

Information for Persons Applying for General Registration with the Alberta College of Dental Hygienists

(For New Graduates of Dental Hygiene Education Programs)

REGISTRATION IS MANDATORY - All Service Providers Must Register

General Registration

Any person involved in the practice of dental hygiene in the province of Alberta must comply with the *Health Professions Act* (the “Act”), the Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation, the Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation, and the registration process of the Alberta College of Dental Hygienists (the “College” or “ACDH”).

In accordance with section 46 of the Act, a person must apply for General or Courtesy registration if they intend to provide one or more of the following services in the province of Alberta:

- Professional services directly to the public;
- The manufacture of dental appliances or conducting of laboratory tests that are used by other regulated members to provide professional services directly to the public;
- The teaching of the practice of a regulated profession to regulated members or students of the regulated profession; and
- The supervision of regulated members who provide professional services to the public.

A person must hold General registration and a Practice Permit whether they intend to practice dental hygiene as a practice owner, employee, contractor, or volunteer for any portion of the year - even if it is just one day.

General registration is for applicants who wish to engage in activities/services that involve the knowledge and/or practice of dental hygiene as a clinician, educator, researcher, administrator, health promoter, or consultant. A Practice Permit will be issued when an application for General registration is approved.

Practice Permits must be renewed on or before October 31 annually, regardless of when an application is approved.

An applicant for registration may not practice dental hygiene in the province of Alberta until they have received notification that their application has been approved and they have been added to the ACDH General Register.

This includes temporary assignments or working interviews.

Applying for Registration Under This Policy

This policy applies to either:

- New graduates of the University of Alberta Dental Hygiene Program who have not registered in other jurisdictions **OR**
- New graduates of dental hygiene programs that are accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) who have not registered in other jurisdictions.

Starting the Registration Process

It is strongly recommended that the registration process is started well in advance of any pre-arranged employment. The College works to process applications as quickly and efficiently as possible, however there are factors that can impact the time it takes to process an application for registration. These factors include the time of year an application is made, what, if any, documentation is missing from the application, or if there are additional assessments needed to make a decision on the application.

General Requirements

1. Application Forms, Fees, and Process

An application for registration must be made on the current and required online form. All applications will be reviewed on an individual basis. No application will take priority over another.

Registration requirements of applicants and the College are set out in Part 2 of the Act, sections 3-9 of the Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation (the "Regulation"), and the ACDH Bylaws.

Fees listed below must be paid in Canadian funds through the online application process. The application fee is non-refundable.

- Application Fee for all applications: \$350.00
- Practice Permit Fee for new graduates applying **within 12 months** of graduation: \$350.00
- Practice Permit Fee for new graduates applying **more than 12 months** after graduation: \$599.00

Refer to the [ACDH Fee Schedule](#) on the Registration & Renewal page of the ACDH website for more information.

With every application, the College works to process applications as quickly and efficiently as possible. The process generally takes four to six (4-6) weeks **after an application is made complete** but may take longer if additional information is required to make a decision or if an application is received between August and November, which is the College's annual renewal period.

Applications received after September 30 will automatically be put forward for consideration in the beginning of the next permit year (November 1 to October 31).

The application process will only start once a completed application form, including payment of the application fee, is submitted. An application will not be considered complete until **all** required information and documentation has been received, and reviewed by the College, and all required qualification and competence assessments have been completed. The College may verify any documentation provided and additional supporting documentation may be requested by the College at any stage during the application process.

The process used by the College to assess each application is as follows:

1. A completed application form is submitted through the College's Applicant Portal.
2. An email is sent through the Portal to the applicant confirming that the application form has been received and providing a PDF copy of the application.
3. The College conducts an initial review once the application fee has been paid.
4. An email is sent to the applicant advising them that the initial review has been completed and if the application is not complete, the email will identify the items that are outstanding.
5. The College provides log-in information to access the Jurisprudence Examination by email.
 - *The College process is on hold until all the required documentation is received, including evidence of successful completion of the Jurisprudence Exam.*
6. An email is sent to the applicant notifying them when their application is complete and in the final review stage.
7. If the final review finds that additional information is required, an email is sent to the applicant identifying the items that are required.
 - *The process is on hold until the requested documentation is received.*
8. The Registrar or their delegate reviews the application and supporting documents and makes a decision.
9. An email is sent to the applicant to notify them of the Registrar's decision.

The Registrar may approve an application, with or without conditions; defer registration; or refuse the application for registration. In each case, the College is guided by an assessment of what is in the best interest of the public.

2. National Examination

Successful completion of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Exam (NDHCE) of Canada is required under section 3 of the Regulation. A copy of the NDHCE Certificate must be uploaded in the application form. If an applicant has lost their NDHCE Certificate, they can [request a replacement online](#). The College will verify the applicant's successful completion of the NDHCE.

3. Dental Hygiene Education & Substantial Equivalency

The College must receive an **official** transcript which lists grades and confirms issuance of a diploma/degree in dental hygiene. The transcript must be sent directly to the College from the Office of the Registrar of the post-secondary institution attended by the applicant.

The University of Alberta (U of A) Dental Hygiene Program is the Council-approved program in Alberta, as it teaches to the full scope of practice in Alberta. It serves as the benchmark program of study for all applicants for registration. Under section 5 of the Regulation, when graduates from accredited schools other than the U of A submit an application for registration, the College compares the qualifications and competencies required for graduation from that school to the qualifications and competencies required for graduation from the U of A program to determine if the applicant's program of study is substantially equivalent to the U of A. This is done through a program review. The results of the review may apply to cohorts that graduate within the 3 years after the graduation date of the program reviewed. The College will initiate the request when a new review is triggered, but it is ultimately the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the information is provided by their school. In the event a program review is required, the application process is on hold until the program review is complete.

The outcome of a program review is not guaranteed based on the previous review. The substantial equivalency of a program *may* change before an individual graduates, depending on when the last review was completed and how long the program is.

In order to assist with determining whether an applicant's qualifications and competencies are substantially equivalent to those required for graduation from the Council-approved program, the Registrar or Registration Committee may require the applicant to undergo any examination, testing, or other assessment activity; and may direct the applicant to undergo any education or training activities that are considered necessary in order for the applicant to be registered. The applicant is responsible for the costs of assessments, written or clinical examinations, testing, and any additional education or training activities.

a. External Agency Assessment

The Registrar or Registration Committee may require the assistance of an external agency to facilitate an academic credential assessment for foreign-trained applicants. The applicant is responsible for the cost for any assessment conducted by an external agency. If an external assessment is required, the applicant will be contacted by the College and will be provided with contact information for assessment agencies acceptable to the College. The report of an external assessment agency must be sent directly from the agency to the College.

b. Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene

Successful completion of a Council-approved, performance-based examination may be required to assist in determining substantial equivalence of clinical competence (knowledge, skills, abilities, and judgment). The Council-approved exam is the Canadian Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene (CPEDH) and may be required if:

- The qualifications and competencies required for graduation from the applicant's dental hygiene program have been reviewed and deemed not substantially equivalent to those of the U of A Dental Hygiene Program OR
- If, at the time of graduation, the applicant's dental hygiene program was not accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

The CPEDH is administered by the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada (FDHRC). More information about the CPEDH including eligibility, application procedures, fees, rules, and assessment, can be found on the [FDHRC website](#). Applicants are advised that a maximum of three (3) examination attempts are permitted.

If an applicant is unsure if the CPEDH is required for their application, it is advised that they contact the College. If the CPEDH is required for application, the applicant must upload a copy of their CPEDH completion certificate in the application form. The College will verify successful completion of the CPEDH.

4. Jurisprudence Examination

The ACDH Jurisprudence Examination is comprised of a series of learning modules and exams, and is only available in English. The exams are designed to test the applicant's knowledge of the legislation, Code of Ethics, Standards of Practice and Guidelines, and other regulatory documents that govern the practice of dental hygiene in the province of Alberta. Dental hygienists must be familiar with and comply with provincial legislation and the College's regulatory documents. Failure to do so may result in being subject to disciplinary action. Under section 3 of the Regulation, an applicant for registration must have successfully completed the ACDH Jurisprudence Examination within the 36 months (3 years) prior to the date the application is made complete.

The learning modules and exams are located on the College's secure learning management system and contain all required instructions and resources. The modules and exams are open-book and can be completed at an applicant's convenience.

Applicants must complete the section of the application form requesting access to the exam and authorizing the College to use the personal information provided to the learning management system to manage the modules and the applicant's completion of the exam.

5. Good Character & Fitness to Practice

Section 28 of the Act requires applicants to provide written evidence of having good character and reputation. Applicants must provide evidence of having good character and reputation by:

- Answering all questions related to previous or current registration and/or applications for registration, unprofessional conduct processes, disciplinary action, and criminal offences;
- Listing jurisdictions in which they are currently or were previously certified, licensed, or registered to practice dental hygiene or any regulated health profession; and having each regulatory authority complete and provide a Verification of Registration Form directly to the College;
- Answering all questions related to good character and fitness to practice; and
- Providing any other relevant evidence requested by the Registrar or Registration Committee.

a. Verification Of Registration

If an applicant is or was certified, licensed, or registered to practice any regulated health profession, the applicant must complete Section A of the Verification of Registration form. A copy of the entire Verification of Registration form (sections A and B) must be sent to each regulatory authority where the applicant is currently or was previously certified, licensed, or registered. Section B must be completed by the regulatory authority and sent directly to the College **no longer than 6 months prior** to the date the application is made complete.

If a Verification of Registration is returned with a finding of unprofessional conduct based on sexual misconduct or abuse, a full disclosure will be requested from the applicant and the regulatory authority and the application may be referred to the Registration Committee for decision.

b. Vulnerable Sector Checks

All applicants must provide a vulnerable sector check issued within 1 year prior to the date the application is made complete. A basic criminal record check will not be accepted. The vulnerable sector check can only be conducted by the local police service (or RCMP detachment if there is no local police service). Some police services require a letter from the College to process the request. There is a link to a standard letter available in the application form for this purpose. The College will accept an original document in a sealed envelope, a **notarized**ⁱ copy, or an electronic version sent directly from the local police service to the College.

c. Protecting Patients from Sexual Abuse and Misconduct

Under section 135.7(2) of the Act, all regulated health professionals in Alberta must successfully complete training on preventing and addressing sexual abuse and sexual misconduct towards patients.

Applicants for registration with the College are required to complete the e-learning course “Protecting Patients from Sexual Abuse and Misconduct.” This interactive e-learning course was developed by the Alberta Federation of Regulated Health Professions (AFRHP) and is available via the AFRHP website here: afrhp.org/protecting-patients/

The course consists of three modules that will familiarize applicants with the section of the Act and how to prevent, recognize and respond to sexual abuse and sexual misconduct. Please note, the course must be completed in one session – applicants are unable to exit the course midway then re-enter at a different time to finish the content. Once the course has been completed, the program will generate a “Certificate of Completion”, which must be submitted with an application for registration.

Please note that this course includes scenarios depicting sexual abuse and misconduct that may be disturbing or triggering to some viewers. If you have concerns, please speak, in confidence, to the College Registration Lead.

6. Professional Liability Insurance

Section 28 of the Act requires that applicants provide evidence of having professional liability insurance. The College requires all persons on the General register to have insurance that meets the minimum standard as approved by Council.

Applicants are strongly advised to review the [PLI Policy](#) found on the Policies page of the ACDH website prior to submitting their application to ensure they have met the requirements. Insurance that does not meet the requirements is not acceptable.

Applicants must upload a copy of a valid insurance certificate showing the minimum requirements. Receipts or membership cards are not acceptable as evidence of insurance. Enhanced insurance options may be of particular interest to registrants who perform advanced restricted activities procedures (local anaesthesia, nitrous oxide/oxygen conscious sedation, restorative procedures, orthodontic procedures, etc.).

7. CPR Certification

Section 9 of the Regulation requires that applicants provide evidence of current CPR certification. Applicants must provide evidence of having successfully completed a CPR course at the level approved by Council. CPR certification training must include theoretical instruction and assessment and an in-person, hands-on component for skills practice and evaluation.

Applicants are strongly advised to review the [CPR Policy](#) found on the Policies page of the ACDH website prior to submitting their application to ensure they have met the requirements. CPR that does not meet the requirements is not acceptable.

The course must be completed no longer than 12 months prior to the date the application is made complete. Applicants must upload a completed CPR Certification Declaration Statement for Instructors along with a copy of their current CPR wallet card/certificate as evidence of holding CPR certification at the required level.

8. English Language Requirements

Section 28 of the Act requires that an applicant be sufficiently proficient in English to be able to engage safely and competently in the practice of dental hygiene. If there is no equivalent English proficiency requirement in the jurisdiction where the applicant is currently registered, applicants whose primary language is not English and/or whose program of study was conducted in a language other than English will be required to provide proof of English language competence.

Official English language scores must be sent directly from the testing service to the College. Examination scores will be accepted only if achieved **within the most recent two (2) years**. A list of accepted English language tests and the accepted achievement level for each is below. Applicants may choose to complete either TOEFL iBT or IELTS. Please contact the testing service for information on the test(s).

- [TOEFL iBT](#) (internet based TOEFL test of English as a Foreign Language)
 - Minimum scores of 21 in reading, listening, and writing
 - Minimum score of 26 in speaking
- [IELTS](#) (International English Language Testing System – academic version)
 - Overall score of 6.5 with no band less than 5.0 is required for the Academic Version

- o Minimum score of 7.5 on the spoken section of the test

9. Competence To Practice Restricted Activities

Sections 8 and 9 of the Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation identify “restricted activities” that dental hygienists are authorized to practice. As these restricted activities involve a significant degree of risk to the public, they can only be performed by individuals with specific competencies. Competencies related to many of the restricted activities authorized in the Regulation, are taught in the basic curriculum of accredited dental hygiene educational programs (e.g., scaling, root planing, exposing radiographs).

Competencies related to the following restricted activities, which are included in Alberta dental hygienists’ scope of practice, are not inclusive in all dental hygiene educational programs:

- a. Prescribing and administering local anaesthesia by injection;
- b. Prescribing and administering nitrous oxide/oxygen for the purpose of conscious sedation;
- c. Restorative procedures of a permanent nature in collaboration with a dentist;
- d. Orthodontic procedures including preliminary fitting of appliances in collaboration with a dentist;
- e. Preliminary fitting of periodontal appliances in collaboration with a dentist; and
- f. Prescribing the Schedule 1 Drugs listed in the Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation

Applicants for registration are not required to demonstrate competence in the restricted activities listed as (a) to (f) for the purpose of initial registration.

If, on their registration application form, an applicant identifies that they have completed formal classroom and clinical education related to one or more of the restricted activities listed as (a) to (f) above, a separate application for authorization to perform the restricted activity must be submitted to the College **within 6 months of completing** the education.

The [Advanced Restricted Activities policy](#) can be found on the Advanced Restricted Activities page of the ACDH website. The application form is available through the Applicant Portal.

At any time following initial registration, a registrant may successfully complete a Council-approved course related to performing one of the restricted activities listed as (a) to (f) above and may apply for authorization to perform the activity. The application form and all required supporting documents must be sent to the College for review **within 6 months of completing the education**.

No applicant may perform an advanced restricted activity until the applicant has received notification that the application for authorization to perform the advanced restricted activity has been approved.

Submitting an Application

Applicants must submit their application and upload supporting documents in the online application form. Supporting documents that must be sent directly to the College can be sent by email to registration@acdh.ca or mailed to the address below:

Registration
Alberta College of Dental Hygienists
Suite 302, 8657 – 51 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB, T6E 6A8

Inquiries

The College would be pleased to answer any questions regarding an application for registration to practice dental hygiene in Alberta. All correspondence and inquiries should be directed to the Registration Team by phone at (780) 465-1756 or by email at registration@acdh.ca.

ⁱ A notarized copy is one which is certified as a true copy of the original by a lawyer, judge, MLA, or other individual designated as a Notary Public. A Notary Public must sign, stamp and seal notarized documents. Photocopies or electronic copies of notarized documents will not be accepted. A Commissioner of Oaths **cannot** notarize documents.