



**College of Alberta
Dental Assistants**

Registration Policy 012

English language proficiency

REG-POL-012 English language proficiency

Legislative authority: This policy is established under sections 3, 6, 9, 43, and 45 of the *Health Professions Act*; sections 3 to 9 of the *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*; section 7 of the *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation*; sections 3 to 9 of the *Fair Registration Practices Act*; and the *Labour Mobility Act*. It guides Council and the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) in confirming that applicants demonstrate the English language proficiency necessary to ensure safe, effective, and ethical practice in Alberta.

1.0 Purpose

This policy establishes the governance framework for assessing English language proficiency for applicants to the College of Alberta Dental Assistants. It ensures that verification of English language proficiency is administered in accordance with legislation and is transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair.

This policy supports the College's mandate to protect and serve the public interest and ensures compliance with the *Health Professions Act*, *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*, and *Fair Registration Practices Act* through transparent, objective, and procedurally fair assessment practices.

2.0 Scope

This policy governs all assessments of English language proficiency required under the *Health Professions Act* and *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*. It applies to Council, the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate), the Registration Committee, and College staff involved in registration and assessment of language proficiency. It also applies to applicants who:

1. completed their education or training in a program not delivered primarily in English;
2. have not practiced primarily in English; or
3. are otherwise determined by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) to require verification of language proficiency to ensure safe and effective practice.

Following assessment under this policy, the College, through the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate), may:

1. **approve** the application upon confirmation of English language proficiency, with or without limits, conditions, or supervision requirements; or
2. **defer** a decision pending completion of additional verification or remediation required to confirm language proficiency; or
3. **refuse the application**, with written reasons and information on review or appeal rights provided in accordance with REG-POL-008 Registration Decisions, Reviews and Timelines, sections 33 and 34 of the *Health Professions Act*, and the *Fair Registration Practices Act*.

This policy operates in alignment with the foundational requirements described in REG-POL-001 General Registration.

3.0 Principles

The College applies the following principles to ensure that language proficiency oversight is consistent, fair, and defensible:

1. **Public protection** is maintained by ensuring applicants possess sufficient English language proficiency to practice safely, competently, and effectively.
2. **Legislative consistency** is upheld by aligning requirements with the *Health Professions Act*, *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*, *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation*, and *Fair Registration Practices Act*.
3. **Accountability** is maintained as Council sets policy and standards, and the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) applies them consistently and records decisions transparently.
4. **Transparency and fairness** are embedded throughout to ensure assessments and decisions are objective, impartial, and procedurally fair.
5. **Strategic alignment** ensures language proficiency assessments support the College's Strategic Plan, reinforcing the College's mandate to protect and serve the public interest.
6. **Competence assurance** ensures decisions are evidence-informed, proportionate, and based on verified demonstration of language proficiency consistent with professional communication and practice requirements.

4.0 English language proficiency requirements

English language proficiency requirements are established under the *Health Professions Act* and *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation* and are administered by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) in accordance with this policy. All decisions and reviews are evidence-informed, transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair.

Applicants are responsible for all fees associated with demonstrating English language proficiency, including testing, score reporting, or credential verification. Test results or documents not in English must be accompanied by certified English translations provided at the applicant's expense.

4.1 Assessment of English Language Proficiency

Applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency as authorized under legislation and this policy, through evidence approved by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate). Acceptable evidence may include recognized test results, education completed in English, or professional experience in an English language practice environment. Criteria and verification methods are defined in College procedures approved by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate).

Recognized English proficiency assessment services include the following:

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)	Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA)	International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (Academic or General)
Minimum total score: 72 Minimum score per component: Reading - 18 Listening - 17 Speaking - 20 Writing - 17	Minimum score of 7 in each section	Minimum 6 in all categories (listening, reading, speaking, writing)

4.2 Verification and review

The Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) verifies all language proficiency documentation and determines whether the evidence meets the requirements established by Council. Where evidence is incomplete, inconsistent, or does not meet current standards, the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) may request additional information or refer the matter to the Registration Committee for review if necessary.

Decisions are made using a risk-based and proportionate approach that aligns with the College’s public protection mandate and the *Fair Registration Practices Act*.

4.3 Decisions and communication

1. The Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) issues language proficiency decisions in accordance with this policy and applicable legislation. Decisions are evidence-informed, transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair in compliance with the *Fair Registration Practices Act*.
2. All decisions are communicated in writing with reasons and, where applicable, include information on review or appeal rights consistent with REG-POL-008 Registration Decisions, Reviews and Timelines. Published timelines for acknowledgment, completeness checks, and decisions apply as set out in the *Fair Registration Practices Act*, and all decisions must be transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair.
3. The College maintains a record of all decisions to support accountability, transparency, and compliance reporting.

Operational procedures are outlined in REG-PRC-012 English Language Proficiency Procedure.

5.0 Expected outcomes

1. **Public protection** is maintained through transparent, objective, impartial, and procedurally fair assessment of English language proficiency.
2. **Applicants demonstrate** the ability to communicate effectively in English to ensure safe and competent practice.
3. **Registration decisions** are timely, consistent, and compliant with the *Fair Registration Practices Act*.

4. **This policy supports the Strategic Plan** and fulfills the College’s legislative obligations under the *Health Professions Act* and *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required by legislative, regulatory, or strategic change, by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) to confirm continued alignment with legislation, Council policy, and evolving standards of regulatory practice.

6.0 Related legislation and references

Legislation and regulation

Health Professions Act, sections 3, 6, 9, 43, and 45

Dental Assistants Profession Regulation (Alberta Regulation 252/2005), sections 3 to 9

Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation (Alberta Regulation 22/2023), section 7

Fair Registration Practices Act, sections 3 to 9

Labour Mobility Act

College authority and governance

Bylaws of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants (2023), sections 3 and 11

Standards of Practice (2023) of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants, including Direction and Supervision requirements for restricted activities

Code of Ethics (2020) of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants

Strategic Plan (2025–30) Leading with Vision, Ensuring Public Trust

Governance Policy on Council and Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) Relationship (2024)

Registration Committee Terms of Reference (2024)

Related College policies

REG-POL-001 General Registration

REG-POL-002 Provisional Registration

REG-POL-004 Practice Permit Renewal

REG-POL-008 Registration Decisions, Reviews and Timelines

REG-POL-009 Good Character, Reputation and Criminal Record Check

REG-POL-010 Professional Liability Insurance

REG-POL-011 Current Practice

REG-POL-013 Cancellation of Registration and Practice Permit

7.0 Definitions

1. **College of Alberta Dental Assistants:** the regulatory body established under the *Health Professions Act*, responsible for governing the practice of dental assisting in Alberta to protect and serve the public interest. For the purposes of policies, the term “College” refers to the College of Alberta Dental Assistants.
2. **English language proficiency:** the ability to listen, speak, read, and write in English at a level sufficient to ensure safe, effective, and ethical professional practice and communication within the dental assisting profession.

8.0 Document information

Policy type	Registration			
Policy owner	Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants			
Approved by	Council of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants			
Approval date	November 22, 2025			
Effective date	January 1, 2026			
Review schedule	Annually or sooner if required by legislative, regulatory, or strategic change.			
Approval history	Version	Date	Council Motion #	Summary of Revision
Related documents	REG-POL-001 General Registration REG-POL-002 Provisional Registration REG-POL-004 Practice Permit Renewal REG-POL-008 Registration Decisions, Reviews and Timelines REG-POL-009 Good Character, Reputation and Criminal Record Check REG-POL-010 Professional Liability Insurance REG-POL-011 Current Practice REG-POL-013 Cancellation of Registration and Practice Permit Standards of Practice (2023) Code of Ethics (2020) Strategic Plan (2025-30) Leading with Vision, Ensuring Public Trust			