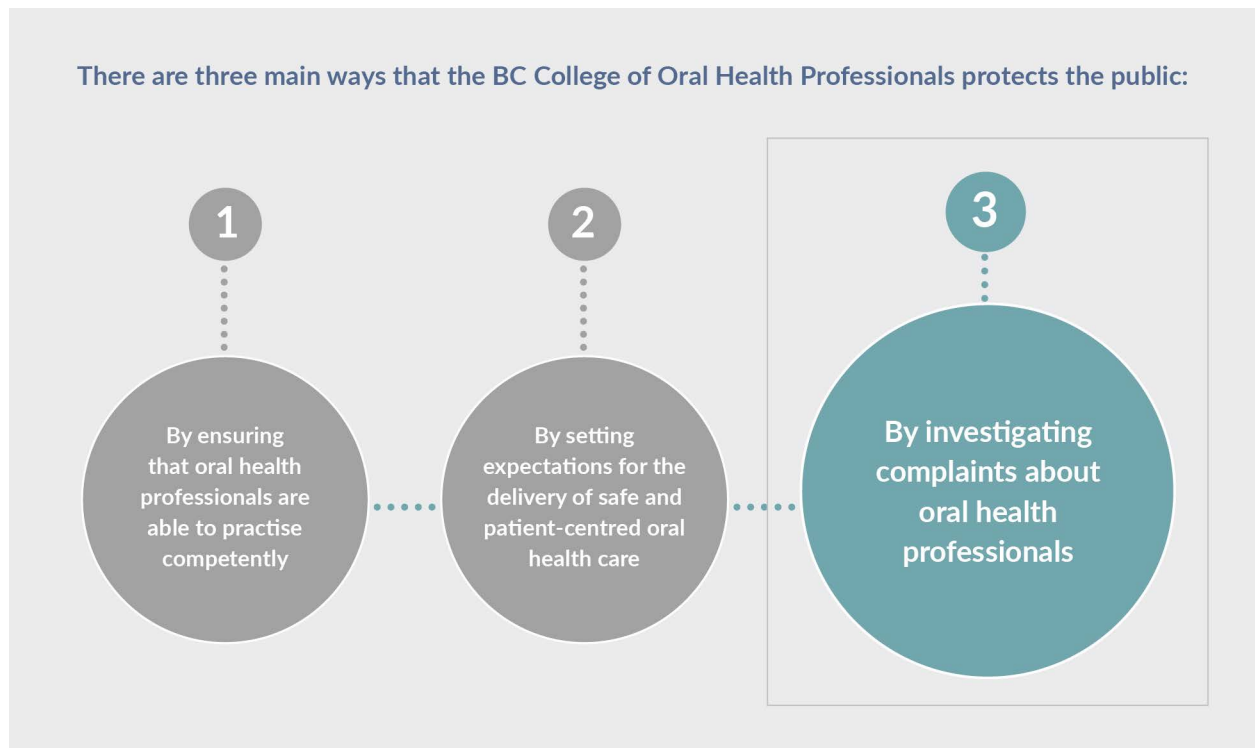


## Expectations for clinical and ethical practice

# How a complaint is resolved

Applies to Dentists, Dental Therapists, and  
Certified Dental Assistants

There are three main ways that the BC College of Oral Health Professionals protects the public:



The British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals (BCCOHP) was created on September 1, 2022 through the amalgamation of four health regulatory colleges: the College of Dental Hygienists of BC, the College of Dental Surgeons of BC, the College of Dental Technicians of BC, and the College of Denturists of BC. All current requirements for standards of clinical and ethical practice issued by the four colleges remain in place upon amalgamation. This document was created by the College of Dental Surgeons of BC and will be updated to reflect the amalgamation.

## COMPLAINTS PROCESS

(normally confidential)

**STEP 1**  
CDSBC Receives a  
Written Complaint

CDSBC investigates all complaints related to the conduct or competence of dentists, dental therapists and certified dental assistants.

Complaints that are trivial, frivolous, vexatious or made in bad faith are dismissed.

**STEP 2**  
Preliminary Evaluation

The complaints team conducts a preliminary evaluation and recommends one of three options for consideration by the Inquiry Committee\*:

- (a) dismissal (e.g., purely financial matters)
- (b) early resolution (e.g. relatively simple complaints)
- (c) investigation (and assignment to a Complaint Investigator)

The complaint investigators on the complaints team are dentists.

**STEP 3**  
Inquiry Committee\*  
Review

The Inquiry Committee reviews the complaint and decides next steps, if any.

The Inquiry Committee consists of dentists, certified dental assistants, and members of the public.

The Inquiry Committee generally meets in panels of at least 3 members (at least one registrant and at least 1/3 public representation).

**STEP 4**  
Investigation

If not dismissed or resolved through early resolution, the next step is investigation. The Complaint Investigator gathers all relevant information and prepares a report for resolution.

This step may include telephone conversations, in-person interviews, and gathering of dental records, X-rays, models, and more.

The complaint letter is forwarded to the registrant, who has the opportunity to respond. The registrant's response is also provided to the complainant.

**STEP 5**  
Complaints Team Prepares Report with  
Recommendations

The complaints team reviews the summary report and recommendations for resolving the complaint. Resolution options include:

- (a) close the complaint with no action taken, or with some recommendations/best practice advice; or
- (b) ask the registrant to sign an agreement to take certain steps to improve their practice (such as taking certain courses to improve skills) or to be mentored by another registrant for a period of time.

A report summarizing the complaint, investigation and recommendations for resolution is prepared for the Inquiry Committee.

This is a collaborative process with the registrant. The registrant has the opportunity to discuss any concerns identified and the proposed resolution. The registrant:

- can agree, or
- can provide a written submission proposing an alternative resolution.

Each complaint is reviewed at a weekly complaints team meeting. The process is overseen by the Inquiry Committee, ensuring that there are multiple dentists reviewing each complaint file.

**STEP 6**  
Inquiry Committee  
Decision

The Inquiry Committee receives the report and recommendations for resolution and makes its decision.

The majority of complaints are resolved at this stage. Complaints only proceed if the registrant provides a written submission for the Inquiry Committee Panel to consider, or if the Committee directs that a citation be issued against the registrant.

**Remedial not Punitive**  
If concerns about a registrant's practice are identified, CDSBC takes a remedial and collaborative approach to resolving those concerns. All complaints resolved without a citation happen by consent.

## DISCIPLINE PROCESS

(normally public)

**STEP 7**  
Inquiry Committee Directs  
the Registrar  
to Issue a Citation

Citations are issued in the rare instances where an issue is serious, an agreement cannot be reached, and/or the registrant has not responded to the complaint.

A citation is a formal document that lists the allegations against the registrant and provides notice that there will be a public hearing before the Discipline Committee.

Less than 2% of complaints reach the discipline stage. Even after a citation is issued, the registrant can make a proposal to the Inquiry Committee to resolve the citation.

### A COMMITTEE-DRIVEN PROCESS

The Inquiry Committee gives direction and decides how each complaint will be resolved. In the event that a complaint proceeds to a discipline hearing, the Discipline Committee will determine the resolution.