



COLLEGE OF REGISTERED
DENTAL HYGIENISTS
OF ALBERTA



Continuing Competence Program Rules

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1 Definitions

1.1 In this document

- 1.1.1 "College" means the College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta;
- 1.1.2 "Competence Committee" means the Competence Committee of the College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta;
- 1.1.3 "Continuing Competence" means maintenance of competence (combined knowledge, skills, attitude and judgment) and enhancement of the provision of professional services;
- 1.1.4 "Continuing Competence Program" means a continuing competence program established and operated by Council;
- 1.1.5 "Council" means the Council of the College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta;
- 1.1.6 "CRDHA" means the College of Registered Dental Hygienists of Alberta;
- 1.1.7 "General Member" means a person who is registered on the register of Regulated members of the College and who has met all the criteria to receive a practice permit and provide professional services in Alberta.
- 1.1.8 "Member" means a person registered as a General member or Non-practicing member of the College.
- 1.1.9 "Most Recent 3-Year Period" means the 3-year period immediately preceding the date of application for transfer from the register of Non-practicing members to the register of General members. This period is reviewed to determine eligibility to transfer to the General Register of Regulated Members.
- 1.1.10 "Must" or "Shall" indicates an imperative need and/or duty; an essential or indispensable item; mandatory.
- 1.1.11 "Non-practicing Member" means a person who is registered on the register of Non-regulated members of the College. A Non-regulated member is not currently engaged in active professional employment in the province of Alberta, and does not hold a practice permit in Alberta.
- 1.1.12 "Practice Hours" means those hours during which a General member was engaged in the practice of dental hygiene as defined in Schedule 5 of the *Health Professions Act* either for remuneration or as an unpaid volunteer.
- 1.1.13 "Program Credit" means the unit of credit granted to a General member for undertaking activities in accordance with any rules approved by Council. Generally, one program credit is equivalent to one hour unless otherwise determined by the Competence Committee.

- 1.1.14 "Refresher Education Program" means an educational program, approved by the Council, which is undertaken by a person for the purpose of renewing or upgrading the person's knowledge base and/or clinical expertise.

1.2 Words that imply a gender are intended to include the other.

2 General Information

Continuous study and self assessment of educational needs is the fundamental and lifelong responsibility of a professional. Technological advancement through research, innovations in patterns of health care delivery, and development of new clinical procedures accentuate the need for General members to remain current.

To formalize its commitment to continued competence and to meet the mandate of the *Health Professions Act*, the College has established a continuing competence program with requirements related to registration and renewal of practice permits.

It is the member's responsibility to determine his or her specific continuing competence needs and to pursue activities that meet these identified needs. The CRDHA Self Assessment Package will aid members in determining individual learning needs and developing a learning plan to maintain competency.

General members have a basic professional responsibility to read professional oral health journals and newsletters and to keep their practice current. Under the CRDHA Continuing Competence Program, credit may be granted for continuing competence learning activities beyond this basic responsibility.

It is understood that all learning activities shall have significant intellectual or practical content related to the practice of dental hygiene, oral health, or the professional responsibility and ethical obligations of the General member. The individual General member's practice setting or environment will be considered by the Competence Committee when reviewing requests for continuing competence program credit. Learning activities that support the General member's specific learning needs and areas(s) of practice will be considered. This may include, but is not limited to, activities related to client assessment, dental hygiene diagnosis, treatment planning, implementation, evaluation, health promotion, research, epidemiology, communications, ergonomics, hazardous materials, record keeping, and conflict resolution.

3 Continuing Competence Program Requirements

3.1 Required Components

The two required components of the CRDHA continuing competence program are:

- program credit requirements;
- practice hour requirements.

3.2 Reporting Period

All General members must satisfy the two required components of the continuing competence program:

- 3.2.1 within each 3-year period commencing November 1, 2006; **or**
- 3.2.2 new General members registered on or after November 1, 2006, will commence their 3-year reporting period on the November 1 following the date of registration.

3.3 Program Credit Requirements

Learning activities that contribute significantly to the scientific, practical, professional, or ethical aspects of the General member's practice of dental hygiene will generally be eligible for program credits. Program credits cannot be claimed for activities that occur as part of the expectations of the dental hygienist's regular provision of dental hygiene services. For example, if giving presentations to junior high school classes is a routine part of your regular employment, this activity is not eligible for program credits. These activities may be included as part of your practice hour requirements.

Learning activities that occur within the practice environment, such as an in-service course offered for all staff members, may be claimed for program credits. The hours attended at this learning activity may not also be claimed as practice hours.

- 3.3.1 A General member must obtain a *minimum 45 program credits* in the 3-year period that starts on the General member's anniversary date and in each subsequent 3-year period. It is recommended that, whenever possible, members obtain 15 credits per year.
- 3.3.2 Program credits exceeding the minimum of 45 credits in one reporting period cannot be carried over or transferred to another reporting period. However, these program credits will continue to be recorded in the member's record.
- 3.3.3 In the event that the minimum program credits are not achieved on or before the end of the relevant 3-year period, application for renewal of a practice permit will be denied.
- 3.3.4 General members not meeting the minimum program credit requirements within the relevant 3-year period must successfully complete one of the following continuing competence program requirements in order to apply for a practice permit:

- (a) Council-approved refresher education course in dental hygiene; **or**
 - (b) the Canadian National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) Examination.
- 3.3.5 Successful completion of an approved refresher education course in dental hygiene or the NDHCB Examination will be considered valid for a period of 12 months following completion, for the purpose of application for a practice permit.
- 3.3.6 Non-practicing members are not required to report their continuing competence activities, but may do so if they desire.

3.4 Practice Hour Requirements

As part of the practice of dental hygiene, a General member may act as a clinician, educator, researcher, administrator, health promoter, and/or consultant. Hours working in any practice environment, whether as a volunteer or for remuneration, will count toward the required practice hours.

- 3.4.1 General members are required to engage in a minimum of 600 practice hours, during the relevant period of 3 consecutive years set out in section 3.2. It is recommended that, whenever possible, General members obtain a minimum of 200 practice hours per year.
- 3.4.2 Practice hours exceeding the minimum of 600 hours cannot be carried over or transferred to another reporting period. However, these practice hours will continue to be recorded in the member's record.
- 3.4.3 In the event that the minimum 600 practice hours is not achieved on or before the end of the relevant 3-year period, application for an annual practice permit will be denied.
- 3.4.4 General members not meeting the minimum practice hour requirements within the most recent 3-year period must successfully complete a Council-approved dental hygiene refresher education course.
- 3.4.5 Successful completion of a Council-approved dental hygiene refresher course will be considered valid for a period of 12 months following completion, for the purpose of application for a practice permit.
- 3.4.6 Non-practicing members do not hold an Alberta practice permit and are therefore not eligible to accumulate practice hour requirements through the provision of dental hygiene services in Alberta.

4 Reporting

4.1 Reporting Program Credits

- 4.1.1 It is the responsibility of a General member to ensure that a completed *Request for Continuing Competence Program Credits* form is submitted within **120 days** of completion of a learning activity. Submission of course attendance lists by sponsoring organizations does not replace this requirement.

Supporting documentation is **not** required for courses delivered by CRDHA. For all other learning activities, supporting documentation must be included.

Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to, any of the following:

- course schedule and outline of course content;
- conference agenda indicating session(s) attended;
- online course outline, learning objectives, and confirmation of successful completion of the course examination;
- copy of registration receipts;
- copy of article in its published format;
- copy of presentation(s);
- copy of CPR wallet card.

- 4.1.2 Providing false or misleading information will be considered unprofessional conduct.
- 4.1.3 Members are advised to keep a personal record of program credits and all forms submitted for credit for at least 3 years. After program credits are entered into a General member's electronic record, the submitted copy of the request form is destroyed by the CRDHA.
- 4.1.4 The College will supply a record of the General member's accumulated program credits to the member at least once in every membership year.

4.2 Reporting Practice Hours

- 4.2.1 It is the responsibility of General members to ensure that practice hours are reported annually in the format set out on the *Application for Renewal of Membership* form.
- 4.2.2 Providing false or misleading information will be considered unprofessional conduct.
- 4.2.3 Members are advised to keep a personal record of practice hours. If requested, a member must provide evidence of practice.
- 4.2.4 The College will supply a record of the General member's accumulated practice hours to the member at least once in every membership year.

5 Competence Requirements for Transfer to the General Register of Regulated Members

5.1 In accordance with CRDHA's policy on Transfer from Non-practicing to General Registration, when applying for transfer to the General Register of Regulated Members, Non-practicing members must provide evidence that they have met all of the requirements of the CRDHA continuing competence program in the most recent 3-year period (e.g., if applying for transfer to the General Register of Regulated Members on January 5, 2010, the most recent 3-year period is January 5, 2007, to January 4, 2010).

5.1.1 Applicants for transfer who do not meet the two required components of the continuing competence program (as set out in Section 3) must provide evidence of successful completion of a Council-approved dental hygiene refresher education course. The course must have been completed no longer than 12 months prior to application for transfer.

5.1.2 Applicants for transfer who have a deficit of program credits only will be required to:

- (a) engage in further learning activities until they achieve the minimum 45 credits required; **or**
- (b) successfully complete the Canadian National Dental Hygiene Certification Board written examination.

5.1.3 Applicants for transfer who have a deficit of only practice hour requirements will be required to provide evidence of successful completion of a Council-approved dental hygiene refresher education course. The course must have been completed no longer than 12 months prior to application for transfer.

5.2 The Registrar must be satisfied that all the requirements for transfer, including the continuing competence program requirements, have been satisfied before an application for transfer to the General Register of Regulated Members will be approved.

6 Monitoring Continuing Competence Program Requirements

6.1 The Registrar will keep the records of each member's program credits and practice hour requirements.

6.2 Each member is responsible for keeping a personal record of program credits and copies of forms submitted for credit for at least 3 years. The College will supply a record of the member's accumulated program credits and practice hours to the member at least once in every membership year. It is the member's responsibility to inform the College of record errors.

- 6.2.1 If a member believes there are record errors, the member may request the CRDHA to correct the information.
- (a) The member must provide additional information or documentation, as requested by CRDHA staff or the Competence Committee, prior to correction.
 - (b) The decision of the Competence Committee regarding a requested change in the record is final.
 - (c) If a decision is made to correct the record, it will be corrected in a timely manner. If it is reasonable to do so, CRDHA will send the corrected information to every organization that the records show has received the incorrect information.
- 6.3 Further information will be requested from members if College staff or the Competence Committee has questions about any of the reported learning activities.
- 6.3.1 If requested, members must provide additional information or documentation related to the learning activity(ies) in question.
- 6.4 Random audits may be conducted to validate practice hours and/or program credits reported by members.
- 6.4.1 Members could be the subject of a documentation review regarding program credits. If requested, members must provide the College with supporting documentation for all learning activities reported for the period being reviewed. Documentation submitted may include registration receipts, course materials, and handwritten course notes. The complete file will be returned to the member after the review is completed.
- 6.4.2 If requested, a member must provide evidence of practice hours in the form of written employer verification.
- 6.5 Providing false or misleading information will be considered unprofessional conduct.

7 Maximum Allowable Program Credits per Course

- 7.1 No one course may qualify for more than **25 program credits**.
- 7.2 Only actual hours attended should be reported.
- 7.3 Typically, one program credit is awarded per hour of participation unless otherwise determined by the Competence Committee.
- 7.4 In the event that a learning activity continues into the evening hours, a **maximum of 10 program credits** per 24-hour period may be claimed.

7.5 Members will not receive program credits for any learning activity taken a second time within a 12-month period.

8 Assigning Program Credits

8.1 The Competence Committee will review requests for determination of program credits and reserves the right to approve or disapprove credits for any submission that it considers to be questionable in regards to receiving a practice permit.

8.2 Pre-determination of Program Credits

Members, study clubs, and/or other course sponsors may apply directly to the Competence Committee on the approved form, at least 60 days prior to delivery of the course, for pre-determination of eligibility for program credits for learning activities.

8.2.1 Study clubs are encouraged to submit a program of studies for pre-determination of program credits. Study club programs may qualify for hour-for-hour credit using the *Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Study Club)* form.

8.2.2 As with all educational opportunities, each member of the study club must submit a completed *Request for Continuing Competence Program Credits* form.

9 Continuing Competence Program Credit Categories

Learning activities shall have significant intellectual or practical content related to the practice of dental hygiene, oral health, or to the professional responsibility and ethical obligations of the General member. The individual General member's practice setting or environment will be considered by the Competence Committee when reviewing requests for continuing competence program credit. It is the General member's responsibility to determine his or her specific continuing competence needs and to pursue activities that meet these identified needs.

The following categories are established for the purpose of assigning continuing competence program credits:

- Unlimited Continuing Competence Program Credit Activities (no limit per reporting period);
- Limited Continuing Competence Program Credit Activities (maximum 20 program credits can be obtained in this category per relevant 3-year period).

9.1 Unlimited Program Credit Activities

Learning activities encompass a variety of formats. In recognition of the diversity of learning opportunities, the following areas have been identified.

9.1.1 Educational Courses or Sessions

Part-time or full-time advanced dental hygiene education, continuing competence courses, presentations, seminars, conferences, or clinical sessions provided by the following agencies would likely be approved for program credits:

- (a) Accredited dental hygiene programs, dental programs, universities, colleges, and technical institutions;
- (b) Provincial, state, national, and international dental hygiene and dental regulatory authorities, associations, and their component societies;
- (c) Federal government health agencies, including the Canadian Forces, and provincial or local government departments of health or public health;
- (d) Hospitals accredited by the Canadian Council of Hospital Accreditation;
- (e) Provincial, state, national, and international oral health specialty organizations recognized by the Canadian Dental Association (CDA) or the American Dental Association (ADA);
- (f) Other health care organizations;
- (g) Other organizations that are approved ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) providers or meet the requirements of the Academy of General Dentistry's (AGD) Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE);
- (h) Study club learning activities that have received CRDHA Competence Committee program credit approval.

9.1.2. Formal Advanced Education Courses or Programs

Members engaged in part-time or full-time studies related to the practice of dental hygiene may qualify for program credits. The course or program must be offered by a recognized educational institution (either on campus or via distance education*). Each "unit of course weight" (ucw) will qualify for hour-for-hour program credits to the maximum of **25 program credits per course**. For example:

- 1 ucw = 13 hours is eligible for 13 program credits;
- 3 ucw = 39 hours is eligible for a maximum of 25 program credits.

Members must provide proof of successful completion of courses to the CRDHA.

**Courses offered via distance education must meet the criteria listed in 9.1.3*

9.1.3 Self-Directed Study

Members may participate in self-directed study continuing competence activities including online learning, audio, video, or CD-ROM formats. To be eligible for program credit hours, self-study activities must include:

- (a) clearly defined learning objectives;

- (b) supporting literature references;
- (c) post-course examination which adequately evaluates the participant's comprehension;
- (d) direct feedback of the examination results by the sponsor to the participant (evidence of successful completion of this examination must be included with the *Request for Continuing Competence Program Credits* form); and
- (e) the self-directed study course provider should be an approved ADA Continuing Education Recognition Program (CERP) provider or have Academy of General Dentistry (AGD) Program Approval for Continuing Education (PACE) or equivalent.

Program credits are granted according to recommendations made by the course provider, the publisher, or the Competence Committee, with consideration given to the amount of time necessary to cover the material and to take the examination. Assignment of program credits will not include the additional time the registrant takes to study or review the materials. The Competence Committee makes the final approval for the number of credits awarded for any online course.

9.1.4 Participation in Research

Members, who engage in specific research activities over and above their educational program requirements and/or regular employment or contractual obligations, may qualify for program credits. This includes but is not limited to:

- (a) development of a research project;
- (b) literature review for a research project;
- (c) facilitation of focus groups for research purposes;
- (d) analysis of participant responses;
- (e) research for the purposes of obtaining a Masters or Doctorate. Credit is only granted in this category for research completed in a graduate program that does not assign "units of course weight" (ucw). Research conducted in courses that are assigned "ucw" will qualify for credit under Section 9.1.2;
- (f) presentation of a research paper or abstract at a scientific meeting.

If required, **Ethics Review Approval must be secured prior to submission** to the Competence Committee and evidence of such approval must accompany the request for program credits.

To determine eligibility for program credits, members are requested to submit a pre-determination on the approved *Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Research)* form.

(Please note: Although your participation in dental hygiene research is encouraged, responding to a survey or questionnaire does not qualify for program credits.)

See Appendix B: Research Program Credits.

9.1.5 Publications

The publication of articles is eligible for program credits. All articles must be relevant to the practice of dental hygiene. The articles will be reviewed by the Competence Committee for determination of program credits.

Publication of articles may be eligible for program credits as follows:

- (a) for each article written and published in a peer-reviewed health or oral health scientific journal/publication: **10 program credits.**
- (b) for each paper, written to present the practitioner's original research, and published in a refereed oral health scientific journal/publication: **15 program credits.**
- (c) articles written and published in the CRDHA or other dental hygiene college/association publications: **3 program credits.** (Please contact the College for specific submission requirements.)
- (d) published reviews of books related to dental hygiene practice: **3 program credits.**
- (e) published reviews of chapters of oral health related books will be granted program credits on an individual basis.
- (f) chapter(s) written in a reference or textbook: **maximum 25 program credits.** Co-authorship credits are proportional to the number of authors:
e.g.,
4 authors = 1/4 of 25 credits
3 authors = 1/3 of 25 credits

9.1.6 Directed Study (Mentoring)

Directed study contracts may be initiated to address a specific learning need. Examples may include teaming up with an educator with advanced skills and knowledge in continuing care facilities or teaming up with a colleague with expertise in a specific area of dental hygiene practice.

- (a) A formalized learning contract must exist between the mentor and the mentee. To qualify for program credits, the learning activity must be approved by the Competence Committee prior to initiation of the activity.
- (b) Both the mentor and mentee may apply for program credits.

- (c) General members may qualify to receive program credits for mentoring and mentoring preparation.
- (d) The Competence Committee determines the final approval of program credits.

See Appendix C: Directed Study/Mentoring Program Credits.

9.1.7 Developing and Delivering Educational Courses

- (a) General members may apply for program credits for developing and delivering educational courses outside of their regular employment or contractual obligations.
- (b) Development and delivery of educational courses as part of the General member's regular obligations will be considered practice hours.
- (c) Requests for program credits will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- (d) Applications for program credits for development and/or delivery of in-person educational courses must include evidence of:
 - i. clearly defined learning objectives;
 - ii. detailed course outline;
 - iii. supporting literature references.
- (e) Applications for program credits for development of a self-directed study learning activity must include evidence of:
 - i. clearly defined learning objectives;
 - ii. detailed course outline;
 - iii. supporting literature references;
 - iv. post-course examination which adequately evaluates the participant's comprehension;
 - v. a mechanism for direct feedback of the examination to the participant.

9.2 Limited Program Credit Activities

Members can obtain a maximum of **20 limited program credits out of the total 45 program credits** in the relevant 3-year period. Excess program credits accumulated in this category are not included in the reported NET total of program credits but they are retained as part of the member's record.

Learning activities may encompass a variety of formats. In recognition of the diversity of learning opportunities, the following areas have been identified.

9.2.1 Presentations

- (a) General members may qualify to receive **1 program credit** for each hour of oral health related presentations delivered to study clubs, seniors, pre-natal or other special interest groups. Program credits for each presentation may be claimed only once per 12-month period.
- (b) General members may claim for development of the initial presentation. The initial presentation will be recognized with an additional program credit (on an hour-per-hour basis) of the actual presentation length (i.e., if the initial presentation is one hour in length, the first submission for program credits for this presentation would be a request for a total of 2 program credits).

9.2.2 Other Practice Related

Other learning activities or programs that relate to practice (e.g., marketing course, communications course, ergonomics in practice) may be eligible for **hour-for-hour program credits to a maximum of 9 program credits** in the relevant 3-year period. Program credit requests submitted under this category must be relevant to the General member's practice of dental hygiene. Documentation that supports how this learning activity is relevant to the General member's practice must be submitted with the request form.

Documentation must include three specific, concrete examples of how learning will be used in the General member's practice and how it applies to continuing competence.

Although CRDHA recognizes the value of extra-curricular activities and self-interest learning in maintaining life balance, such activities will not be considered for credit under the Continuing Competence Program.

9.2.3 Annual General Meetings

Annual general meetings of national or provincial oral health professional associations such as the CRDHA and the Canadian Dental Hygienists' Association (CDHA) may be claimed for continuing competence program credit. **Maximum of 3 program credits per membership year.**

9.2.4 Self Assessment Package

Evidence of completion of the CRDHA Self Assessment Package may be submitted for continuing competence credit once per year. **Maximum of 2 program credits per membership year.** Completion of the Self Assessment Package or other forms of self assessment is currently optional.

9.2.5 Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

As required by regulation, a General member applying for renewal of a practice permit must provide evidence of holding a CPR certificate at the level required by the Council.

At a minimum, the CPR course must include classroom instruction and practicum experience related to:

- one- and two-person rescuer chest compressions for adults, children, and infants;
- one- and two-person rescuer adult, child, and infant bag-valve mask technique and rescue breathing;
- relief of choking in adults, children, and infants;
- use of an automated external defibrillator.

The course must be delivered in accordance with the recommendations of the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR). CPR certification must be renewed annually.

Completion of CPR annual certification qualifies for hour-for-hour credit to a **maximum of 3 program credits. Maximum of 9 credits in the relevant 3-year period.**

9.2.6 CRDHA Jurisprudence Examination

The CRDHA Jurisprudence Examination may be completed one time for credit. Application to take the examination can be obtained from the CRDHA office. **Maximum of 2 program credits, one time only.**

9.2.7 Other activities approved by the Council, the Registrar, or the Competence Committee

10 Practice Visits

10.1 Authorization to Conduct a Practice Visit

10.1.1 As authorized by section 21 of the Dental Hygienists Profession Regulation, the Competence Committee may carry out practice visits as part of the continuing competence program.

10.1.2 The Competence Committee may direct that a selected General member or group of General members participate in a practice visit for the purpose of assessing continuing competence.

10.1.3 The General member(s) must co-operate with members of the Competence Committee and a person appointed under section 11 of the *Health Professions Act*.

10.2 Requesting a Practice Visit

A General member may request that the Competence Committee carry out a practice visit regarding the General member's practice (e.g., a General member may request a practice visit to aid in the positive advancement of practice standards in his or her practice environment).

11 Special Consideration of Credit

If special consideration for program credits is requested, the following information must be submitted on the *Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits* form:

- name and address of sponsoring organization;
- name, and curriculum vitae of individual(s) presenting;
- location of course;
- date of course;
- description of course objectives and content.

Members must submit documentation that supports how this learning activity is relevant to his or her practice of dental hygiene.

12 Failure to Meet Requirements

When a member fails to meet the Continuing Competence Program requirements, application for a practice permit will be denied.

13 Appeals

- 13.1 Any member who wishes to appeal the decision of the Competence Committee must submit a letter of appeal to the Competence Committee within 30 days of the receipt of the Competence Committee's decision.
- 13.2 The member must supply the Competence Committee with any requested additional data and may be asked to appear before the Competence Committee for a hearing.
- 13.3 Decisions of the Competence Committee shall be final.

14 Confidentiality

Information related to participation in the Continuing Competence Program is confidential and any person who has access to or comes into possession of such information shall not publish, release, or disclose the information in any manner except as necessary to carry out powers, duties, and obligations under the *Health Professions Act*.

Appendix A: Forms

01 Personal Record

02 Request for Continuing Competence Program Credits

03 Program Credit Codes

04 Request for Program Credits (Self Assessment)

05 Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits

06 Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Study Club)

07 Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Research)
(also see Appendix B)

08 Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Directed Study/Mentoring)
(also see Appendix C)

The Continuing Competence Program forms are available online at the following address and links:

- www.crdha.ca
- CRDHA members (top navigation)
- Forms (left navigation)
- Continuing Competence Program Forms

Appendix B: Research Program Credits

Guidelines for Obtaining Continuing Competence Program Credits for Research

The Competence Committee approves recognition of participation in research activities for continuing competence credit. These guidelines have been developed to assist and encourage General members to apply for continuing competence program credits for their research activities and to assist the Competence Committee with evaluating the eligibility of these activities for program credit.

Definitions

Research is the systematic process of collecting and analyzing information to increase our understanding of the phenomenon under study. It is the function of the researcher to intentionally enhance the understanding of the phenomenon and to communicate that understanding to others. Ethical issues underpin all areas, and ethical conduct is the first consideration.

Three main types of research may be considered for continuing competence credit:

- **Exploratory:** preliminary research to clarify the exact nature of the problem to be solved.
- **Qualitative:** focuses on the experiences, interpretations, impressions, or motivations of an individual or individuals, and that seeks to describe how people view things and why. It relates to beliefs, attitudes, and changing behaviour.
- **Quantitative:** focuses on measuring and counting facts and the relationships among variables, and that seeks to describe observations through statistical analysis of data. It includes experimental and non-experimental research and descriptive research (research that attempts to describe the characteristics of a sample or population).

The research project or activity:

- may be subdivided into phases. Each phase must have a start and completion date that falls within the member's continuing competence program reporting cycle in order to be eligible for continuing competence program credits.
- must have specific time limits.
- may or may not be for the purposes of obtaining a Masters or Doctorate degree.
- may be of any form of research: qualitative, quantitative or exploratory.
- will give consideration to issues of ethics, language, culture, and gender.

Process for Submitting a Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Research)

1. The General member(s) determines and records the project and purpose, including specific learning objectives to be achieved and provides the following information to the Competence Committee.
 - (a) Description of the research activity/project that includes the following:
 - i. the research problem with relevant research reviewed;

- ii. a clear research question or hypothesis (purpose of your project);
 - iii. a brief description of the research design or methodology;
 - iv. statement of objectives and boundaries of the activity/project;
 - v. manner of dissemination of findings.
- (b) Description of YOUR specific activities/role in the research project.
 - (c) Explanation of its benefits to your practice of dental hygiene.
2. The General member (and any other involved party) determines when the research activity will start and end and where the learning will take place.
 3. The General member submits the *Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Research)* form at least 60 days prior to initiating the research learning activity to the Competence Committee for approval.
 4. The Competence Committee will provide the member with confirmation that research is or is not eligible for assignment of program credits.
 5. Once the research activity has been completed, each General member involved in the research activity must individually submit a *Request for Continuing Competence Program Credits* form to the CRDHA.

Please note: Acceptance of a research project for continuing competence program credits does not in any way indicate support for or endorsement of the research project by the CRDHA or its Competence Committee.

Appendix C: Directed Study/Mentoring Program Credits

Guidelines for Obtaining Continuing Competence Credit for Directed Study (Mentoring)

These guidelines have been developed to assist and encourage General members to apply for continuing competence credits related to directed study (mentoring) and to assist the Competence Committee with evaluating the eligibility of these activities for program credit.

Definitions

Directed Study means a method of acquiring specific knowledge or skills through specified learning activities with the guidance of an identified mentor.

Mentor means a knowledgeable teacher or guide. “Mentors nurture possibilities.”¹ For the purposes of these guidelines, a mentor can be a registered dental hygienist or other professional for interdisciplinary collaboration purposes (e.g., dietitian, speech language pathologist).

Mentee means a member requiring guidance and support in developing his or her competence in the determined area of need. This member has a strong desire to learn, develop, and grow professionally. The mentee must have a willingness to learn from the chosen mentor(s).

All professions, including dental hygiene, can benefit from mentoring as a means of meeting an individual’s learning needs. The mentoring relationship is one that provides an environment that supports adults while they continue to learn and develop themselves. It is a shared journey in which the two participants mutually contribute in a questioning, supporting, and caring manner.

For the purposes of this learning opportunity, formal mentorship has the following characteristics:

- is a deliberate, conscious, voluntary relationship;
- may be subdivided into phases. Each phase must have a start and completion date that falls within the member’s continuing competence program reporting cycle in order to be eligible for continuing competence program credits.
- is sanctioned or supported by the College;
- occurs between an experienced, employed, or retired person (the mentor) and one or more other persons (the mentees);
- does not generally occur in a direct, hierarchical, or supervisory chain-of-command relationship;
- the outcome of the relationship is expected to benefit all parties in the relationship for career development, goal achievement, and in other practice-related areas mutually designated by the mentor and mentee;
- benefits the community within which the mentoring takes place;
- such activities taking place on a one-to-one, small group, or by electronic or telecommunication means;
- typically focus on interpersonal support, guidance, mutual exchange, sharing of wisdom, coaching, and role modeling.

¹ Compton, SM (2002). *Meanings of the mentoring relationship between junior and senior faculty members in higher education*. Unpublished dissertation, p.15

Examples of possible learning activities

- clinical skill development in a specific area of dental hygiene practice
- acquisition of residential care knowledge and skills
- acquisition of research skills using the Internet
- enhancement of nutritional assessment skills for oral health purposes

Role of the mentor

The mentor, selected by the General member, will have expertise in the General member's desired area of study as well as the ability to guide the General member in his or her learning. The mentor must agree to mentor the General member and must be involved with development of the *Directed Study/Mentoring Contract*.

Examples of suitable mentors are:

- community health dental hygienist promoting tobacco cessation;
- educator or clinician with advanced skills and knowledge in care of clients in continuing care facilities;
- private practice clinician with advanced skills and knowledge in root planing techniques;
- dietitian (nutritional assessments);
- speech language pathologist (speech problems linked to oral problems and possible solutions).

Process for Developing a Directed Study/Mentoring Contract

1. The General member determines and records what he or she would like to learn (learning objective or goal) and explains why he or she believes it would benefit their practice of dental hygiene (purpose).
2. If necessary, the General member seeks out appropriate resources regarding professional mentoring. (Please contact the CRDHA or CDHA if you require a list of possible resources.)
3. The General member approaches an appropriate mentor about the contract.
4. The mentor agrees to mentor the General member and they develop a plan that outlines how the learning will occur.
5. The General member (or "mentee") and mentor determine when the contract will start and end and where the learning will take place. Each learning activity must start and end during the **same continuing competence reporting period**.
6. The mentor and mentee determine the number of continuing competence program credits that will be requested by the General member (*see 9.1.6 Directed Study (Mentoring)*).
7. If the mentor is a General member, the mentor determines the number of continuing competence program credits that he or she will be requesting for mentoring and for mentoring preparation (*see 9.1.6(c)*).
8. The mentor and mentee sign a contract.

9. The mentee submits the proposed mentoring project to the Continuing Competence Committee for approval using the *Request for Pre-determination of Program Credits (Directed Study/Mentoring)* form.
10. Once the learning activity has been completed, the mentee and mentor individually submit *Request for Continuing Competence Program Credits* forms to the CRDHA.



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