

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

For New Graduates of Dental Hygiene Education Programs That Are Not Substantially Equivalent

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 “HPRAR”), the *Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation* (the “DHPR”), 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 as a New Graduate of a Dental Hygiene Education Program That is NOT Substantially Equivalent

This pathway applies to applicants who have graduated from a dental hygiene education program that has been determined to be not substantially equivalent to a Council-approved program of study **AND** who have not been registered as a dental hygienist in another jurisdiction.

A Council-approved program is required to teach to the full scope of practice in Alberta. The University of Alberta (U of A) Dental Hygiene Program is currently the only Council-approved program in Alberta, as serves as the benchmark program of study for all applicants for registration. Although the U of A currently

only offers a degree-level education program, the benchmark used by the College compares to the diploma-level.

Starting the Registration Process

Applicants are strongly advised to review the [Registration and Practice Permit Renewal Policy](#) found on the ACDH website prior to submitting their application to ensure they have met the requirements for application including CPR, professional liability insurance and vulnerable sector checks.

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 DHP, 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 Registering as a Dental Hygienist page of the ACDH website for more information.

The College works to process each application as quickly and efficiently as possible. The process generally takes four (4) 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 an application form and 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. An application form and application fee are submitted through the College's Applicant Portal.
2. An automated 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.
 - *The College process is on hold until all the required documentation is received, including evidence of successful completion of the Jurisprudence Exam.*
5. An email is sent to the applicant notifying them when their application is complete and in the final review stage.
6. 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.*
7. The Registrar or their delegate reviews the application and supporting documents and makes a decision.
8. An email is sent to the applicant to notify them of the Registrar's decision and next steps.
 - *The process is on hold until the applicant decides to accept or not accept the Registrar's decision and pays the Permit fee if required.*
9. If the application is approved and the applicant accepts the Registrar's decision and pays the Permit fee, the College enters their name onto the General Register and issues a unique registration number and Practice Permit.
10. An email is sent to the registrant informing them of their registration number, initial registration date, reporting period and other important information about being registered with the College.

Decision on Application for Registration

The Registrar or Registration Committee may approve an application, with or without conditions; defer registration; or refuse the application for registration. In each case, the decision is based on an assessment of what is in the best interest of the public.

2. Dental Hygiene Education & Substantial Equivalency

a. Evidence of Education

The College must receive an **official** transcript which lists the applicant's grades and confirms issuance of a diploma/degree in dental hygiene in the applicant's name. The transcript must be sent directly to the College from the post-secondary institution or a secure transcript provider.

b. Substantial Equivalency

Section 5 of the DHPR requires that an applicant's qualifications must be determined by the Registrar or the Registration Committee to be substantially equivalent to the competence requirements of a graduate from a Council-approved dental hygiene program. To make this determination, the ACDH compares the qualifications and competencies required for graduation from a program that is not Council-approved to the qualifications and competencies required for graduation from the benchmark program to determine if the applicant's program of study is substantially equivalent to a Council-approved program. This is done through a substantial equivalence 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 the length of the program.

If a dental hygiene education program is determined to not be substantially equivalent to the benchmark program, a new graduate applicant is welcome to apply directly after graduation but is required to demonstrate substantial equivalence of their individual qualifications. As per section 5(2) of the DHPR, the Registrar or Registration Committee may require a new graduate applicant to undergo any examination, testing, assessment, education, or training that the Registrar or Registration Committee consider necessary for the applicant to demonstrate that their individual qualifications and competence are substantially equivalent in order to be registered.

For example, an applicant may be required to demonstrate competence by successfully completing a clinical assessment. The requirement for any such examination, testing, assessment education, or training will be determined by the ACDH. The applicant is responsible for the costs of assessments, written or clinical examinations, testing, and any additional education or training activities.

Currently, the available assessments are offered through the University of Alberta Continuing Dental Education department (the Clinical Competence Assessment), or the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada (the [Canadian Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene](#)).

3. National Examination

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

4. Jurisprudence Examination

Successful completion of a Council-approved jurisprudence examination is a legislated requirement for registration under section 3 of the DHPR. The Council-approved ACDH Jurisprudence Examination is comprised of a series of learning modules and exams and is only available in English. The exams are designed to review and 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.

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 Applicant Profile form authorizing the College to use the personal information provided to the learning management system to facilitate the applicant's enrollment in and use of the learning management system.

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:

- Responding truthfully to 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;
- Responding truthfully to 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 one (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 a Canadian law enforcement agency. Some agencies 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. If an agency requests an Agency Code, please contact the College. The College will accept an original document in a sealed envelope, a **notarized** 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 through the College’s secure learning management system.

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 uploaded in the application form.

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 regulated members on the General register to have insurance that meets the minimum standard as approved by Council and detailed in section 3 of the [Registration and Practice Permit Renewal Policy](#). Insurance that does not meet the requirements is not acceptable.

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

7. CPR Certification

Section 9 of the DHPAR requires that applicants provide evidence of current CPR certification at the level approved by Council and detailed in section 2 of the [Registration and Practice Permit Renewal Policy](#). CPR certification training must include theoretical instruction and assessment and an in-person, hands-on component for skills practice and evaluation. 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](#) as well as 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 achieved within two (2) years prior to the date the application is made complete must be sent directly from the testing service to the College. The accepted English language tests and the accepted achievement level for each is below. 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
 - Minimum score of 7.5 on the spoken section of the test

9. Competence To Practice Restricted Activities

Sections 8 and 9 of the HPRAR 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 HPRAR, are taught in the basic curriculum of Council-approved or substantially equivalent dental hygiene educational programs (e.g., scaling, root planing, applying ionizing radiation).

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 section 8(d) of the HPRAR.

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**, or with appropriate evidence of currency.

The [Advanced Restricted Activities policy](#) can be found on 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.