



**College of Alberta
Dental Assistants**

Competency Profile

For Alberta Dental Assistants

Effective December 1, 2017

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Introduction

This Competency Profile includes the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes of Dental Assistants in Alberta. No one dental assistant is expected to possess every competency described in this document. Each dental assistant will possess a set of competencies specific to their workplace, setting or practice. In addition, the degree of proficiency of each competency will vary with different dental assistants.

The competencies defined in this Profile may be attained by dental assistants in many different ways. Most competencies, including authorized practices, will be acquired through formal education. Other competencies may be acquired through experience, further education and/or on-the-job training.

Purpose of the Profile

The purpose of this Profile is to:

- outline the competencies for the Dental Assistants Profession;
- provide a foundation for the College of Alberta Dental Assistants' continuing competence program;
- serve as a guideline for the development of competency assessment tools and methods, performance management systems, and dental assistant job descriptions;
- provide a reference for dental assistants' ongoing self-assessment of competence;
- provide direction to post-secondary institution programs regarding essential curriculum components;
- serve as a reference to inform employers and other stakeholders of the competence and potential of dental assistants in the dental care team; and
- provide baseline information and reference for long-term manpower planning for dental and health care.

This Profile is NOT intended to:

- be inclusive of all possible competencies required by dental assistants; some competencies may have been inadvertently missed;
- represent the competencies that ALL dental assistants must achieve;
- specify obligations and/or requirements of dental assistants for third party agencies or any other outside party;
- be permanent, but must be updated on a regular basis as requirements and technologies change; or
- be a step-by-step instructional guide for professional practice.

Future of the Document

This Competency Profile is meant to be a “living document;” it will evolve and change as dental practice evolves and changes. We welcome comments and suggestions to help us continuously improve and refine the Profile.

A-1: Anatomy and Physiology

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- A-1-1 Identify the structures and functions of the body and its systems.
- A-1-2 Identify the anatomy of the head and neck.
- A-1-3 Describe and locate structures of the cranium, oral cavity and face.
- A-1-4 Identify and describe tooth morphology of the human dentition.
- A-1-5 Identify and describe how tooth loss affects oral anatomy and overall health.
- A-1-6 Identify and describe the innervations of the oral cavity.
- A-1-7 Identify the terminology, alignment and mechanics related to dental occlusion.
- A-1-8 Identify and describe human growth and development such as:
 - embryology and histology terms
 - facial and palatal development
 - tooth development
 - eruption patterns
 - exfoliation patterns
 - tissues and structures of the teeth
 - the hard and soft tissues of the oral mucosa
 - developmental anomalies

A-2: Pathology

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- A-2-1 Describe oral pathology and oral abnormalities.
- A-2-2 Recognize diseases and infections that may affect oral health such as:
 - oral cancer
 - HIV/AIDS
 - Candidiasis
 - diabetes
- A-2-3 Identify potential oral pathological conditions.

A-3: Microbiology

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- A-3-1** Identify and explain basic characteristics of micro-organisms and their role in the transmission of disease.
- A-3-2** Identify diseases related to bacteria, spores, viruses, fungi and protozoa and prions.
- A-3-3** Identify transmissible diseases.
- A-3-4** Identify modes and routes of disease transmission.
- A-3-5** Explain the composition and significance of biofilm on the oral cavity and overall health.

A-4: Pharmacology

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- A-4-1** Understand the classifications of drugs and how medications may affect dental procedures.
- A-4-2** Access drug reference materials.
- A-4-3** Recognize and understand the purpose, common effects and interactions of therapeutic, non-prescription, nutraceutical, prescription and controlled drugs on client* care and safety issues.
- A-4-4** Recognize the purpose and process of recording medications including dosages and frequency taken.
- A-4-5** Recognize and understand the indications for pre-medications prior to dental treatment.
- A-4-6** Recognize signs and symptoms of possible substance abuse.

*The term “client” in this Competency Profile refers to a patient (or their designated representatives), individual, customer, families, and groups being served by a dental assistant.

A-5: Dental Terminology

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

A-5-1 Understand and explain areas of dentistry such as:

- general
- preventive
- restorative
- specialty
- endodontics
- oral and maxillofacial surgery
- orthodontics
- pediatrics
- periodontics
- prosthodontics
- oral pathology
- other
- geriatrics
- public health
- forensics
- cosmetic
- implant
- sleep apnea
- temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMD)

A-5-2 Understand and explain professionally acceptable medical/dental terminology, classifications and abbreviations in documenting, reporting and communicating such as:

- primary, mixed and permanent dentition
- occlusion, centric occlusion and malocclusion
- classification of restorations

A-5-3 Understand and explain tooth-numbering systems.

A-6: Dental Instruments, Handpieces and Equipment

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

A-6-1 Identify and describe the purpose of dental instruments such as:

- examination instruments
- hand cutting instruments
- restorative instruments

A-6-2 Identify and describe the purpose of handpieces and accessories such as:

- slow-speed handpieces
- high-speed handpieces
- rotary cutting instruments
- laboratory instruments

A-6-3 Identify and understand the operation of dental equipment such as:

- client chairs
- operator's and assistant's stools
- dental units
- oral evacuation systems
- curing lights

A-7: Oral Health

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

A-7-1 Understand the elements of oral health such as:

- function
- aesthetics
- absence or presence of disease

A-7-2 Understand the caries process and the factors affecting its development and progress.

A-7-3 Understand the periodontal disease process and the factors affecting its development and progress.

A-7-4 Understand the relationship between oral health and overall health.

A-7-5 Differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic stains.

A-7-6 Understand oral health is maintained through:

- dietary analysis
- proper nutrition
- home care
- regular dental examinations
- fluoride therapy
- recommended treatments

B-1: Needles and Sharps

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- B-1-1** Assemble, handle and dispose of needles and sharp instruments in accordance with site-specific protocol.
- B-1-2** Adhere to site-specific protocol in the event of needle-stick and sharp instrument injury.

B-2: Hazardous Materials

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- B-2-1** Recognize, apply and monitor appropriate procedures in accordance with current guidelines for the labeling, handling, storage, use and disposal of hazardous materials and biomedical wastes such as:
- radiographic processing solutions
 - amalgam waste
 - disinfecting and sterilizing solutions
 - lead waste
 - sharps
 - tissue and blood-soaked materials
- B-2-2** Recognize and understand toxicity of dental materials.

B-3: Radiation and Lasers

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- B-3-1** Comply with radiation and laser legislation and guidelines such as:
- dosimeter and lead-apron use
 - protective eyewear/shield and signage use
- B-3-2** Apply and monitor the effectiveness of radiation and laser procedures and equipment such as:
- registration of equipment
 - quality control measures
 - preventive maintenance

B-4: Workplace Safety

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

B-4-1 Comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

B-4-2 Utilize controls to identify and reduce risk of physical injury to oneself and others such as:

- hazard and exposure assessment (chemical, biological)
- safe handling, use and disposal of instruments and equipment
- safe lifting and transferring of loads (client, equipment)
- use of personal protective equipment (footwear, eyewear, headwear, and radiation protection as necessary)
- application of ergonomic techniques to reduce body stress and injury

B-4-3 Utilize strategies to identify and reduce risk of psychological injury to oneself and others such as:

- adhering to employer policy and procedures
- using non-violent crisis intervention and conflict management
- following procedures for reporting and documenting
- knowing rights and responsibilities under legislation
- knowing safe and appropriate responses to incidents or potential incidents
- knowing support services available in the event of an incident involving violence or harassment
- being aware of workplace violence and associated risk factors

B-4-4 Recognize and manage clients with behavioural and psychiatric disorders such as:

- substance abuse
- alcoholism
- drug dependence
- bipolar disorder and schizophrenia
- anxiety and depression
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

B-5: Emergencies

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- B-5-1** Identify and interpret signs and symptoms of common medical conditions that may occur during dental treatment such as:
- chest pains
 - hyperventilation
 - allergic reactions
 - seizures
 - syncope
- B-5-2** Adhere to site-specific procedures in the event of a dental or medical emergency with clients or staff.
- B-5-3** Prepare for and respond to emergencies by demonstrating an ability to follow protocols such as:
- maintain emergency drugs, supplies and equipment
 - recognize and report physiological changes
 - initiate Emergency Medical System (EMS)
 - apply first aid
 - administer CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation)
 - use defibrillation devices
 - alert others to emergency and follow instructions/procedures
 - evacuate clients and staff
 - record emergency incidents
- B-5-4** Adhere to site-specific procedures for threatening events such as:
- fire/ gas leaks
 - bomb reports/ scares
 - violent/ abusive /threatening individuals
 - terrorist attacks/ robberies/ invasions
- B-5-5** Adhere to site-specific procedures for weather-related events such as:
- floods
 - earthquakes
 - tornadoes and hurricanes

C-1: Infection Prevention and Control

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- C-1-1** Adhere to site-specific infection prevention and control protocols.
- C-1-2** Clean and reprocess instruments and equipment.
- C-1-3** Disinfect equipment and surfaces.
- C-1-4** Monitor and maintain records of the reprocessing of instruments and equipment.
- C-1-5** Utilize handwashing techniques.
- C-1-6** Utilize personal protective equipment such as:
 - gloves
 - safety glasses/goggles
 - masks
 - protective clothing/footwear
- C-1-7** Place and remove protective barriers.
- C-1-8** Purge and maintain dental water lines.
- C-1-9** Respect recommendations for annual, current and appropriate personal immunizations for dental assistants.

C-2: Client Information, Assessment and Records

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- C-2-1** Greet, seat, position and relate to the client.
- C-2-2** Obtain personal, medical and dental history and consent.
- C-2-3** Recognize importance of client's personal, medical and dental history and understand its relevance to dental treatments.
- C-2-4** Monitor and maintain records of the reprocessing of instruments and equipment.
- C-2-5** Utilize handwashing techniques.
- C-2-6** Recognize, for various types of clients, normal ranges of vital signs such as:
 - pulse rate
 - blood pressure
 - temperature
 - respiration rate
 - blood oxygen levels
- C-2-7** Perform an oral inspection with the use of examination instruments such as:
 - mouth mirror
 - explorer
 - electronic screening devices
- C-2-8** Chart/record client's existing intra-/extra-oral conditions such as:
 - restorations
 - missing teeth
 - abnormalities
 - comments regarding pain, tenderness or other problems
- C-2-9** Obtain intra-/extra-oral photographs.
- C-2-10** Maintain well-organized, legible, readily accessible and understandable client records that adhere to regulations and general record keeping principles.
- C-2-11** Assess, interpret and communicate pertinent client information to the supervising dental health care professional.
- C-2-12** Recognize and report signs of suspected physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect.
- C-2-13** Present and coordinate treatment plan options.

C-3: Chairside Assisting

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- C-3-1** Review treatment records to prepare instruments, equipment, materials and operatory for specific dental procedures.
- C-3-2** Provide client with treatment information.
- C-3-3** Confirm consent has been obtained prior to commencing treatment.
- C-3-4** Provide pre-treatment instructions.
- C-3-5** Assist with dental treatments/procedures such as:
 - preventive
 - restorative
 - oral and maxillofacial surgical
 - endodontic
 - periodontal
 - prosthodontic
 - orthodontic
 - temporomandibular joint dysfunction
 - forensic
 - pediatric and geriatric
 - sleep apnea
 - neuromodulators
 - implants
 - oral pathology
- C-3-6** Utilize dental instruments, handpieces and equipment such as:
 - mouth mirror
 - explorer
 - cotton pliers
 - articulating paper
 - slow-speed handpiece
 - laboratory instruments
 - overhead lights
 - client chair
 - operator and assistant stools
 - amalgamator
 - curing light
 - oral evacuation system

C: Treatment Support Procedures

- C-3-7** Maintain visibility and accessibility for operator.
- C-3-8** Anticipate operator needs.
- C-3-9** Perform oral evacuation.
- C-3-10** Perform instrument transfers.
- C-3-11** Monitor, report and respond to client's condition.
- C-3-12** Manage and modify care for clients requiring accommodations due to medical, mental or physical conditions such as:
 - Patient Transfer Protocol
 - modify the operatory to accommodate clients with special needs
 - adapt procedures according to physical needs and mobility limitations
 - provide information and instructions with consideration of cognitive level and communication ability
- C-3-13** Dismiss client at conclusion of appointment.

C-4: Anesthesia and Pain Control

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- C-4-1** Apply topical anesthetics.
- C-4-2** Assist during the administration of local anesthesia such as:
 - prepare and manage local anesthetic setup, including assembling the local anesthetic syringe
 - inform client about effects of anesthesia
- C-4-3** Assist during the administration of sedation such as:
 - recognize the importance of reducing the dental team's exposure to nitrous oxide
 - prepare and check nitrous oxide and oxygen sedation equipment
 - select a mask of appropriate size, and place it on the tubing
 - have client put on the mask, and adjust the fit
 - tighten the tubing once it is comfortable for the client
 - inform the client about the effects of sedation
- C-4-4** Modify practice during the administration of conscious, general and intravenous sedation.
- C-4-5** Assist with observing, documenting and reporting client's condition during anesthesia and pain control procedures.

C-5: Drugs and Materials

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- C-5-1** Reconstitute neuromodulators with water or saline (not with any other drugs).
- C-5-2** Convert and calculate components.
- C-5-3** Draw up local anesthetic or neuromodulators out of a vial or ampoule into a syringe.
- C-5-4** Record and maintain an up-to-date drug log.
- C-5-5** Mix and manipulate dental materials.

C-6: Post Treatment Care

C-6-1 Provide post-treatment instructions such as:

- explain specific oral health care requirements
- explain potential post-treatment complications
- advise client about drug implications
- advise client of after-hours emergency post-operative treatment options such as dentist on call, hospital emergency room and walk-in clinics

C-6-2 Follow up with client care such as:

- assess severity of symptoms
- communicate with client
- ask pertinent questions relating to such topics as pain management and medications
- advise client to return to dental office for post-operative analysis
- inform clients of available emergency services such as dentists on call and emergency facilities

C-6-3 Assess soft tissue for signs of healing, infection or complications.

C-7: Laboratory

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

C-7-1 Create dental study models:

- pour gypsum products
- perform 3D printing

C-7-2 Trim study models.

C-7-3 Mount study models on articulator.

C-7-4 Maintain and perform minor repairs on removable appliances.

C-7-5 Fabricate custom trays such as:

- whitening trays
- fluoride carriers
- impression trays
- sports guards

C-7-6 Coordinate external laboratory services.

C-7-7 Fabricate occlusal rims.

C-7-8 Perform minor denture repairs.

D-1: Radiology and Digital Imaging

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- D-1-1** Recognize and understand applications of radiology and digital imaging in dental health care such as:
- radiographs
 - impressions
 - cone beam computed tomography (CBCT)
 - computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing (CAD-CAM)
- D-1-2** Prepare and manage the client for radiographs/ digital imaging.
- D-1-3** Select radiographic techniques such as:
- types of radiographs
 - x-ray machine settings, such as milliamperage (mA), kilovoltage peak (kVp) and exposure
 - intra-oral film position
 - degrees of angulation
 - select film size
 - assemble and position equipment and film/ sensor for exposure
- D-1-4** Expose dental radiographs.
- D-1-5** Obtain digital images.
- D-1-6** Process and evaluate quality of radiographs/digital images.
- D-1-7** Mount and/or label processed radiographs/digital images.
- D-1-8** Trace and measure cephalometric radiographs.
- D-1-9** Duplicate radiographs.

D-2: Dental Lasers

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- D-2-1** Utilize dental lasers for caries detection, tooth whitening and curing dental materials.

D-3: Sleep Apnea

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

D-3-1 Prepare and explain sleep apnea equipment and materials.

D-4: Instrument and Equipment Care

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

D-4-1 Maintain dental instruments and equipment in accordance with manufacturers' guidelines such as:

- perform minor repairs
- lubricate equipment
- replace solutions

D-4-2 Perform troubleshooting in accordance with manufacturers' guidelines.

D-4-3 Identify and arrange for support and service for maintenance or repair/replacement of instruments and/or equipment as required.

D-5: Emerging Technologies

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

D-5-1 Recognize developments and trends in technology in general, and those designed for health care/dental applications.

D-5-2 Evaluate new technologies as to their potential benefits and risks to dental practice and personal use.

D-5-3 Consult with employer and other team members, and obtain training prior to testing or implementing new technologies.

D-5-4 Participate in quality assurance and evaluation activities related to implementation of new technologies.

E-1: Intra-Oral Dental Assisting

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- E-1-1** Perform selective coronal polishing with a slow-speed handpiece.
- E-1-2** Apply pit and fissure sealants and adjust occlusion with a slow-speed handpiece.
- E-1-3** Apply anti-cariogenic agents.
- E-1-4** Apply desensitizing agents.
- E-1-5** Apply disclosing agents, interpret and record results.
- E-1-6** Assess and record oral hygiene indices.
- E-1-7** Perform caries detection procedure utilizing an electronic caries detection device, and document observations for assessment by the dentist.
- E-1-8** Perform periodontal probing and record findings.
- E-1-9** Perform coronal whitening using trays and/or direct application.
- E-1-10** Insert and adjust mouth guards.
- E-1-11** Place and remove periodontal and surgical dressings.
- E-1-12** Place and remove isolation material such as:
 - dental dams
 - cotton rolls
 - dry angles
- E-1-13** Place and remove matrices and wedges.
- E-1-14** Apply treatment liners and bases (without pulpal involvement).
- E-1-15** Apply acid etch, antibacterial agents, and primer and bond.
- E-1-16** Place intermediate restorative material for temporary restoration of tooth, and remove excess material from occlusion or contour with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-1-17** Obtain and evaluate preliminary impressions.
- E-1-18** Obtain final impressions for evaluation by the dentist.

- E-1-19** Obtain face bow registration.
- E-1-20** Obtain bite registrations.
- E-1-21** Perform pulp vitality testing.
- E-1-22** Select molds and shade of teeth.
- E-1-23** Place gingival retraction cord with or without haemostatic agents (no epinephrine) in sulcus.
- E-1-24** Remove gingival retraction cord.
- E-1-25** Select or fabricate and fit provisional crowns, inlays, onlays and bridges.
- E-1-26** Cement provisional crowns, inlays, onlays and bridges, and remove excess temporary cement with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-1-27** Remove provisional crowns, inlays, onlays and bridges and cement with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-1-28** Remove excess bonding agent or permanent cement with hand instruments.
- E-1-29** Perform suture removal.
- E-1-30** Polish restorations with slow-speed handpiece using pastes, rubber tips, points and cups.
- E-1-31** Place paper points to dry root canals.
- E-1-32** Place cotton pellets into endodontic access openings.
- E-1-33** Irrigate root canal during endodontic procedures.
- E-1-34** Perform a preliminary fit of a partial or complete denture, prior to adjustment by the dentist.
- E-1-35** Place and remove soft tissue relines.
- E-1-36** Perform a preliminary fit of a periodontal appliance, prior to adjustment by the dentist.

E-2: Orthodontics

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- E-2-1** Insert orthodontic appliances.
- E-2-2** Insert and remove orthodontic separators.
- E-2-3** Prepare teeth for bonding or cementation of bands and bonding of orthodontic brackets and bondable attachments.
- E-2-4** Select, fit and cement orthodontic bands with self-curing or light curing cement, and remove excess cement with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-2-5** Position and bond orthodontic brackets and bondable attachments with light-cured bonding agent, and remove excess bonding agent with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-2-6** Insert, ligate and remove orthodontic archwires using individual or chain elastomeric ligatures, separate and continuous wire ligature ties and self-ligation mechanisms.
- E-2-7** Insert and remove orthodontic accessories.
- E-2-8** Trim and/or bend distal ends of orthodontic arch wires.
- E-2-9** Remove orthodontic bands with hand instruments, and remove cement with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-2-10** Remove orthodontic brackets and bondable attachments with hand instruments, and remove bonding agent with hand instruments and slow-speed rotary handpiece.
- E-2-11** Apply non-medicinal material to reduce the effect of irritating components.

E-3: Scaling

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- E-3-1** Evaluate periodontal scaling instruments for appropriate sharpness.
- E-3-2** Perform periodontal scaling instrument sharpening.
- E-3-3** Perform periodontal scaling using hand instruments and ultrasonic instruments.

F-1: Nutrition and Oral Health

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- F-1-1** Describe how diet and nutrition can affect oral health.
- F-1-2** Recognize systemic and localized effects of nutrition on oral health.
- F-1-3** Describe current nutritional requirements for various age groups.
- F-1-4** Describe oral implications of eating disorders.
- F-1-5** Describe the relationship between frequency and quantity of cariogenic foods in the caries process.
- F-1-6** Promote nutritional requirements for optimum oral health.

F-2: Addictions and Oral Health

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- F-2-1** Recognize addiction influences on dental disease.
- F-2-2** Promote and provide literature and resources to assist with treatment of addictions.

F-3: Client Education

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- F-3-1** Apply the principles of instruction and learning to individuals and groups.
- F-3-2** Explain the relationship between oral health and overall health.
- F-3-3** Recognize client-specific oral hygiene needs.
- F-3-4** Explain the periodontal disease process and factors affecting its development and progress.
- F-3-5** Explain the caries process and factors affecting its development and progress.
- F-3-6** Develop oral hygiene goals using client-centered approach.
- F-3-7** Select and demonstrate oral self-care products to achieve goals.
- F-3-8** Provide client-specific oral hygiene instruction and techniques.
- F-3-9** Advise client of appropriate prevention and removal of stains.
- F-3-10** Provide instruction for prosthesis and appliance care.
- F-3-11** Identify symptoms of oral habits such as:
 - tobacco product use
 - oral jewelry
 - bruxism
 - mouth breathing
- F-3-12** Advise client on consequences of oral habits.
- F-3-13** Promote and provide information to assist with modifying oral habits.
- F-3-14** Evaluate outcomes of instruction, providing feedback and making necessary modifications.

F-4: Public Health

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

F-4-1 Promote and provide oral health care programs in a community setting or at public health centers.

F-4-2 Deliver key messages on oral health care to target audiences such as:

- when children should first visit a dentist
- benefits of preventive dentistry
- benefits of water fluoridation

F-4-3 Assist with and participate in dental surveys.

F-4-4 Perform observations and record obvious dental caries and urgent oral health problems.

F-4-5 Inform client and/or caregiver of findings that require intervention.

F-4-6 Record and compile survey and screening data.

F-4-7 Understand, apply and utilize elements of public health science such as:

- evidence-based practice
- epidemiology
- population health approaches
- data mapping
- planning models

G-1: Communicating

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- G-1-1** Understand how the communication process is used within the dental process and for the provision of effective dental care.
- G-1-2** Communicate effectively to establish, maintain and conclude interpersonal relationships.
- G-1-3** Understand the importance of self-awareness and feedback to effective communications.
- G-1-4** Establish effective relationships employing both verbal and nonverbal techniques.
- G-1-5** Identify barriers to effective communication such as:
 - age
 - special needs
 - language
 - culture
- G-1-6** Recognize the need to learn about, adjust and respond to a variety of socio-cultural influences such as:
 - education
 - spirituality
 - religious beliefs
 - culture
 - heritage
 - gender/transgender
 - socio-economic status
 - ethnic beliefs
 - lifestyle
- G-1-7** Recognize current social issues that impact the delivery of dental health to diverse groups and communities.

G-2: Instructing and Mentoring

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- G-2-1** Apply basic learning principles and techniques to teach dental assisting practice to students, colleagues and staff.
- G-2-2** Maintain knowledge of industry standards and ensure curriculum reflects current competencies as identified in documents such as:
 - Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants
 - National Dental Assisting Examining Board Domain Description
- G-2-3** Recognize the importance of teaching styles and common factors influencing learning, and adjust teaching accordingly.
- G-2-4** Modify teaching plans and delivery to meet requirements of clients with special needs.
- G-2-5** Select and use learning aids and technologies appropriate to the clients and to the content.
- G-2-6** Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning through a variety of methods.
- G-2-7** Document the teaching plan, its delivery and outcomes of the teaching and learning process.
- G-2-8** Demonstrate enthusiasm for formal instruction, learning and dental assisting to inspire and motivate learners.
- G-2-9** Provide preceptorships to students and new dental assistants.

G-3: Collaborating

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- G-3-1** Understand the importance of collaboration in providing effective dental care and ensuring efficient operation of the workplace.
- G-3-2** Describe and respect the different roles of the dental health care team and the health community.
- G-3-3** Listen and be receptive to the ideas, opinions and suggestions of fellow team members.
- G-3-4** Promote co-operation and group cohesiveness.
- G-3-5** Actively participate in team activities to plan, implement, and evaluate client care.
- G-3-6** Provide constructive feedback and recognition to fellow team members.
- G-3-7** Engage client, family and others as partners in client-centered care.
- G-3-8** Recognize and understand the principles of team dynamics and group processes to create a positive workplace environment.
- G-3-9** Practice effective interpersonal communication with team members.
- G-3-10** Assist, instruct and mentor other members of the team.

G-4: Conflict Management

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- G-4-1** Identify the signs and symptoms of conflict situations.
- G-4-2** Recognize potential common sources of conflict.
- G-4-3** Manage conflict by using effective communication techniques.
- G-4-4** Intervene quickly in urgent situations involving conflict.
- G-4-5** Focus on the problem/issue related to the conflict, and not on the individuals or personalities.
- G-4-6** Consult with supervisors and other appropriate professionals as required in situations of conflict.

G-5: Third Party Communication

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- G-5-1** Be familiar with the legal requirements of authorization, confidentiality and privacy in dealing with third parties.
- G-5-2** Maintain third-party transaction records.
- G-5-3** Provide accurate and relevant information to third parties when requested and approved by the client.

G-6: Critical Thinking

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- G-6-1** Recognize the importance of critical thinking, critical inquiry and evidence-based practice to ethical oral health care services.
- G-6-2** Understand how critical thinking and critical inquiry influence decision making and practice judgments such as:
 - impacts on the flow of treatments and scheduling appointments
 - resource management
 - communications
- G-6-3** Apply critical thinking through analysis, discernment and reflective reasoning.

H-1: Office Procedures

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

H-1-1 Perform basic dental office procedures.

H-1-2 Utilize common business office equipment, systems, software and technologies.

H-1-3 Manage client appointment systems such as:

- respond to inquiries
- manage schedules
- operate computer systems and software

H-1-4 Assist with financial management such as:

- manage billing and payment processes
- accounts receivable/payable records
- payroll systems

H-1-5 Assist with inventory management such as:

- monitor and keep track of inventory
- order and restock supplies
- organize supplies in operator
- keep controlled substances secure

H-1-6 Assist with the marketing and promotion of the dental practice and services.

H-1-7 Comply with regulations, professional marketing standards, and code of ethics with respect to the marketing of dental practices, services and products.

H-2: Information Systems

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- H-2-1** Acquire and process information and data in a timely manner.
- H-2-2** Organize information/records for easy retrieval and use.
- H-2-3** Utilize computers, digital cameras, mobile phones and Internet technology within the dental environment.
- H-2-4** Be knowledgeable of and adhere to office policies and legislation governing health and dental records, e.g. *Health Information Act*, FOIP, etc.
- H-2-5** Manage clients' personal, medical, financial and dental records.
- H-2-6** Follow procedures to protect confidentiality and protect against hazards to the security, integrity, loss or unauthorized use, disclosure, modification or unauthorized access to health/dental information.
- H-2-7** Practice "safe computing" to prevent loss, disclosure, modification or unauthorized use or access to confidential information such as:
 - client records
 - personnel documents
 - financial records
- H-2-8** Ensure that the office technology/systems are secure and protected from viruses, malware, intrusions and other threats.
- H-2-9** Comply with office procedures and protocol to back up, deal with, and restore data that may be corrupted or lost as a result of a computer failures or unauthorized intrusions.

H-3: Human Resources

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- H-3-1** Apply the principles of leadership, supervision and motivation.
- H-3-2** Explain and discuss specific employer/employee responsibilities and current rules and regulations regarding employment of dental personnel.
- H-3-3** Develop office policy and procedures manuals.
- H-3-4** Manage employee personnel records.
- H-3-5** Hire and evaluate employees.
- H-3-6** Plan and conduct employee development activities and training.
- H-3-7** Manage and supervise personnel.
- H-3-8** Terminate employees in a fair and legal manner.

H-4: Service Quality

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- H-4-1** Recognize that clients seeking oral health care services have choices and options, keep informed through research, and have a right to quality service.
- H-4-2** Obtain input and feedback from clients as to what they want and their satisfaction and concerns about dental/oral health services and products.
- H-4-3** Provide reliable service such as delivering what was agreed upon dependably, accurately and on time.
- H-4-4** Demonstrate courtesy, and the ability to convey trust and confidence.
- H-4-5** Show empathy, a degree of caring and providing individual attention to clients and their families.
- H-4-6** Demonstrate responsiveness, the willingness to help individuals, and provide prompt service.
- H-4-7** Endeavor to provide a pleasant and comforting environment through their own appearance, physical facilities and surroundings.
- H-4-8** Assist in measuring service performance and client satisfaction.
- H-4-9** Take all complaints seriously and address them promptly.
- H-4-10** Recognize that service quality requires acceptable performance from every member of the team.
- H-4-11** Recognize that the success of a dental practice and therefore continued employment depend on satisfied clients.
- H-4-12** Recognize, initiate and adapt to changes to improve dental services and office efficiency including enhancements to products, procedures, equipment and technologies.

I-1: Legislation

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

I-1-1 Comply with all governing legislation such as:

- *Health Professions Act (HPA)*
- *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*
- *Government Organization Act*
- *Health Information Act*
- privacy legislation

I-1-2 Comply with legislation that has a “duty to report” requirement for threats that may be injurious or dangerous to public health, or situations of suspected abuse or neglect.

I-1-3 Comply with all CADA documents affecting the profession of dental assisting such as:

- *Standards of Practice*
- *Code of Ethics*
- *Competency Profile for Alberta Dental Assistants*
- *Bylaws*
- *Policies*
- *Position Statements*

I-1-4 Be accountable for one’s own dental assisting practice such as:

- duty to self-report to CADA including:
 - blood borne infections
 - criminal charges or guilty plea or verdict
 - under investigation, subject of proceeding or discipline by another professional regulatory body
- duty to report to professional liability insurance provider any incident that may result in a claim

I-2: Governance

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

I-2-1 Practice principles and responsibilities involved in self-regulation such as:

- client – providing safe, competent and ethical care
- employer – working within role expectations, policies and procedures
- CADA – maintaining standards and guidelines, code of ethics, standards of practice and continuing competence

I-2-2 Recognize that self-regulation is a privilege that requires members to participate in the activities of CADA such as:

- adhering to the required responsibilities of regulated members
- developing knowledge and leadership skills necessary to ensure success of CADA
- providing timely feedback and input during member consultations

I-2-3 Participate on CADA Council and committees and contribute to:

- management and leadership of CADA
- establish, review and recommend changes to bylaws and policies
- financial management of CADA
- implementation and enforcement of bylaws and policies

I-3: Professional Conduct

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- I-3-1** Perform only those duties and restricted activities within assigned authority as outlined in legislation and regulation.
- I-3-2** Identify and report any incompetent, illegal or unethical conduct by colleagues or other health care personnel to the appropriate authority.
- I-3-3** Seek assistance when unable to perform competently.
- I-3-4** Identify when assignment of duties is beyond individual competence or authorized practice and respond in a manner such as:
 - consult with team members or supervisor
 - collaborate as necessary
 - hand off tasks as necessary
 - upgrade education and training
- I-3-5** Apply concepts of professional autonomy throughout practice such as:
 - accountability for one's own actions and behaviours
 - best practices and research
 - independence as appropriate
 - ethical decision making
 - self-managed competence
- I-3-6** Maintain confidentiality with clients, colleagues, staff, team and organization such as:
 - adhere to policy, procedures, guidelines, standards and legislation
 - identify breaches in confidentiality
 - manage all client information appropriately (verbal, written, electronic)
 - recognize and manage risks
- I-3-7** Display professional behaviour both inside and outside the workplace.
- I-3-8** Provide dental services in a non-discriminatory and ethical manner.
- I-3-9** Recognize and minimize risks that may lead to malpractice.

I-4: Professional Boundaries

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

I-4-1 Establish, maintain and manage professional boundaries with:

- client, family and others
- colleagues and co-workers
- students and trainees
- supervisors
- employers
- sales and marketing people
- suppliers and vendors

I-4-2 Recognize and maintain professional boundaries such as:

- beginning, maintaining and ending relationships
- caring for family/ friends
- casual, friendship, romantic, sexual
- chastising, coercion, favoritism
- conflict of interest
- giving and receiving gifts
- inappropriate financial or personal benefits
- inappropriate physical contact
- limited self-disclosure
- psychological abuse and/ or disruptive behaviours
- social media interactions

I-4-3 Recognize and avoid risks associated with use of social media such as:

- breaching privacy and confidentiality
- compromising public safety
- diluting trust in health care professionals and the health care system
- undermining individual professional reputation and career
- using during work hours

I-5: Fitness to Practice

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- I-5-1** Maintain physical, mental and emotional health to ensure safe, competent and ethical practice.
- I-5-2** Recognize and maintain professional boundaries such as:
 - addictions
 - cognition
 - coping mechanisms
 - family and environmental issues
 - inappropriate behaviours
 - mental health
 - physical ability
 - psychological well-being
 - sensory perception
 - stress management
- I-5-3** Take responsibility and self-manage fitness-to-practice to ensure client and personal safety such as:
 - participating in wellness activities
 - maintaining positive self-esteem and attitude
 - managing work-life balance
 - accessing assistance programs/counseling
 - self-reporting and withdrawing from providing services, if necessary
- I-5-4** Recognize resources available and access appropriate ones for self-improvement and maintenance of personal well-being.

I-6: Leadership

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- I-6-1** Promote and support the vision, mission and values of professional dental assisting organizations.
- I-6-2** Assess, reflect and recognize own strengths and limitations as a leader to achieve personal and professional growth.
- I-6-3** Delegate responsibilities and duties.
- I-6-4** Assess, influence and manage change.
- I-6-5** Elicit support and commitment from others to achieve a common goal.
- I-6-6** Utilize effective decision-making processes.

I-7: Organization and Time Management

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- I-7-1** Manage time and organize client care.
- I-7-2** Prioritize client needs.
- I-7-3** Demonstrate flexibility, creativity and adaptability in meeting the unusual demands of the dental-care setting.
- I-7-4** Ensure documentation is completed in a timely manner.
- I-7-5** Identify and manage the effects of time management in self and others.
- I-7-6** Respect other team members in decisions of personal time management such as:
 - arriving and being prepared for work on time
 - collaborating in care delivery
 - conducting oneself professionally
 - limiting personal activities to personal time (social media, texting, personal calls)
 - managing breaks effectively
 - helping out other team members as needed

I-8: Research

A Dental Assistant possesses the knowledge, skills, judgments and attitudes to:

- I-8-1** Remain current with research and trends in the areas of dental assisting, dentistry and oral health care, dental-related technologies, products and services.
- I-8-2** Be able to source information and critically read, evaluate and apply research findings and trends.
- I-8-3** Be familiar with various research designs, data collection techniques, analysis and reporting.
- I-8-4** Participate in research projects and studies that contribute to the knowledge base of dental assisting, dentistry and oral health care.