

## ***CONTINUING COMPETENCY***

This section describes the policies of the College of Dental Hygienists regarding continuing competency.

## ***THE CONTINUING COMPETENCY POLICIES***

### **Introduction**

Continuing study and self-assessment of educational needs is the fundamental and lifelong responsibility of a professional person.

The professions of dental hygiene and dentistry are constantly changing through advances in technology, research, innovations in health care delivery and procedures, and increasing social awareness. Continual change accentuates the need for dental hygiene registrants to remain current.

In order to formalize its commitment to continuing professional study and to meet the mandate of the Health Professions Act under the College's bylaws, the College, through the Quality Assurance Committee, has established continuing competency (CC) requirements for the registration and re-registration of dental hygienists.

### **Policy**

In 2003, the Board of the College approved the following CC policies, effective January 1, 2004. The policies are based on the principles outlined below:

1. Continuing competency activities must contribute to scientific, practical, professional or ethical aspects of the registrant's dental hygiene practice.
2. Registrants have a professional responsibility to read journals and newsletters and keep current with their practice. Credit may be submitted for continuing competency courses or programs beyond this responsibility.

3. In order to be eligible for credit, the content of continuing competency activities must be applicable to the individual registrant's practice of dental hygiene. Practice areas include clinical therapy, health promotion, education, administration and/or research.
4. It is a registrant's professional responsibility to determine his/her specific continuing competency needs and to pursue activities that enable him/her to maintain competency in his/her dental hygiene practice.
5. The College strongly recommends that registrants retain records that support all continuing competency credit submissions for each current cycle and for a least six months following each cycle.

## I. General Information

The Quality Assurance Committee reserves the right to approve or disapprove credits for activities based on their relevance to the practice of dental hygiene as described in the Scope of Practice Statement in Tab 6 of the Registrant's Handbook.

- Continuing Competency (CC) credit requirement  
The College requires 75 CC credits per three-year cycle. The College's CC requirement has been in place since 1995. Requirements under the previous regulatory authority were the same.
- Alternatives to CC credits  
As alternative to obtaining CC credits, registrants may obtain their required credits for each three-year cycle by successfully completing BC Dental Hygiene Practice Examination or a dental hygiene refresher course approved by the Registration Committee.

- Cycles and specific requirements  
Credit hours in excess of those required in a three-year cycle cannot be carried forward to a subsequent cycle.
  - Registration Applicants  
More information on the continuing competency requirements for applicants can be found in the registration section of this handbook and in the registration application package available from the College office. The CC policies in this section may be applied to determine eligible activities and credit amounts.
  - New Registrants  
Three-year cycles begin January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following initial registration. Credits obtained after initial registration but prior to the beginning of a three-year cycle will apply towards that cycle.
  - Full, Full (Residential Care) and Conditional Registrants  
The three year CC cycles are based on a January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> year. 75 CC credits are required in order to renew registration by March 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following the end of a registrant's three-year CC cycle. For Conditional registrants, local anaesthesia courses taken as a requirement for Full registration are not eligible for credit.
  - Non-Practising Registrants  
Non-Practising registrants are not required to maintain their CC credits, but when converting to a practising registration class, must show evidence of completing 75 hours of CC within the previous three years or having successfully completed one of the

alternatives described above. A new three-year cycle will commence January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following conversion from non-practising to practising registration.

▪ Full-Time Students

Full-time advanced study is defined as post-diploma dental or dental hygiene programs of study offered by recognized education institutions that lead to a Bachelor, Master or Doctorate degree or other specific credential with a dental related component.

Dental hygienists enrolled full-time in advanced dental studies will have their CC cycle waived and a new three-year cycle will commence January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year following the completion of studies. A copy of the registrant's university/college transcript or proof of university/college registration must be submitted annually to confirm the registrant's status.

## II. Specific Guidelines

While meeting the principles outlined above, the following continuing competency activities are eligible for credit. They are grouped into two categories:

- CC activities (no limit per cycle); and
- Limited credit CC activities (maximum 25 credits per cycle).

### CC Activities

a. **Education courses or sessions:**

Hour-for-hour credit

Continuing competency activities may be offered in a variety of formats, including presentations, seminars

and clinical sessions. They may be offered by continuing education agencies, study clubs, and local, regional, national or international dental hygiene organizations and may include conferences and conventions. Examples include:

- Sessions in the registrant's scope of practice area(s) that relate to all aspects of client assessment, dental hygiene diagnosis, treatment planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Convention/conference sessions in the registrant's area of dental hygiene practice.
- Any supporting aspects of a registrant's practice. Depending on the registrant's area of practice, this could include courses on communications, languages, ergonomics, hazardous materials, record keeping, computer skills, financial management and general or specialty dentistry.

**b. Part-time advanced study:**

13 CC credits per college/university credit

Registrants may be enrolled part-time in post-diploma dental or dental hygiene programs of study offered by recognized education institutions that lead to a Bachelor, Master or Doctorate degree or other specific credential with a dental related component. Courses may be on-site or on-line and each course qualifies for 13 CC credits per university/college credit. A copy of the registrant's university/college transcript or proof of course registration must be retained. (NB: See section I for information on full-time advanced study).

**c. Formal programs of study for prescribed areas of dental hygiene practice:**

Hour-for-hour credit

Registrants successfully completing formal education courses in specific areas of dental hygiene practice qualify for hour-for-hour credit. Proof of successful completion must be retained.

**d. Directed studies:**

Credits granted on recommendation of the mentor

Directed study contracts may be initiated by a registrant to address a specific learning need. This could include a literature review of a specific topic, development of health promotion materials, specific advanced clinical education, or an internship program. A formalized learning contract must exist between the mentor and the individual, and the contract must be approved by the Quality Assurance Committee prior to the activity being initiated. Guidelines for Directed Study contract may be found at the end of this tab.

**e. Self-study:**

Credits granted as recommended

Registrants may participate in self-study continuing education courses via internet, publications, CD ROM, DVD, videotapes and other interactive activities.

- Must provide evidence of successful completion of a post course examination.
- Certificates of completion from continuing education providers must be retained for possible future reference.

Self-study journals need to be approved by the Quality Assurance Committee. Journals or

newsletters that have not yet been reviewed will be reviewed on request to the Committee.

Credits are granted according to recommendation made by the internet course provider, the publisher, or by the Quality Assurance Committee.

**f. Publications:**

Credits granted on an individual consideration basis

The publication of articles in referred journals, as well as the publication of books and chapters in books, and the publication of research, are eligible for CC credit. Credit requests will be reviewed by the Quality Assurance Committee.

**g. Convention/conference attendance:**

5 credits granted per conference

Registrants attending provincial, national and international dental hygiene, dental, or interdisciplinary conferences are eligible for 5 CC credits per conference. Alternatively, registrants may submit for individual education courses attended.

**h. Presenters, facilitators and study club mentors:**

Hour-for-hour credit

Presenters, facilitators and study club mentors who provide dental/dental hygiene presentations or instruction outside their regular duties, to dental or other professions in the form of study clubs, health groups or post-secondary education programs qualify for hour-for-hour credit. Such programs include guest lectures, workshops, courses, clinical or didactic portions of study clubs, and presentations.

## Limited Credit CC Activities

*(maximum 25 total credits per cycle,  
from all categories below)*

**a. Extraordinary Practice Preparation:**

Hour-for-hour credit

Continuing competency credits may be granted to dental hygienists for extraordinary time spent outside of his/her routine dental hygiene employment hours for practice preparation. Examples include time spent searching the internet for literature on a specific practice topic and preparing for presentations to CC course participants, students, study clubs, community health groups or other applicable groups. Faculty members may apply for hour-for-hour credits under this section for work done in preparation for course presentations.

**b. Professional meetings:**

Hour-for-hour credit

Annual General Meetings (AGM), committee or Board meetings of professional groups such as the College (CDHBC), British Columbia Dental Hygienists Association (BCDHA), Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA), Dental Hygiene Educators of Canada (DHEC) and the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board – Canada (NDHCB) are eligible for hour-for-hour credit.

**c. Other:**

Hour-for-hour credit

Other items that are eligible for hour-for-hour continuing competency credit include dental hygiene week activities and volunteer work as a dental hygienist.

### III. Process For Compiling And Reporting CC Information

A CC Credit Form has been developed to assist registrants with gathering their CC information and submitting it to the College. A copy of this form, and a sample form, may be found at the end of this section and on the College's website at [www.cdhbc.com](http://www.cdhbc.com).

A CC Credit Form will be provided annually. It may be placed at the front of a file folder or binder. Using the policies in section II as a guide, it is recommended that registrants record on the form the details of each CC activity as it is completed during the year. CC course registration information and course handouts and notes may be added to the file or binder so that the CC materials are readily available if requested for review by the College.

A signed copy of the CC Credit Form should be submitted once annually with renewal. In the year of cycle end, 75 CC credits are required for registration renewal March 1<sup>st</sup> of the following year. Further instructions on completing and submitting this form will be included with your renewal package.

### IV. Records of Credits

A record of CC credits will be provided annually. It will contain the total number of CC credits reported for the previous calendar year. Registrants are asked to retain a copy of their CC Credit Form and compare the College's recorded number to their records, and to notify the College if any discrepancy occurs.

## V. Review Process

CC submissions are monitored by a review system. Two types of reviews will occur:

- ***CC Credit Form review***  
Further information will be requested from registrants if College staff have questions about any of the reported CC activities. A letter will be sent to registrants after the review, confirming the acceptance of the activities.
- ***Documentation review***  
Registrants could be the subject to a CC documentation review. If so, registrants would be asked to provide the College with supporting documentation for all CC activities reported in the current cycle. The CC information submitted may include registration receipts, course materials and handwritten course notes. The complete file will be returned to the registrant after the review with a letter, confirming the hours of reported CC activities that meet the guidelines.

Registrants may appeal the denial of any CC activities to the Registrar and the Quality Assurance Committee.

## VI. Questions?

If you have any questions please contact the College office.

General comments or letters may also be sent to the Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee, care of the College office.

## ***DIRECTED STUDY***

Directed study and mentoring are continuing education activities approved for continuing competency (CC) credit by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC). These Guidelines have been developed to assist and encourage registrants to apply for CC credits through Directed Study and mentoring and to assist the QAC with evaluating the merit of these activities.

### **Definitions:**

Directed Study and mentoring are methods of acquiring specific knowledge or skills through specified learning activities, with the guidance of an identified mentor. A mentor has been defined by the QAC as a "wise and trusted teacher or guide".

### **Examples of Directed Study and mentoring learning activities:**

- Dental hygiene volunteer work in a foreign country
- Written report on a literature review of a specific topic
- Clinical skill development in a specific area of dental hygiene practice
- Acquisition of residential care knowledge and skills.

### **Role of the mentor:**

The mentor selected by the registrant will have expertise in the registrant's desired area of study as well as the ability to guide the registrant in his/her learning. The mentor must agree to mentor the registrant and must be involved with development of the Directed Study/Mentoring contract. The mentor's signature on the contract is required. Examples of suitable mentors are:

- A community health dental hygienist promoting tobacco cessation

- An educator or clinician with advanced skills and knowledge in residential care
- The head of a dental foreign aid mission

**Process for developing a Directed Study/Mentoring contract:**

1. The registrant determines and records what they would like to learn (their goal) and explains why they believe it would benefit their practice of dental hygiene (their purpose).
2. The registrant approaches an appropriate mentor about the contract.
3. The mentor agrees to mentor the registrant and, together, they develop specifics as to how the learning will occur, based on the Directed Study/Mentoring Contract Form.
4. The registrant and mentor together determine when the contract will start and end and where the learning will take place.
5. The mentor and registrant determine the number of CC credits that will be requested by the registrant (see CC Activity (d)).
6. If the mentor is a registrant, the mentor determines the number of CC credits that will be requested for mentoring (see CC Activity (h)) and for mentoring preparation (Limited CC Credit Activity (a)).
7. The mentor and registrant sign a contract and agree on any reimbursement.
8. The registrant submits the contract to the Quality Assurance Committee for approval.
9. Once the contract has been completed, the registrant and mentor may individually record CC credits on their CC forms.

## Directed Study/Mentoring Contract Format

**To the registrant:** In consultation with your mentor, please prepare the following information for submission to the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC):

- 1) **Registrant's Name**
- 2) **Mentor's Name:** Please include the qualifications of the mentor, as they relate to this project.
- 3) **Project and Purpose:** Please describe your project and explain how this project will benefit your practice of dental hygiene.
- 4) **Learning Plan:**
  - Describe how you plan to acquire the required knowledge and/or skills
  - Describe the specific activities planned that will help you to learn
  - Describe how the mentor will help you with your learning.
- 5) **Projected Timeline:** State the expected start and end dates of the Directed Study Contract.
- 6) **Continuing Competency Credits:**

**Registrant:** State the number of CC credits that you will be requesting for this project. The number should be based on your mentor's judgement of the reasonable amount of time necessary for you to acquire the learning (and not the time spent learning or hour-for-hour credit).

**For the Mentor:** State the number of CC credits the mentor will be requesting, based on CC Activity (h) and Limited CC Activity (a).
- 7) **Signatures:**

Both you and your mentor must sign and date the contract.

**Questions?**

Further information may be obtained by calling the CDHBC office at 1 (800) 778-8277 or (250) 383-4101.

*Please submit your contract to the Quality Assurance Committee for prior approval, care of:*

*College of Dental Hygienists of British Columbia  
#219 - 645-Fort Street  
Victoria, British Columbia V8W 1G2*

