



College of Alberta  
Dental Assistants

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# **Preventive Dentistry Module (PDM) Policies**

Approved by Council  
June 12, 2016

The Preventive Dentistry Module (PDM) is a post-graduate program available for Registered Dental Assistants (RDA) to further their education to allow them to perform the intra-oral duty of scaling teeth. The role of an RDA with PDM is strictly preventive. The RDA provides support to the Dentist and the Registered Dental Hygienist for greater access to patient care through collaborative practice.

The *Dental Assistant Professional Regulation* provides the basis for which a properly educated RDA may be taught and authorized to perform the restricted activity of scaling teeth to specific limits as defined in the *Regulation*.

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

## POLICIES

1. A “qualified” RDA for the purposes of these policies is one who is properly educated, through the successful completion of a CADA approved PDM program or a recognized equivalent approved by the CADA Council, and authorized by CADA to perform the skill of limited dental scaling.
2. Qualified RDAs may not independently provide the service of limited dental scaling.
3. A qualified RDA may perform limited dental scaling for patients, on all areas with a pocket depth of 4 mm or less, as directed by a Dentist or Registered Dental Hygienist provided that the prescribing Dentist or Registered Dental Hygienist recently (within six months) assessed<sup>1</sup> the patient to determine the patient has healthy gingival and periodontal tissues, and no overt or radiographic signs of alveolar bone loss. If there has been any change in the condition in the oral cavity since the assessment<sup>2</sup> such as evidence of major dental restorations i.e. crown(s), bridge(s) and/or implant(s) or the initiation of orthodontic treatment, the patient should be reassessed<sup>3</sup> by a Dentist or Registered Dental Hygienist prior to the qualified RDA providing limited scaling services.
4. Prerequisites for entry into the PDM program will include, but are not limited to, valid licensure/registration in a regulated Canadian jurisdiction with formal training in all of the current<sup>4</sup> Alberta entry-to-practice intra-oral skills.
5. Students enrolled in the PDM program may practice limited dental scaling services during their field placement (practicum) experiences between in-school clinical sessions following directives from the educational institute provided appropriate supervision is on-site and able to assist.

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this policy, “assessed/ assessment/ reassessed” means a Dentist or Registered Dental Hygienist has completed at minimum the following:

1. reviewed the patient dental and health history;
2. performed or reviewed the results of a full-mouth probe or a Periodontal Screening and Recording (not applicable when primary dentition present);
3. examined radiographs (when available); and,
4. conducted a clinical examination.

<sup>2</sup> See definition above.

<sup>3</sup> See definition above.

<sup>4</sup> Current as of the most recent date of policy amendment noted on the cover page.

6. Students enrolled in the PDM program will be deemed graduates of the PDM upon successful completion of all components of the PDM program.
7. RDAs that have successfully completed the PDM program or a recognized equivalent approved by the CADA Council, upon request, may be granted the limited dental scaling credential and be authorized to perform limited dental scaling services.
8. RDAs that have successfully completed a dental hygiene program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada or RDAs who can verify current licensure/registration as a Registered Dental Hygienist in a regulated Canadian jurisdiction, upon request, may be granted the limited dental scaling credential and be authorized to perform limited dental scaling services. The candidate must hold a valid RDA practice permit and must practice within the *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation* when using the PDM designation.
9. Practical evaluations, theoretical evaluations, and clinical upgrades may be used to determine substantial equivalence of modules taught outside of Alberta.
10. CADA approved dental assisting programs in Alberta who wish to offer the PDM program must receive written approval from CADA before offering the program and confirmation of graduate eligibility for registration.

PDM Policies are subject to change without notice; please refer to the CADA Website [www.abrda.ca](http://www.abrda.ca) for currency of policy.

## Appendix

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

### Restricted Activities

#### Authorized activities

**12(1)** Regulated members may, within the practice of dental assisting, perform the following restricted activities under the direction of a dentist, dental hygienist or denturist who is authorized to perform or to order the performance of the following restricted activities:

- (a) to apply any form of ionizing radiation in medical radiography;
  - (b) to cut a body tissue or to perform surgical or other invasive procedures on body tissue in or below the surface of teeth, for the purpose of performing dental probing, including periodontal screening and recording;
  - (c) to fit a fixed or removable partial or complete denture for the purpose of determining the preliminary fit of the device;
  - (d) to fit a periodontal appliance for the purpose of determining the preliminary fit of the device;
  - (e) to fit an orthodontic appliance for the purpose of determining the preliminary fit of the device.
- (2)** Subject to subsection (3), a regulated member who has advanced training approved by the Council may perform the restricted activity of cutting a body tissue or performing surgical or other invasive procedures on body tissue in or below the surface of teeth, for the purpose of scaling teeth under the direction of a dentist or a dental hygienist authorized to perform that restricted activity.
- (3)** The performance of the restricted activity referred to in subsection (2) is subject to the condition that the client has been recently assessed by the dentist or dental hygienist who has determined the patient has healthy gingival and periodontal tissues or plaque associated gingivitis, pockets of 4 mm or less and no overt or radiographic signs of alveolar bone loss.
- (4)** For the purpose of this section, “direction” means a dentist, dental hygienist or denturist is on-site and able to assist.

## **Restriction**

**13** Despite section 12, regulated members must restrict themselves in performing restricted activities to those activities that they are competent to perform and to those that are appropriate to the member's area of practice and the procedure being performed.

## **Students**

**14(1)** A student who is enrolled in a dental assisting program approved by the Council is permitted to perform the restricted activities set out in section 12(1) under the supervision of a regulated member registered on the general register or courtesy register.

**(2)** The supervising regulated member must

- (a) be on-site with the student while the student is performing the restricted activity,
- (b) be available to assist the student in performing the restricted activity as required, and
- (c) be authorized to perform the restricted activity set out in section 12(1).

**(3)** A regulated member who is undertaking a program of studies approved by the Council for scaling of teeth is permitted to perform the restricted activity of cutting a body tissue or performing surgical or other invasive procedures on body tissue in or below the surface of teeth for the purpose of scaling teeth under the on-site supervision of the following who are able to assist:

- (a) a dental assistant who is authorized to perform the restricted activity under section 12(2);
- (b) a dentist who is authorized to perform the restricted activity;
- (c) a dental hygienist who is authorized to perform the restricted activity.