal techniques.

G-1-5 Identify barriers to effective communication such as:
  - age
  - special needs
  - language
  - culture

G-1-6 Recognize the need to learn about, adjust to, and respond to a variety of socio-cultural influences such as:
  - education
  - spirituality
  - religious beliefs
  - culture
  - heritage
  - gender / transgender
  - socio-economic status
  - ethnic beliefs
  - lifestyle

G-1-7 Recognize current social issues that impact the delivery of dental health to diverse groups and communities.
G-2: Teaching and Mentoring

A Dental Assistant will:

G-2-1    Demonstrate basic knowledge of teaching and learning principles and techniques.

G-2-2    Maintain knowledge of industry standards and ensure curriculum reflects current competencies as specified in the *Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants* to prepare learners for current dental assisting practice.

G-2-3    Recognize the importance of teaching styles and common factors influencing learning, and adjust teaching accordingly.

G-2-4    Apply common guidelines in providing client, family and caregiver teaching.

G-2-5    Adjust teaching plan and delivery to meet requirements of clients with special needs.

C-2-6    Select and use learning aids and technologies appropriate to the clients and to the content.

G-2-7    Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning through a variety of methods.

G-2-8    Document the teaching plan, its delivery and outcomes of the teaching and learning process.

G-2-9    Demonstrate enthusiasm for formal instruction, learning and dental assisting to inspire and motivate learners.

G-2-10   Demonstrate knowledge and ability to provide quality preceptorships to students and new dental assistants.
G3: Collaboration and Teamwork

A Dental Assistant will:

G-3-1 Demonstrate knowledge of the importance of collaboration in providing effective dental care and ensuring efficient operation of the office.

G-3-2 Respect the different roles of the dental healthcare team.

G-3-3 Show respect for the knowledge, skills and expertise of all members of the healthcare team and health community.

G-3-4 Listen, and be receptive, to the ideas, opinions and suggestions of fellow team members.

G-3-5 Promote co-operation and group cohesiveness.

G-3-6 Actively participate in team activities to plan, implement, and evaluate client care.

G-3-7 Provide constructive feedback and recognition to fellow team members.

G-3-8 Engage client, family and others as partners in client-centered care.

G-3-9 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of principles of team dynamics and group processes to create a positive workplace environment.

G-3-10 Practice effective interpersonal communication with team members.

G-3-11 Assist, instruct and mentor other members of the team.
G-4: Conflict Management

A Dental Assistant will:

G-4-1 Identify the signs and symptoms of conflict situations.

G-4-2 Recognize potential common sources of conflict.

G-4-3 Manage the conflict by using effective communication techniques.

G-4-4 Intervene quickly in urgent situations involving conflict.

G-4-5 Focus on the problem / issue related to the conflict, and not on the individuals or personalities.

G-4-6 Consult with supervisors and other appropriate professionals as required in situations of conflict.

G-5: Third Party Communication

A Dental Assistant will:

G-5-1 Be familiar with the legal requirements of authorization, confidentiality and privacy in dealing with third parties.

G-5-2 Maintain complete and accurate client records.

G-5-3 Provide accurate and relevant information to third parties when requested and approved by the client.
G-6: Critical Thinking

A Dental Assistant will:

G-6-1 Recognize the importance of critical thinking and critical inquiry to effective and ethical dentistry and oral healthcare practice.

G-6-2 Demonstrate knowledge of how critical thinking and critical inquiry influence decision making and practice judgments.

G-6-3 Use critical thinking through analysis, discernment and reflective reasoning.

G-6-4 Apply critical thinking throughout the decision-making process in their professional practice.

G-6-5 Seek, acquire and process information in a critical and scientific manner.
H-1: Office Procedures

A Dental Assistant will:

H-1-1 Have a basic knowledge of dental office procedures.

H-1-2 Have a working knowledge of business office equipment, systems and technologies.

H-1-3 Manage the office client appointment systems such as:
   • respond to inquiries
   • manage schedules
   • operate computer systems and software

H-1-4 Assist with billing and financial management such as:
   • manage billing and payment processes
   • accounts receivable / payable records
   • payroll systems

H-1-5 Assist with inventory management such as:
   • monitor and keep track of inventory
   • order and restock supplies
   • organize supplies in operatory
   • keep controlled substances secure

H-1-6 Demonstrate knowledge and assist with the marketing and promotion of the dental practice and services.

H-1-7 Demonstrate knowledge and comply with regulations, professional marketing standards, and code of ethics with respect to the marketing of dental practices, services and products.
H: PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

H-2: Information Systems

A Dental Assistant will:

H-2-1 Demonstrate the ability to acquire and process information and data in a timely and effective manner.

H-2-2 Organize information / records for easy retrieval and use.

H-2-3 Demonstrate the knowledge and ability to effectively use computers, digital cameras, mobile phones and Internet technology within the dental office.

H-2-4 Be knowledgeable of, and adhere to, office policies and legislation governing health / dental records, e.g. Health Information Act, FOIP, etc.

H-2-5 Manage clients’ dental records.

H-2-6 Know and follow procedures to protect confidentiality and protect against hazards to the security, integrity, loss or unauthorized use, disclosure, modification or unauthorized access to health / dental information.

H-2-7 Provide access to dental records to current and former clients and other appropriate parties.

H-2-8 Keep client records for minimum of ten years.

H-2-9 Ensure that any records stored off-site are in a safe and secure facility where access is only available to authorized personnel.

H-2-10 Ensure that any records stored off-site are inventoried with the name of the client, date of last visit, and date the record was sent to storage.

H-2-11 Destroy client health records by secure and confidential means such as shredding.

H-2-12 Ensure that any electronic records software has safeguards to protect confidentiality and security of clients’ information as specified by the Health Information Act.

H-2-13 Practice “safe computing” to prevent unauthorized access or viewing of client records, personnel data, financial records or other confidential office information.

H-2-14 Ensure that the office technology /systems are secure and protected from viruses, malware, intrusions and other threats.

H-2-15 Be familiar with office procedures and protocol to deal with, and restore, data that may be corrupted or lost as a result of a computer failure or unauthorized intrusions.
H-3: Human Resources

A Dental Assistant will:

H-3-1 Demonstrate knowledge about the principles of leadership, supervision and motivation.

H-3-2 Explain and discuss specific employer / employee responsibilities and current rules and regulations regarding employment of dental personnel.

H-3-3 Assist with developing an office manual describing office policy and procedure.

H-3-4 Assist with the management of staff / employee personnel records.

H-3-5 Assist with the hiring and evaluation of employees.

H-3-6 Assist with the planning and conducting of staff development activities and training.

H-3-7 Manage and supervise personnel.

H-3-8 Terminate staff in a fair and legal manner.
H-4: Service Quality

A Dental Assistant will:

H-4-1 Recognize that today’s clients seeking dental or oral healthcare services:
- have plenty of choices and options
- are better informed than ever before
- are more likely to research dental services on the Internet
- have high expectations of quality service and the latest technologies
- are more likely to go elsewhere if they are dissatisfied
- may publicize their dissatisfaction and complaints on the Internet

H-4-2 Obtain input and feedback from clients as to what they want and their satisfaction and concerns about dental / oral health services and products.

H-4-3 Provide reliable service, i.e. providing what was promised dependably, accurately and on time.

H-4-4 Demonstrate knowledge and courtesy, and the ability to convey trust and confidence.

H-4-5 Show empathy, a degree of caring and providing individual attention to clients and their families.

H-4-6 Demonstrate responsiveness, the willingness to help individuals and provide prompt service.

H-4-7 Endeavor to provide a pleasant and comforting environment through their own appearance, physical facilities and surroundings.

H-4-8 Assist in measuring service performance and client satisfaction.

H-4-9 Take all complaints seriously and address them promptly to the satisfaction of the client and/or family.

H-4-10 Recognize that service quality requires satisfactory performance from every member of the team.

H-4-11 Recognize that the success of a dental practice, and therefore their jobs / careers, depend on satisfied clients.
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-1: Legislation

A Dental Assistant will:

I-1-1 Comply with the *Health Professions Act (HPA)*, *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation* and *Government Organization Act*.

I-1-2 Respect the role of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants (CADA).

I-1-3 Comply with legislation governing healthcare information, privacy and confidentiality.

I-1-4 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of legislation that has a “duty to report” requirement for threats that may be injurious or dangerous to public health, or situations of suspected abuse or neglect.

I-1-5 Comply with all documents affecting the profession of dental assisting practice and regulated and non-regulated member statuses, including but not limited to:

- *CADA Standards of Practice*
- *CADA Code of Ethics*
- *Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants*
- *CADA Bylaws*
- *CADA Policies*
- *CADA Position Statements*

I-2: Professional Conduct

A Dental Assistant will:

I-2-1 Perform only those duties and restricted activities within assigned authority as outlined in legislation and regulation.

I-2-2 Refer any incompetent, illegal or unethical conduct by colleagues or other health personnel to the appropriate authority.

I-2-3 Seek guidance when unable to perform competently.

I-2-4 Demonstrate responsibility and accountability for own conduct.

I-2-5 Display professional behaviour and deportment of a dental assistant.

I-2-6 Provide dental care in a nondiscriminatory manner.
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-3: Accountability and Responsibility

A Dental Assistant will:

I-3-1 Demonstrate knowledge of legal accountability for one’s own dental assisting practice such as:
- reasonable and prudent decisions
- responsible for fitness to practice
- duty to self-report to CADA including:
  - personal incapacity impairing fitness to practice
  - blood borne virus infection
  - criminal charges, guilty plea or verdict
  - under investigation, subject of proceeding, discipline by another regulator
- duty to report to professional liability insurance provider

I-3-2 Practice principles and accountabilities involved in self-regulation such as:
- client – provide safe, competent, ethical care
- employer – work within role expectations, policies and procedures
- CADA – maintain standards and guidelines, code of ethics, standards of practice and continuing competence

I-3-3 Identify when assignment of duties is beyond individual competence or authorized practice and respond in manner such as:
- consult with team members or supervisor
- collaborate as necessary
- hand off tasks as necessary
- upgrade education and training

I-3-4 Apply concepts of professional autonomy throughout practice such as:
- accountable for one’s own actions and behaviours
- best practices and research
- independence as appropriate
- ethical decision making
- self-managed competence

I-3-5 Maintain confidentiality with clients, colleagues, staff, team and organization such as:
- adhere to policy, procedures, guidelines, standards and legislation
- identify breaches in confidentiality
- manage all client information appropriately (verbal, written, electronic)
- recognize and manage risks
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-4: Governance

A Dental Assistant will:

I-4-1 Demonstrate knowledge of principles and accountabilities involved in self-regulation of a health profession in Alberta.

I-4-2 Recognize that self-regulation is a privilege that requires members to participate in the activities of CADA such as:

- adhering to the required responsibilities of regulated members
- developing knowledge and leadership skills necessary to ensure success of CADA
- providing timely feedback and input during member consultations

I-4-3 Consider positions on Council to contribute to:

- management and leadership of the CADA
- establishment, review and changes to bylaws and policies
- financial management of the CADA
- implementation and enforcement of bylaws and policies

I-4-4 Consider participating in CADA committees such as:

- registration committee
- competence committee
- complaints review committee
- hearing tribunals
- other committees

I-5: Leadership

A Dental Assistant will:

I-5-1 Provide leadership.

I-5-2 Promote the vision, mission and values of CADA.

I-5-3 Assess, reflect and recognize own strengths and limitations as a leader to achieve optimum personal and professional growth.

I-5-4 Demonstrate effective delegation skills to appropriately assign workload.

I-5-5 Assess, influence and effectively manage change.

I-5-6 Elicit support and commitment from others to achieve a common goal.

I-5-7 Utilize effective decision-making processes.
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-6: Fitness to Practice

A Dental Assistant will:

I-6-1 Maintain physical, mental and emotional health to ensure safe, competent and ethical practice.

I-6-2 Monitor components affecting fitness to practice such as:
   • addictions
   • cognition
   • coping mechanisms
   • family and environmental issues
   • inappropriate behaviours
   • mental health
   • physical ability
   • psychological well being
   • sensory perception
   • stress management

I-6-3 Take responsibility and self-manage fitness-to-practice to ensure client and personal safety such as:
   • participating in wellness activities
   • maintaining positive self-esteem and attitude
   • managing work-life balance
   • accessing assistance programs / counseling
   • self-reporting and withdrawing from providing services, if necessary

I-6-4 Demonstrate knowledge of the resources available and ability to access appropriate ones for self-improvement and maintenance of personal well-being.
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-7: Professional Boundaries

A Dental Assistant will:

I-7-1 Establish, maintain and manage professional boundaries such as:

- client, family and others
- colleagues and co-workers
- students and trainees
- supervisors
- employers
- sales and marketing people
- suppliers and vendors

I-7-2 Recognize and maintain professional boundaries such as:

- beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
- caring for family / friends
- casual, friendship, romantic, sexual
- chastising, coercion, favoritism
- conflict of interest
- giving and receiving gifts
- inappropriate financial or personal benefits
- inappropriate physical contact
- limited self-disclosure
- psychological abuse and/or disruptive behaviours
- social media interactions

I-7-3 Demonstrate knowledge of risks associated with use of social media such as:

- breach of privacy and confidentiality
- compromise public safety / trust in professionals
- undermine individual professional reputation and career
- use during work hours

I-7-4 Recognize, intervene and report boundary violations of oneself or others.
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-8: Organization and Time Management

A Dental Assistant will:

I-8-1 Manage time and organize client care effectively and efficiently.
I-8-2 Prioritize client needs.
I-8-3 Demonstrate flexibility, creativity and adaptability in meeting the unusual demands of the dental-care setting.
I-8-4 Ensure documentation is completed in a timely and appropriate manner.
I-8-5 Delegate tasks as required.
I-8-6 Identify and manage the effects of time management in self and others.
I-8-7 Respect other team members in decisions of personal time management such as:
  • arriving, and being prepared, for work on time
  • collaborating in care delivery
  • conducting oneself professionally
  • limiting personal activities to personal time (social media, texting, personal calls)
  • managing breaks effectively
  • helping out other team members as needed

I-9: Adaptability

A Dental Assistant will:

I-9-1 Adapt to changes in the profession.
I-9-2 Recognize the implications of change on their professional practice.
I-9-3 Demonstrate awareness of own beliefs, values, reactions and response to change.
I-9-4 Initiate, adapt and accept changes to improve dental services and office efficiency including changes to products and procedures.
I-9-5 Keep informed of issues and trends within the dental care system.
I-9-6 Identify needs for, and contribute to, changes to enhance the profession.
I: PROFESSIONALISM

I-10: Research

A Dental Assistant will:

I-10-1  Remain current with research and trends in the areas of dental assisting, dentistry and oral health care, dental-related technologies, products and services.

I-10-2  Be able to critically read, evaluate and apply research findings and trends.

I-10-3  Be familiar with various research designs, data collection techniques, analysis and reporting.

I-10-4  Participate in research projects that contribute to the knowledge base of dentistry and oral health care.

I-10-5  Collaborate in research projects and studies.