

Continuing Education Requirements

For Dentists, Dental Therapists, and Certified Dental Assistants

Category: Quality Assurance

Source: CDSBC

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Disclaimer: This document was developed by the former College of Dental Surgeons of BC before the amalgamation of BC's four oral health regulatory colleges in 2022 and the introduction of BCCOHP's *Professional Standards for the Oral Health Team* (Professional Standards), effective June 30, 2025. The Professional Standards define the minimum expectations for professional and ethical conduct, performance, and behaviour for regulated oral health professionals in BC.

While BCCOHP is in the process of rescinding and replacing all legacy practice resources with unified standards, this document remains applicable.

Territorial acknowledgement

The offices of BCCOHP are located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Coast Salish and Lekwungen-speaking Peoples, represented today by the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Acknowledging the territories and the original stewards of these lands is a fundamental responsibility of our organization and in keeping with our commitment to support the provision of safe, effective, culturally sensitive oral health care for British Columbians.

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For the purpose of this document, "registrant" includes certified dental assistants (CDAs), dental therapists and dentists.

A commitment to continuing competence and lifelong learning is fundamental to the fulfilment of a registrant's professional responsibilities.

Introduction

The College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia (CDSBC) is mandated to regulate certified dental assistants (CDAs), dental therapists and dentists in the public interest. Through CDSBC, the dental profession is accountable for the quality of dental care that is provided within British Columbia.

All registrants must keep their knowledge up to date and maintain competency in their practices throughout their careers. All members of a dental team must strive to deliver the highest standards of professional care while providing dental services.

The need for registrants to be current in learning and practice has intensified in recent years. Rapid technological change, innovation in health care delivery, new clinical procedures and increasing social awareness are just a few examples of why every CDA, dental therapist and dentist must meet their professional responsibility and the need to maintain competence. A commitment to continuing competence and lifelong learning is fundamental to each practitioner's obligation to fulfil this responsibility.

CDSBC has established continuing competency requirements for annual renewal of registration and certification for registrants as part of a Quality Assurance program. The details of the program and guidelines for fulfilling the requirements are presented in this document.

Program Principles

CDSBC's Quality Assurance program principles are listed below. Registrants planning continuing education activities should consider the following:

- It is the responsibility of every registrant to maintain his or her own competence to practice.
- The incorporation of self-reflection and self-assessment into day-to-day practice are important components of this responsibility.
- Practice improvement and professional growth are the ultimate goals of continuing education within CDSBC's Quality Assurance program.
- BCCOHP's *Professional Standards for the Oral Health Team* and Practice Standards are core documents that should be used for self-assessment by oral health professionals.
- Registrants are encouraged to link learning activities and professional development to their individual practices as a means of enhancing competence.

Program Objective

The objective of the Quality Assurance program is to promote competence and professionalism at all stages of a CDA's dental therapist's or dentist's career. To be eligible for credit, activities must have significant intellectual and/or practical content related to the practice of dentistry. Activities can also be related to the professional responsibilities or ethical obligations of the participant. See below for further information on eligibility criteria.

Eligibility

Registrants should consider the following eligibility criteria before submitting a continuing education course for credit. To be eligible for CE credits, an activity must include at least one of the following criteria:

- have significant intellectual and/or practical content related to oral health
- improve patient safety
- improve the efficacy of patient care and treatment
- address continuing competence of the practitioner
- address change in practice environments (e.g. cultural sensitivity)
- address advances in technology that improve patient outcomes
- relate to the professional responsibilities or ethical obligations of the participant

Activities eligible for CE credit must align with **BCCOHP's Professional and Practice Standards**, and should be taught or led by a person with appropriate credentials and/or experience related to the subject matter.



Presenters who teach restricted activities must be permitted (either currently or previously) to perform the specific restricted activity being taught.

Information presented at courses should be based on sound scientific principles.

CE activities are not eligible if they:

- pertain to personal or financial gain;
- are not in patients' best interest.

Quality Assurance Requirements

Quality Assurance requirements are set out in provincial legislation governing CDAs, dental therapists and dentists. Registrants acquire credits in three-year cycles, with each new cycle commencing January 1 of the calendar year following the year of registration or certification with CDSBC.

Credit Hours

One hour = 1 credit

Only hours of lecture, instruction or participation are eligible.

Credits Required

Dentists – must obtain a minimum of 90 credits during a three-year cycle.

Certified specialists – at least 50 per cent of the total 90-credit requirement must be obtained through programs pertaining to the specialty in which the dentist is registered.

Certified dental assistants – must obtain a minimum of 36 credits during a three-year cycle.

Dental therapists – must obtain a minimum of 75 credits during a three-year cycle.

Reporting Credits

Credits should be reported as they are acquired. Credits in excess of those required in a three-year cycle cannot be carried forward to a subsequent three-year cycle. Registrants are responsible for ensuring that credits toward continuing competence are reported to CDSBC. To submit credits, log into your account on the CDSBC website and click on "submit CE credits" in the continuing education section, or use the approved individual submission forms. Registrants must select the category of topic, modality of learning, provide a brief course description and upload supporting documentation.

Additionally, they must maintain documentary evidence of program completion. For eligible multiple day courses/seminars/self-study, proof of attendance and/or a course outline is required and must be provided to CDSBC to receive credits.



Audit Process

After registrants submit their course details through CDSBC's online CE portal, the course status will appear as "submitted" and credits will be applied.

Course submissions are randomly selected for audit daily. Those who have been selected for audit will receive an email notifying them that their submission has been marked as "under review," as well as a request for documentation of successful course completion. While under review, credits are not applied to CE transcripts.

During the audit process, CDSBC staff review topic categories and modality selections, and documentation of course completion. If more information is required (e.g., course outline, certificate of completion, etc.), it is communicated on the registrant's CE transcript.

Once additional information is provided, submissions are reviewed by staff. After staff review, and if requirements are met, staff mark items as "approved" and credits are applied. If requirements are not met or sessions are ineligible for CE credits, they are marked as "denied".

Categories of Continuing Education

Following are descriptions of the categories under which CDAs, dental therapists and dentists may earn CE credits and the maximum number of credits allowed in each category over a three-year cycle.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Max credits</i> (per cycle)		
		Dentists	CDAs	Dental Therapists
CLINICAL DENTAL	Relates directly to the provision of patient care and treatment.	no limit		
DENTAL PRACTICE MANAGEMENT	Relates directly to the operation and management of a dental practice. Topics such as marketing or financial/retirement planning are not eligible for credit.	30	18	18
DENTAL/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES	First aid, CPR, ACLS, and management of dental/medical emergencies.	24	12	12
NON-CLINICAL DENTAL	Topics that are applicable to the practice of dentistry.	15	12	12
OTHER DENTAL	E.g. CDA modules, lecturers/presenters/mentors/supervisors, university/college courses, examinations, publication authorship, and learning contract/direct study.	variable (see pages 6-7)		

Learning Modalities

Following are examples of CE learning modalities and the credit limits for each one within the three-year CE cycle (one cycle = three years).

Credits are hour-for-hour, unless specified otherwise.

Courses/Lectures

Single or multi-day courses or scientific lectures are eligible for credit on an hour-for-hour basis.

Dental Scientific Meetings

Single or multi-day dental scientific lectures or conventions.

CREDIT LIMITS

Credits can be claimed hour-for-hour for non-specific educational activities (e.g., exhibits) to a maximum of 5 credits per event (not including formal courses).

Dental/Medical Emergencies

First aid/CPR, ACLS and other emergency management courses.

CREDIT LIMITS

Dentists: 24 credits
Dental Therapists: 12 credits
CDAs: 12 credits

Publication Authorship

Dental articles written and published in a peer-reviewed journal of dental or medical literature may qualify, subject to approval by the Quality Assurance Committee.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Up to 15 credits may be granted per article, at the discretion of the Quality Assurance Committee.

(An example of 15 credits would be the lead author of an article published in a professional publication.)

Books or chapters in books.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Credits are granted on an individual basis upon assessment by CDSBC.

Study Clubs

APPROVAL PROCESS

Study clubs and other forms of peer-to-peer learning are encouraged.

A study club session must meet the CE requirements outlined in this document to be eligible for credits.

Advanced Study

Studies in a field applicable to the practice of dentistry in an accredited university or college.

A new three-year cycle will begin on January 1 of the year following completion of a postgraduate dental program.

CREDIT LIMITS

Credits for full-time programs are granted on a course-by-course basis to a maximum of:

Dentists: 90 credits
Dental Therapists: 75 credits
CDAs: 36 credits

Part-time study:

Dentists: 54 credits
Dental Therapists: 45 credits
CDAs: 22 credits

(Part-time courses must be in excess of 35 hours/semester.)

Self-Study Courses

Self-study courses may include the following mediums: videos, recorded webinars, and other recorded virtual learning.

APPROVAL PROCESS

The Quality Assurance Committee will determine the number of credits eligible and will extend credit only to those courses that include:

- a clearly defined learning objective;
- supporting literature references;
- post-course knowledge assessment or other mechanism accepted by the Quality Assurance Committee; and
- direct feedback of post-test results

CREDIT LIMITS

Self-study courses qualify for:

Dentists: 54 credits per cycle

Dental Therapists: 45 credits per cycle

CDAs: 22 credits per cycle

*(Total hours will **not** be based on the time an individual takes to complete a program.)*

The Quality Assurance Committee has extended the removal the self-study maximum for dentists, dental therapists and CDAs indefinitely, as Quality Assurance Programs are currently under review. Registrants and CDAs can claim up to a maximum of 10 credits per day.

Dental Teaching

Lecturers, presenters or study club mentors may claim one credit for one hour of CE.

Clinical Supervisors may claim one credit for three hours of clinical instruction.

CREDIT LIMITS

Maximum of 20 credits per year, including time for the development of course content.

Examinations

Proof of successful completion of recognized postgraduate dental examinations other than entry-level or specialty qualification exams.

CREDIT LIMITS

25 credits

CDA Modules

Completion of approved certified dental assistant advanced education modules for prescribed areas of dentistry.

CREDIT LIMITS

Maximum 22 per module



Approved Educational Sources

The Quality Assurance Committee reserves the right to deny eligibility of credits for programs that do not meet the objective of the Quality Assurance Program, even if those programs come from approved sources.

The following list includes, but is not limited to, sources where CDAs, dental therapists and dentists may obtain courses, lectures or equivalents that are recognized for continuing education credit, subject to limitations contained in the guidelines.

NOTE: The Quality Assurance Committee reserves the right to deny eligibility of credits for programs that do not meet the objective of the Quality Assurance Program, even if those programs come from approved sources. If there are questions as to whether a course will be eligible for credits, please contact CDSBC for further information.

- A recognized educational institution, i.e.
 - » study clubs
 - » teaching hospital
 - » government health agencies
 - » military-sponsored health related courses
 - » emergency health programs (CPR, ACLS, first aid, etc.)
 - » dental component societies
 - » professional association courses
 - » dental or medical regulatory authorities
- An educational institute that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or American Dental Association (ADA)
- A body that has been approved by the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), the American Dental Association – Continuing Education Recognition Program (ADA – CERP), or the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) recognition program
- An international, national, provincial or state dental or medical association
 - » Examples: Canadian Dental Association (CDA), Canadian Dental Assistants' Association (CDAA), Certified Dental Assistants of BC (CDABC), American Dental Association (ADA), and Federation Dentaire Internationale (FDI)

For More Information

If you have questions or require additional reporting forms, contact CDSBC Continuing Education at **604-736-3621** or toll free at **1-800-663-9169**. You can also reach us by email at **CE@cdsbc.org** or visit our website at **www.cdsbc.org**.



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