

# Guide to the Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications – For Graduates of Non-Accredited Dental Hygiene Programs

## INTRODUCTION

In Ontario, the practice of dental hygiene is governed under the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991* (*RHPA*) and the *Dental Hygiene Act, 1991* (*DHA*). Dental hygienists in Ontario must comply with the Acts, as well as with the Bylaws and standards of practice of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO). Copies of relevant legislation, Bylaws, and standards of practice are available on the CDHO website at [www.cdho.org](http://www.cdho.org).

It is a non-exemptible requirement for registration that **an applicant must have graduated from a dental hygiene program** that has been accredited by either the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or by the Commission on Dental Accreditation in the United States (CODA). **If an applicant's dental hygiene program was not accredited by either CDAC or CODA, the program must be assessed** in order to determine whether it is equivalent to an accredited program.

The applicant must first **apply to the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) to have his/her educational credentials assessed**. Further information and contact details for NDHCB can be found on their website at [www.ndhcb.ca](http://www.ndhcb.ca). If NDHCB has indicated that it will not be able to complete an assessment of an applicant's dental hygiene program, or if NDHCB has determined that an applicant is not eligible to write the exam, then the applicant may apply to the Registration Committee for an assessment.

This guide will provide the information you need in order to complete and submit your application to have your educational credentials and qualifications assessed by the Registration Committee of the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario

## DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

### 1. NDHCB ASSESSMENT

An applicant must first have the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) assess their course of study in order to determine if they are eligible to take the written entry-to-practice examination.

If NDHCB has already determined that you are eligible to write the exam, then you are *not* required to have your course of study assessed again by the Registration Committee. Instead of submitting an application to have your dental hygiene program assessed, please refer to the [Section for Graduates of Non-Accredited Dental Hygiene Programs \(including International Programs\)](#) for information on how to proceed with the registration process.

If NDHCB has indicated that it will not assess your dental hygiene education and/or that you are not eligible to write the board exam, and if you still wish to proceed with an application to the CDHO, you can begin an application to have your dental hygiene program assessed by the Registration Committee. You must provide all supporting documentation listed in this guide. When the assessment documents have all been submitted to the CDHO, the file will be referred to the Registration Committee to determine if the course of study is equivalent to that of an accredited program.

## **2. REGISTRATION COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT - REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

In order for the Registration Committee to proceed with an assessment of your dental hygiene program, CDHO Forms 1-6 must be received, along with all pieces of required documentation listed in the *Supporting Documents* section. Please note that some forms or documents must be submitted to CDHO directly from a third party, as noted in this guide and on the Checklist.

### **CDHO FORMS**

#### ***Form 1: Application and Payment***

Complete the **Application for Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications (Form 1)** and submit to CDHO only once you have gathered all required documentation, or, where applicable, arranged to have documentation sent directly to CDHO by the appropriate third party.

Payment for the assessment fee must be submitted with the application form. CDHO accepts payment by certified cheque / money order, or you can request a credit card payment form in order to pay with Visa or MasterCard (including Visa Debit and MasterCard Debit). We do not accept American Express, any prepaid cards, cash, or personal cheques. **Please refer to Form 1 or the Checklist (Form 6) for the amount due for the assessment.**

#### ***Form 2: Document Release Form***

Complete and sign the top section on page 1 of the **Document Release Form (Form 2)**. Send the entire document to the institution where you completed your dental hygiene program. If you attended more than one institution to complete your dental hygiene education, send a copy of Form 2 to *each institution* that you have listed on Form 1.

A representative from the institution needs to complete the rest of the document and return the completed form, along with all required supporting documentation, directly to the CDHO office. **CDHO cannot accept any education documents from any source other than the applicant's dental hygiene institution(s).**

**NOTE:** You also need to submit Form C to your school, which they will complete and send to our office along with an Official Transcript. For more information, please see the *Form C and Transcript* heading in the *Supporting Documents* section, below.

- In addition to the completed Form 2, the institution is required to submit directly to CDHO the following supporting documentation:
- A program catalogue or a website link to the program, from the time of study/graduation of the student.

- Entire program syllabus from the time of study/graduation of the student, including a course description, detailed course content, learning objectives, outcomes or competencies *for each course*.
- Duration of the program and all courses (amount of credits or hours allocated *for each course/semester/year*).
- The number of classroom, laboratory, preclinical and clinical credits or hours, grades or marks earned *for each course*.
- Detailed description of preclinical/laboratory and practical experiences.
- Report cards on supervised clinical practice rotations and direct client care activities, including the number of hours, the areas practiced, and a detailed description of the supervised clinical practice.
- Report cards on external rotations in the areas of education, health promotion, hospital dentistry, public health and/or community dental hygiene practice.
- Detailed description of the methods of evaluation for each course (e.g., by examination, projects, weekly tests) including all direct client care evaluation criterion.
- The rating/grading scale relevant to the student's time of study.

As indicated, all official dental hygiene program outlines, course descriptions, course syllabi, etc., must be **from the years that you were participating in the program**.

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING TRANSLATIONS**

All documentation from the dental hygiene education institution must be submitted to CDHO in the original language of instruction. If the language of instruction was not either English or French, then the documentation must *also* be accompanied by an official word-for-word translation in either English or French. The institution's official translation should be signed by the dental hygiene program dean, director, or coordinator as being true and official.

If all documents have been sent to the CDHO in either English or French or are accompanied by the institution's official translation in English or French, a final copy will be provided by CDHO staff to you. You will use this copy to complete the Self-Evaluation of Educational Credentials (Form 3) and, if applicable, the Continuing Competence Activities Report (Form 4).

If the supporting documents are only provided by the institution in the original language of instruction and no translation has been provided in English or French, it will be your responsibility as the applicant to have all documents translated word for word by a certified official translator, at your own cost. In this case, CDHO will forward to you any documents that require translation, after they have been received from the institution.

The process for the applicant to follow for translation is as follows:

1. CDHO must receive the completed Form 2 and supporting documents directly from the school, completed in the language of instruction, as required.
2. CDHO staff will make a copy of the submission for their records and then forward all documentation to the applicant so that the package can be sent to a certified/official translator of the applicant's own choice.

3. The applicant will select a translator to translate all documentation **word for word into either English or French**, at the applicant’s own cost.
4. The official translator must then send the translated document **directly to the CDHO office**. CDHO cannot accept the translated documents to be submitted by the applicant.
5. When the translated documents arrive at the CDHO office, CDHO staff will forward to the applicant a copy of the translated documents, in order that the applicant may complete Forms 3 and 4 in either English or in French, as required.

**NOTE:** A certified/official translator is authorized to officially sign and stamp translations. All translated documents need to have the seal of a certified/official translator to be considered. Any translations are subject to being audited for accuracy.

***Form 3: Self-Evaluation of Educational Credentials***

You will complete the **Self-Evaluation of Educational Credentials (Form 3)** using the copy of the dental hygiene program documents that has been forwarded to you by CDHO. It is recommended that you thoroughly review all documentation related to your dental hygiene program before beginning the Self-Evaluation. The Self-Evaluation will ask you to determine whether a particular competency was taught in the program, where in the documentation evidence of that competency can be found, and at what level of performance the competency was taught.

Down the left-hand column of the Self-Evaluation is listed each of the dental hygiene competencies that CDHO expects an entry-to-practice level applicant to have learned. For each competency listed, refer to the course documents and verify that the competency was taught in the program. If you can find documented evidence of the competency, make a mark under the “Yes” column next to the competency. If it is not noted in any of the course documents, make a mark in the “No” column. **The course documents must demonstrate that the competency was taught in order for CDHO to verify that you have learned what is required.**

DENTAL HYGIENE COMPETENCIES	ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICANT'S DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM							
	Was the competency taught in your Dental Hygiene program? Mark with an (v)		If YES, where is it evidenced in the Dental Hygiene curriculum provided? (Name(s) of document and page number(s)).		If YES, at what level of performance was it done during your Dental Hygiene program? *Use legend above. Mark with an (v)		Additional notes/comments (ex. specific examples that show how you have met the competency during your Dental Hygiene program or, if applicable, additional education or courses).	
	YES	NO	Documentation	Page(s)	K	L	E	C
<b>PROFESSIONALISM:</b> <b>1. RESPONSIBILITY</b> Each dental hygienist has the responsibility to promote delivery of and access to quality dental hygiene services.								
1.1 Apply evidence-based decision making approaches to the analysis of information and current practices.								
1.2 Apply the behavioural, biological and oral health sciences to dental hygiene practice decisions.								

In the Documentation column, make a note of the name of the document in which you found evidence of the competency being taught and then enter the page number within that document where the evidence appears. Based on the information provided in the course documents, determine at what level the competency was performed: Knowledge, Laboratory, Evaluation, or Direct Client Care. Use the legend at the top of the Self-Evaluation form to assist you or see the Competency Performance Level descriptors below.

Finally, for each of the competencies listed, provide any additional notes or comments as needed in the right-hand column. For example, you might provide a specific example that shows how you mastered each particular competency during the course of your dental hygiene program. You can also use this column to indicate whether a specific competency that was not taught in your dental hygiene program was learned through additional education or courses.

**K – KNOWLEDGE:** I was exposed to this competency in THEORY ONLY during the course of my dental hygiene program.

**L – LABORATORY:** I had personal experience with this competency in a laboratory setting or in preclinical activities (observation, manikins or student partners) during the course of my dental hygiene program.

**E – EVALUATION:** I was personally evaluated and received a grade for this competency either in a THEORY course, a LABORATORY component or in a PRECLINICAL course.

**C – DIRECT CLIENT CARE EVALUATION:** I personally performed this competency frequently, independently and competently on clients/patients I was responsible for, and I was assessed and given a grade on numerous occasions during the course of my dental hygiene program.

#### *Competency Performance Levels for the Self-Evaluation*

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING ADDITIONAL EDUCATION**

If a particular competency was not learned in your dental hygiene program, but you did learn the competency through additional education (e.g. certificate course, continuing education, post-graduate program, etc.), you can indicate this information on the Self-Evaluation form in the examples/notes column. If you will be including additional education or courses in your Self-Evaluation, you must arrange to have the course documentation forwarded to CDHO directly from the course provider. An original or notarized copy of the completion certificate or letter confirming successful completion must be submitted by you to CDHO with your application package.

As with the dental hygiene program documentation, any documents related to additional education or courses must be provided in the original language of instruction, along with a word for word translation in either English or in French. If an official translation is not submitted to CDHO by the course provider, it is your responsibility to obtain a certified translation of the documents.

CDHO can only accept additional education or courses as proof of meeting a particular competency that was not otherwise taught in the applicant's dental hygiene program if there is documented evidence of the competency being learned in the other course.

#### **Form 4: Continuing Competence Activities Report**

To support your application for an assessment of your educational credentials and qualifications, you can use the **Continuing Competence Activities Report (Form 4)** to report any additional, relevant learning or activities you have completed or participated in since graduating from your dental hygiene program.

For each activity or course listed on Form 4, CDHO must receive the original or a notarized copy of a certificate of completion/letter/proof of attendance. The proof of completion must be in your name and include the name of course, course description, name of the lecturer(s), and the number of hours or credits for the course. If the documents are not in English or French, you will need to submit a **certified, word for word translation in English or in French**.

Because the continuing competence activities are not to be used as evidence of completion of the dental hygiene competencies listed on the Self-Evaluation (Form 3), we do not require either the proof of completion or the translated documents to be sent to CDHO directly from the course provider. However, note that these documents are subject to being audited for authenticity and/or accuracy.

#### **Form 5: Record of Employment**

The **Record of Employment (Form 5)** is used to support your application for an assessment of your educational credentials and qualifications. Only employment as a dental hygienist should be entered on the form. If you need additional room, you can copy the form and label them in the appropriate order (e.g., 1 of 2; 2 of 2).

#### **Form 6: Checklist**

Use the **Checklist (Form 6)** to ensure that you have completed all necessary steps and included with your application, or arranged to have sent to CDHO by the appropriate third party, all required documentation. Sign and date the bottom of the Checklist and include it when you submit the completed application to CDHO.

### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

#### **i. Dental Hygiene Diploma / Certificate**

Provide a **notarized/certified true copy of your dental hygiene diploma/degree**. To have a notarized or certified true copy made, you must bring the original document to a Notary and they will make the copy and put their stamp or seal on it. You can then keep the original document and submit the stamped copy to CDHO with your application package. Standard photocopies or copies you have made yourself will not be accepted.

#### **ii. Description of Dental Hygiene / Scope of Practice**

Arrange to have a **legal description of the practice of dental hygiene or scope of practice** to be sent directly to the CDHO office by the dental hygiene regulatory authority in the jurisdiction where you completed your dental hygiene education. The legal description must be submitted *even if you were never registered in that jurisdiction*. This information will help the Registration Committee to understand the scope of practice that the dental hygiene program would have been based on.

#### **iii. Form C and Transcript**

Arrange to have **CDHO Form C (Certificate of Dean or Principal of Dental Hygiene Program) and an official transcript** of your grades / mark sheets / academic records to be sent directly to the CDHO office by the institution where you completed your dental hygiene program. You can probably arrange to have this sent to CDHO when the institution sends us the completed Document Release and Program Information (Form 2) and supporting documents. [Form C](#) can be downloaded from the CDHO website.

#### ***iv. Independent Education Credential Evaluation***

Arrange to have an **independent post-secondary education credential evaluation** done by one of the approved agencies listed below. The evaluation must include the country of education, the name of the institution(s) attended, the year and the specific credential received (degree, diploma, or certificate), the length of the program, the area(s) of specialization, and the Canadian equivalency.

The evaluation must be prepared and sent directly to the CDHO office by one of the following external credentialing agencies approved by the CDHO:

- World Education Services (WES) – [wes.org/ca](http://wes.org/ca)
- International Credential Evaluation Service (ICES) – [bcit.ca/ices](http://bcit.ca/ices)
- International Qualifications Assessment Service (IQAS) – [alberta.ca/iqas-overview.aspx](http://alberta.ca/iqas-overview.aspx)

Choose one of the agencies listed above and consult their website for an application form. This evaluation is independent from the request for an assessment of educational credentials and qualifications by the Registration Committee of the CDHO. **Any associated costs for the independent education credential evaluation are the responsibility of the applicant and are not included in the CDHO assessment fee.**

### **3. REGISTRATION COMMITTEE ASSESSMENT – PROCESS AND DECISION**

Once the application and all supporting documents for the assessment have been submitted to the CDHO, the file will be referred to the Registration Committee to determine if the course of study meets the College's requirements for a dental hygiene program. Provided that no additional communication is required between the Registration Committee and the applicant and/or the dental hygiene educational institution, it will take approximately 3 months for the Registration Committee to render a decision.

The assessment process may be longer if the Committee determines that further documentation or clarification is needed.

If the Registration Committee determines that the dental hygiene program you completed is substantially equivalent to that of an accredited dental hygiene program, a letter outlining the Committee's decision will be sent to you and you will be advised of next steps. As per CDHO Regulation Part VII – Registration, you will be required to participate in a written competency evaluation set or approved by the Registration Committee (S. 31. (1) 2). As a graduate of a non-accredited dental hygiene program, you will also be required to participate in a clinical competency evaluation (S. 31. (1) 3).

If the Registration Committee determines that your dental hygiene program is not substantially equivalent to that of an accredited program, you will be notified in writing of the Committee's decision and reasons. In this case, it is recommended that, if you wish to continue to pursue a career in dental hygiene in Ontario, you attend an accredited dental hygiene program. A full list of [accredited programs in Ontario](#) can be found on the ODHA website.

#### **4. APPEALING A DECISION OF THE REGISTRATION COMMITTEE**

If the Registration Committee determines that the dental hygiene program you completed is *not* equivalent to that of an accredited program, you will have the right to request a review of the Committee’s decision. An appeal would need to be submitted to the *Health Professions Appeal and Review Board* (HPARB) within 30 days of the date of the Registration Committee’s decision letter. Information about the appeal process and contact information for HPARB will be sent to you when you are sent the Committee’s decision and reasons.

#### **5. OTHER REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION**

As outlined above, if your dental hygiene program is accepted by the Registration Committee, you will be notified of the process for participating in a written competency evaluation that has been approved by the Committee. As a graduate of a non-accredited dental hygiene program, you will also be required to participate in a clinical competency evaluation. You must pass the written evaluation *before* you can attempt the clinical evaluation. More information about exams can be found on the CDHO website ([Become a Dental Hygienist – Examinations](#)).

After successfully completing both the written and practical exams, you can apply for registration as a dental hygienist in Ontario. More information about the application process and other requirements for registration can be found on the CDHO website ([Become a Dental Hygienist – Registration](#)).

### **APPENDICES TO THE GUIDE TO THE ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL CREDENTIALS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

- [Form 1: Application for an Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications](#)
- [Form 2: Document Release and Program Information](#)
- [Form 3: Self-Evaluation of Educational Credentials](#)
- [Form 4: Continuing Competence Activities Report](#)
- [Form 5: Employment Record](#)
- [Form 6: Checklist](#)
- [CDHO Form C – Certificate of Dean or Principal of College/University](#)
- [Excerpts from CDHO Regulation Part VII – Registration](#)

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