



**College of Alberta
Dental Assistants**

Governance Policy 004

Committees and Decision Pathways

GOV-POL-004 Committees and decision pathways

Legislative Authority: This policy is established under the *Health Professions Act*, the *Dental Assistants Profession Regulation*, the *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation*, the *Fair Registration Practices Act*, and the *Labour Mobility Act*. Authority is further supported by the Bylaws of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants.

1.0 Purpose

This policy establishes the governance framework for committees of the College and clarifies decision pathways, authority boundaries, escalation processes, and reporting relationships.

This policy distinguishes between statutory committees established under legislation and committees established by Council for governance purposes.

This policy ensures committee structures, mandates, and decision pathways are transparent, defensible, and consistent with legislative authority and governance expectations.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all committees established under legislation or by Council, including standing committees, ad hoc committees, and statutory panels.

This policy applies to committee mandates, authority, reporting relationships, escalation, and decision pathways.

This policy does not alter, restrict, or override statutory authority assigned directly to committees or panels under the *Health Professions Act*.

Operational procedures supporting this policy are approved by the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or authorized delegate) and include committee establishment, mandate documentation, meeting processes, reporting processes, and escalation procedures.

3.0 Principles

The College applies the following principles to ensure committee governance is lawful, consistent, and accountable.

1. **Public interest** is protected by ensuring committees operate within legislated authority and approved mandates.
2. **Legislative consistency** is upheld by distinguishing statutory authority from delegated or governance authority.
3. **Mandate clarity** ensures each committee operates within clearly defined responsibilities and authority limits.
4. **Role separation** preserves the distinction between governance oversight, statutory decision making, and operational management.
5. **Proportionality and consistency** guide committee structures and escalation pathways.
6. **Strategic alignment** ensures committee activities support the Strategic Plan (2025 to 2030) Leading with Vision, Ensuring Public Trust.

4.0 Committee authority and decision pathways

Committees operate within authority granted by legislation or approved by Council. The intent of this section is to clarify how committee authority is defined, exercised, and escalated.

4.1 Statutory committees

1. Statutory committees and panels derive authority directly from legislation.
2. Statutory committees exercise independent decision making authority where provided by the Health Professions Act or related legislation.
3. Council does not ratify, reverse, or interfere with decisions made by statutory committees acting within their legislated authority except where legislation expressly provides review or appeal authority.
4. Statutory committees report to Council for oversight and accountability purposes but retain independent decision authority where established by legislation.
5. Statutory committees established under legislation may include committees responsible for registration decisions, competence oversight, complaints review, hearing tribunals, and appeals where provided for under the *Health Professions Act* or related legislation.

4.2 Council-established governance committees

1. Council may establish committees to support governance oversight, policy development, risk monitoring, or strategic initiatives.
2. Governance committees operate within mandates approved by Council.
3. Governance committees provide recommendations to Council unless authority is expressly delegated by Council or legislation.
4. Committees do not exercise independent governance authority unless expressly delegated by legislation or by Council resolution documented in Council records.

4.3 Council ad hoc working groups

1. Council may establish ad hoc working groups to support defined governance tasks, projects, or strategic initiatives where the work does not fall within the mandate of an existing committee.
2. Ad Hoc working groups:
 - a. operate under a Council-approved Terms of Reference
 - b. have a defined purpose and time-limited mandate
 - c. report to Council or to the sponsoring committee as directed by Council
 - d. do not exercise independent governance authority unless explicitly delegated by Council
 - e. are dissolved once the assigned work is completed or the mandate expires

Council appoints members to the working group based on relevant expertise. Council may appoint a Council member or another individual with appropriate expertise to serve as chair.

4.4 Mandates and authority limits

1. Each committee has a documented mandate approved by Council.
2. Mandates define purpose, authority, reporting relationships, and decision pathways.
3. Committee mandates are documented through Council-approved Terms of Reference.

4. Committee Terms of Reference must establish member conduct expectations, including confidentiality, conflict of interest management, respectful and professional participation, role boundaries, and compliance with applicable governance policies and procedures. Committee members are required to comply with these expectations as a condition of appointment.
5. Committees operate only within the authority granted through legislation or Council-approved mandates.
6. Authority limits are reviewed periodically to ensure legislative compliance and governance clarity.
7. Council appoints and may remove committee members and external representatives consistent with legislation, the Bylaws and policy. Appointment decisions are documented and reviewable.

4.5 Escalation and referral

1. Matters outside a committee's approved mandate are referred to Council or to the appropriate authority as defined by legislation or by Council-approved mandate.
2. Governance committees escalate matters requiring governance decision or policy approval to Council.
3. Operational matters are referred to the Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or authorized delegate) unless legislation assigns authority elsewhere.
4. Escalation pathways must be documented and aligned with committee mandates to preserve statutory authority, mandate clarity, and decision integrity.
5. All referrals and escalations are recorded in governance records to ensure clarity of authority, procedural fairness, and accountability.
6. The delegation register serves as the authoritative record of Council-approved delegated authorities and may be relied upon as evidence of delegated authority unless superseded by legislation, Council resolution, or governance policy.

4.6 Reporting and oversight

1. Committees report to Council in accordance with approved reporting schedules.
2. Reporting focuses on mandate fulfillment, risks, compliance, and outcomes.
3. Oversight by Council does not interfere with statutory decision making authority.

5.0 Expected outcomes

1. **Public interest** is protected through clear committee authority and defensible decision pathways.
2. **Clear mandate and authority** limits prevent governance overlap and unauthorized decision making.
3. **Statutory independence** is respected and preserved.
4. **Consistent escalation pathways** support transparent and accountable governance.
5. **Structured reporting** strengthens Council oversight and confidence.
6. **Strategic alignment** ensures committee activities support the Strategic Plan (2025 to 2030) Leading with Vision, Ensuring Public Trust.

This policy is reviewed annually, or sooner if required by legislative, regulatory, or strategic change.

6.0 Related legislation and references

Legislation and regulation

- Dental Assistants Profession Regulation.
- Fair Registration Practices Act.
- Health Professions Act.
- Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation.
- Labour Mobility Act.

College authority and governance

- Bylaws of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants (2023).
- Code of Ethics (2020) of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants.
- Council and Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or authorized delegate) Relationship Policy (2024).
- Strategic Plan (2025–30) Leading with Vision, Ensuring Public Trust.

Related college policies

- GOV-POL-001 Governance and Accountability Framework
- GOV-POL-002 Council Roles, Conduct and Ethics
- GOV-POL-003 Delegation and Registrar Authority
- GOV-POL-005 Risk, Assurance and Oversight
- GOV-POL-006 Governance Review and Transparency

7.0 Definitions

- 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.
- Council-Established Committee:** A committee created by Council under its governance authority to support oversight, policy development, or strategic functions.
- Statutory Committee:** A committee or panel established under the *Health Professions Act* or related legislation with authority defined by statute.

8.0 Document information

Policy type	Governance
Policy owner	Registrar and Chief Executive Officer (or authorized delegate)
Approved by	Council of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants
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Effective date	June 20, 2026			
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Approval history	Version	Date	Council Motion #	Summary of Revision
Related documents	GOV-PRC-008 Committee Establishment and Mandate Procedure GOV-PRC-009 Committee Operations and Reporting Procedure GOV-PRC-010 Decision Escalation and Referral Procedure Governance Committee Terms of Reference Finance Risk Management and Audit Committee Terms of Reference Registration Committee Terms of Reference Competence Committee Terms of Reference Code of Ethics (2020) Bylaws of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants (2023) Strategic Plan (2025 to 2030) Leading with Vision, Ensuring Public Trust			