

**FEDERATION OF DENTAL HYGIENE  
REGULATORS OF CANADA**



**EQUIVALENCY ASSESSMENT HANDBOOK  
FOR INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED DENTAL HYGIENE  
APPLICANTS  
AND  
GRADUATES OF NON-ACCREDITED CANADIAN OR  
AMERICAN DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAMS**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications Process ..... 4

    1.1 Principles of Assessment ..... 4

    1.2 Who needs to apply for an Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment? ..... 5

    1.3 Credentialing Standards..... 5

2. Translation Policy ..... 6

3. Application Process ..... 6

    3.1 Applying for an equivalency assessment of credentials ..... 6

    3.2 Fees..... 7

4. Documentation Policies ..... 7

5. Documentation Requirements and Process:..... 8

6. Communication with Applicants ..... 11

    6.1 Acknowledgment of Reception of Application and Supporting Documents ..... 11

    6.2 Tracking of Documents Received..... 11

    6.3 Release of Information to a Third Party..... 12

7. Eligibility Assessment Policies and DecisionsN..... 12

8. Notice of Right to Appeal ..... 13

9. List of Appendices ..... 13

## **1. Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications Process**

Prior to applying for an equivalency assessment, applicants must contact the regulatory authority in the province or territory where they would like to work to find out what requirements are needed to fulfill to work there.

The FDHRC assesses the educational credentials and qualifications of individuals who graduated from a dental hygiene program not accredited in Canada or the United States on behalf of the provincial and territorial regulatory authorities. Please note that Canada has two official languages, English and French. Individuals may apply in either of those two official languages.

The FDHRC will assess an applicant's educational credentials and qualifications by determining whether their dental hygiene education and their qualifications are substantially equivalent to those of a Canadian educated dental hygienist as per an established process. The assessment standards are based on the following:

- A. CDAC Accreditation Requirements for Canadian Dental Hygiene Programs;
- B. Entry-To-Practice Competencies and Standards for Canadian Dental Hygienists (2010);
- C. CDHA Dental Hygiene Definition, Scope and Practice Standards;
- D. Curricula from accredited Canadian dental hygiene programs; and
- E. The latest NDHCE Blueprint.

### **1.1 Principles of Assessment**

The assessment process reviews whether an applicant's education and training are substantially equivalent to that of a graduate from an accredited dental hygiene program in Canada. The FDHRC assessment process is built on the following principles:

- A. Dental Hygiene is a regulated health profession encompassing the theory and practice in the areas of oral therapeutic interventions, preventive interventions and health education, health promotion and management of the dental hygiene practice;
- B. Dental Hygiene has a unique body of knowledge, distinct expertise, recognized national competencies accompanied with national practice standards, and a national Code of Ethics;
- C. The education and experience of dental hygienists must prepare them to work independently and in a collaborative relationship with the client, other health care professionals and stakeholders and, in all jurisdictions but the province of Quebec, they work without the direct supervision of a dentist;
- D. The practice of Dental Hygiene utilizes a systematic approach to dental hygiene care called the Dental Hygiene Process of Care. It involves five key behaviours or steps: Dental Hygiene Assessment, Dental Hygiene Diagnosis, Dental Hygiene Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of treatment and services;

- E. An applicant for an assessment of educational credentials and qualifications is required to meet the same standards from those required of a dental hygienist graduating from an accredited Canadian dental hygiene program; and
- F. All applications for an equivalency assessment are reviewed on an individual basis.
- G. The evaluation of academic qualifications does not establish the equivalency of a non-accredited dental hygiene program to an accredited dental hygiene program, but rather, recognizes that the applicant has achieved a level of dental hygiene education equivalent to that of accredited Canadian programs.
- H. Applicants are responsible for all expenses for verification and translation of required documents.

## 1.2 Who needs to apply for an Educational Credentials and Qualifications Assessment?

Any applicant who is:

- A. A graduate of a dental hygiene program that was NOT accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC), or the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA/CODA) on the date of the applicant's graduation; OR
- B. A graduate of a dental hygiene program outside of Canada or the United States.

## 1.3 Credentialing Standards

In order to be considered for an Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications, any applicant must be able to provide evidence of minimum educational requirements. In its assessment process, the FDHRC uses four (4) minimum criteria that **MUST** be met before it can proceed further:

Criterion 1:

The applicant must have graduated with a **diploma**/degree or its equivalent, **in dental hygiene**.

Criterion 2:

The dental hygiene program must be established as a separate school, faculty, division or department recognized by the appropriate government agency in the country/jurisdiction where the program is established at a **post-secondary institution** which is also recognized by the appropriate government agency.

Criterion 3:

The program must be of a **minimum of two (2) full time academic years of formal dental hygiene education** in a recognized Dental Hygiene program, including a clinical component with direct client care supervised by dental hygiene faculty.

Criterion 4:

The program must have **learning outcomes/competencies and evaluation criteria** set out in a clear, concise and detailed manner to the satisfaction of the FDHRC.

## 2. Translation Policy

All documents must be submitted to the FDHRC **in the language of instruction**. If the language of instruction is not English or French, the applicant will have to have a copy of the original documents translated into either English or French at their own cost.

If the applicant's educational institution has an official translation in either English or French of the required documents, the institution must send the documents to the FDHRC in their original language of instruction and attach the official signed translation in either English or French.

If the applicant's educational institution does not have an official translation, and the FDHRC receives documents from the institution in a language other than English or French, the FDHRC will paginate these documents and send a copy back to the applicant for translation. It is then the responsibility of the applicant to have these documents translated **word for word** by a certified/official translator.\*

The official translator must then send the translated documents directly to the FDHRC and not to the applicant.

**IMPORTANT:** \*A certified/official translator is authorized to officially sign and stamp translations. All translated documents need to have the seal of a certified/official translator to be considered; and all translations can be audited for accuracy.

The FDHRC will accept electronically submitted translations (on disk or USB key) if it is accompanied by a signed letter, embossed with the professional translator's seal, mailed directly to the FDHRC from the office of the translator. Please note that a print copy of the translated document is not required under these conditions.

The cost of any translation of documents into English or French is the responsibility of the applicant.

## 3. Application Process

### 3.1 Applying for an equivalency assessment of credentials

An applicant that graduated from a non-accredited dental hygiene program that wishes to become registered as a dental hygienist in Canada must first apply to the FDHRC for an equivalency assessment of their educational credentials and qualifications to determine if they are substantially equivalent to the Canadian dental hygiene educational standards. The application form can be found under Appendix A. No assessment of credentials will be started until the applicant has fulfilled the minimum credentialing educational criteria 1, 2, and 3 (see [Credentialing Standards](#)) and paid all fees.

### 3.2 Fees

The current fees associated with an equivalency assessment can be found in the most current FDHRC Fee Schedule.

The FDHRC ONLY accepts money order/certified cheque or credit card payment (VISA OR MASTERCARD) or VISA Debit card in Canadian funds for the appropriate fee and applicable taxes, payable to the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada. Personal cheques will not be accepted. The Assessment Fee is non-refundable unless the applicant cannot meet criteria 1, 2 or 3 from the [Credentialing Standards](#). If those criteria are not met, the NDHCB will NOT assess the applicant's dental hygiene credentials, will reimburse the eligibility application's fee minus a non-refundable administration fee of \$112.50 + applicable taxes, and the applicant will be denied eligibility to write the NDHCE.

### 4. Documentation Policies

All required documents MUST be sent by mail or courier service or delivered in person (see [mailing address](#)). The FDHRC also accepts faxed or emailed applications and documents but only if the originator of the material can be determined without a doubt by the FDHRC.

In order to process any application, the FDHRC needs all the required documents listed on the Assessment for Eligibility Application Checklist (see Appendix C). As previously mentioned, if any of the documents listed are in a language other than English or French, they must be submitted in the original language and it will be the responsibility of the applicant to have a certified word for word translation done and sent to our office as per our [Translation Policy](#).

In order to complete the assessment of educational credentials and qualifications, the FDHRC reserves the right to contact any relevant institutions and its representatives listed on the signed Document Release Form (Appendix B) for verification purposes and/or to request additional information. If the applicant attended more than one institution in order to complete their dental hygiene studies, each institution must be sent a signed copy of the Appendix B to be filled out by the institution and returned to the FDHRC office with the requested supporting documentation.

If documents are not submitted properly, this will delay the processing of the application. Please note that some documents must be sent to the FDHRC by the applicant while others must be sent directly from the educational institution or another institution/organization directly to the FDHRC offices (see Appendix C).

**IMPORTANT:** No assessment will be started until all the required documentation and payment of fees have been received.

Once all documentation is received and the assessment is started, the entire process is usually completed within 8 to 10 weeks. The assessment will take longer if the assessor needs to do additional research, verify documents or requires additional information.

An application for an assessment of educational credentials and qualifications to determine equivalency is valid for one (1) year from the date the application form and payment was received by the FDHRC. After one (1) year, if the applicant has failed to meet ALL the requirements for a completed application, the file will be closed, and no refund will be issued. All contents of the applicant's file will be retained in the FDHRC office and will not be released to the applicant. Original documents will only be returned if specifically indicated on the Application Form and the applicable fees have been paid. If an applicant wishes to reactivate their file, they must provide the FDHRC with a new application form, pay the appropriate fees, and submit additional and/or currently required documentation.

If an applicant submits fraudulent, forged, altered or irregular documents, the FDHRC will neither continue nor complete the assessment of credentials of the applicant. A letter outlining our findings will be sent to the applicant or their agent, fees will not be refunded, and all the documents received will become the property of the FDHRC and will not be released to the applicant or their agent. All provincial and territorial Canadian dental hygiene regulatory authorities and all recognized evaluation services may also be notified. In such cases, the FDHRC reserves the right to notify the institution(s) and/or board(s), which had purportedly issued the documents.

## **5. Documentation Requirements and Process:**

Depending on whether an applicant graduated from a non-accredited dental hygiene program in or outside of Canada, the documentation needed varies and is outlined below (please note that the numbering system is based on the Appendix C).

### **A. For a Graduate of a Dental Hygiene Program from outside of Canada (therefore not accredited by CDAC):**

1. A completed **Application Form** for an Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications (Appendix A) - signed and dated;
2. The appropriate **payment of fees** (see FDHRC Fee Schedule);
3. **Proof of legal name change:** If an applicant has legally changed their name, they must send the FDHRC a notarized copy of proof of legal document showing the name change (for example, a marriage certificate). This is not required if the applicant has not changed their name, and all the documents that the FDHRC will receive reflect this;
4. An original or a notarized copy of **dental hygiene diploma/degree**, submitted by the applicant. Simple photocopies are not acceptable;
5. A **legal description** of the practice of dental hygiene in the jurisdiction/country of education. This document must be submitted directly by the dental hygiene regulatory authority from the country of graduation;
6. N/A;



7. An official **transcript** of grades/mark sheets/academic records, submitted directly to the FDHRC office by the dental hygiene educational institution of graduation;
8. A report for post secondary **educational credential evaluation**, which includes the country of education, the name of the institution(s) attended, the year and the specific credential received (degree, diploma or certificate), the length of the program, the area(s) of specialization and the Canadian equivalency, prepared and submitted directly by one of the following external credentialing agencies approved by the FDHRC:
  - [World Education Services \(WES\)](#)
  - [International Credential Evaluation Service \(ICES\)](#)
  - [International Qualifications Assessment Service \(IQAS\)](#)

NOTE: Application forms are available on the websites listed above.

9. **Educational Documentation:** After completing page 1 of Appendix B, the applicant must have their educational institution complete the rest of Appendix B (Document Release Form). All official course syllabi/course outlines or official statement of course description from the **time/years of study of the applicant** must be submitted to the FDHRC directly by the dental hygiene educational institution of graduation. These documents must include all the following:
  - i. Length (years, months) of the program;
  - ii. A program catalogue or a list of each course taken in the dental hygiene program and the weighting factors for each course (total number of hours/hours per week);
  - iii. Curriculum/course information including:
    - detailed course description;
    - detailed course content/objectives/learning outcomes/competencies;
    - number of hours for each course in terms of theory, laboratory, preclinical and clinical hours;
    - description of practical preclinical/laboratory experiences;
    - description of practical clinical experiences including location, number of hours, types of direct client care dental hygiene services provided and average number/types of clients/patients treated while a student and applicable clinical reports/evaluation report cards (NOTE that direct client care activities can be in the school dental hygiene clinic, specialty practices, in long-term care facilities, in hospitals, in public health settings, in educational institutions, etc.);
    - description of the methods of evaluation for each course (e.g. by examination, projects, weekly tests).

It is recommended that this information be submitted in electronic form if possible (CD, USB key, attachment, etc.)

The FDHRC will not accept any educational documents from any other source than the applicant's dental hygiene educational institution and its representative(s).

**IMPORTANT:** Documentation must be submitted in the original language of instruction.

10. N/A;
11. **Appendix D** – Applicant Self-Evaluation of Educational Credentials and Qualifications Form;
12. **Appendix E** – Applicant Continuing Competence Activities Report; and
13. **Appendix F** – Applicant Current and Former Employers Report.

**B. For a Graduate of a Canadian Dental Hygiene Program not accredited by CDAC:**

1. A completed **Application Form** for an Assessment of Educational Credentials and Qualifications (Appendix A) - signed and dated;
2. The appropriate **payment of fees** (see NDHCB Schedule of Fees);
3. **Proof of legal name change:** If an applicant has legally changed their name, they must send the NDHCB a notarized copy of proof of legal document showing the name change (for example, a marriage certificate). This is not required if the applicant has not changed their name, and all the documents that the NDHCB will receive reflect this;
4. An original or a notarized copy of **dental hygiene diploma/degree**, submitted by the applicant. Simple photocopies are not acceptable;
5. N/A;
6. An official statement confirming the dental hygiene program is established as a separate school, faculty, division or department **recognized by the appropriate government agency** in the province/territory where the program is established at a post secondary institution which is also recognized by the appropriate government agency. This document must be submitted directly by the dental hygiene educational institution of graduation or the government agency;
7. An official **transcript** of grades/mark sheets/academic records submitted directly to our office by the dental hygiene educational institution of graduation.
8. N/A;
9. **Educational Documentation:** After completing page 1 of Appendix B, the applicant must have their educational institution complete the rest of Appendix B (Document Release Form). All official course syllabi/course outlines or official statement of course description from the time/years of study of the applicant must be submitted to the NDHCB directly by the dental hygiene educational institution of graduation. These documents must include all the following:
  - i. Length (years, months) of the program;
  - ii. A program catalogue or a list of each course studied in the dental hygiene program and the weighting factors for each course;
  - iii. Curriculum/course information including:
    - detailed course description;
    - detailed course content/objectives/learning outcomes/competencies;

- number of hours for each course in terms of theory, laboratory, preclinical and clinical hours;
- description of practical preclinical/laboratory experiences;
- description of practical clinical experiences including location, number of hours, types of direct client care dental hygiene services provided and average number/types of clients/patients treated while a student and applicable clinical reports/ evaluation report cards (NOTE that direct client care activities can be in the school dental hygiene clinic, specialty practices, in long-term care facilities, in hospitals, in public health settings, in educational institutions, etc.);
- description of the methods of evaluation for each course (e.g. by examination, projects, weekly tests).

It is recommended that this information be submitted in electronic form if possible (CD, USB key, attachment, etc.)

The NDHCB will not accept any educational documents from any source other than the applicant's dental hygiene educational institution.

10. Letter from the educational institution with confirmation that it has applied to CDAC for accreditation including **CDAC's recommendations** and the institution's response as well as measures taken or to be taken since CDAC's report;
11. **Appendix D** - Applicant Self-Evaluation of Educational Credentials and Qualifications Form;
12. N/A
13. N/A

**NOTE: FILL OUT APPENDIX C – ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION CHECKLIST AND RETURN WITH YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION.**

## **6. Communication with Applicants**

If there are any questions during the application process, please contact the office by email at [exam@fdhrc.ca](mailto:exam@fdhrc.ca) or by phone at 613-260-8156.

### **6.1 Acknowledgment of Reception of Application and Supporting Documents**

Once the FHDRC has received the application for an equivalency assessment and the documents, the FDHRC will send correspondence to the applicant confirming what has been received and what is still missing.

### **6.2 Tracking of Documents Received**

If an applicant wants to track what documents the FDHRC has received on their behalf, they should ensure these documents are sent to the FDHRC office by registered mail, or by an international courier service that can confirm that the documents have been properly received.

The FDHRC will also update the applicant's Eligibility Application Checklist Document (Appendix C) when documents are received on their behalf. The applicant may request by email a copy of the updated Appendix C from the FDHRC staff. They may also email or phone the FDHRC office to inquire about the completeness of their application file.

If the FDHRC receives all documents in the format required, the FDHRC will update the application status and begin the applicant's assessment. If the documents are not in the required format, the FDHRC will send the Eligibility Application Checklist Document (Appendix C) back the applicant with instructions on how to submit the documents correctly.

### **6.3 Release of Information to a Third Party**

If an applicant wishes to authorize a third party/agent to act on their behalf in any aspect of the application process, a power of attorney will be required.

Information, correspondence, and results of the assessment report will be given to the applicant OR to their agent in writing. No information will be released over the telephone. Each applicant's written request to forward copies of documents in their file to a third party will be assessed a non-refundable fee, payable by credit card, certified cheque or money order in Canadian funds, as determined by the FDHRC.

## **7. Eligibility Assessment Policies and Decisions**

One copy of the assessment report result will be issued to the applicant or their agent. A successful assessment result establishes eligibility for the applicant to apply to write the NDHCE within a period of **three (3) years from the date of approval**.

When an applicant's assessment of educational credentials and qualifications is deemed equivalent, a letter to the applicant will outline the process on how to apply for the examination (NDHCE). The letter will also include the date of the next scheduled examination for which the applicant is eligible to apply. To apply for the NDHCE, the applicant must complete the NDHCE application form and pay the appropriate examination fee and applicable taxes.

An applicant who did not have their educational credentials and qualifications deemed equivalent to those of a graduate of a Canadian accredited dental hygiene program will NOT be eligible to write the NDHCE. The assessment report sent to the applicant will outline specific deficiencies and suggest other mechanisms that may be available to pursue eligibility to write the NDHCE in the future. Once an applicant has been notified that their educational credentials and qualifications are not equivalent, the applicant's assessment of credentials' file is closed. If the applicant wishes to reactivate the file, a new application, appropriate fees, and proper supporting documentation must be submitted.

Assessment decisions and reasons reports may differ over time as the FDHRC's dental hygiene program assessment decisions are based on the most recent Canadian educational standards for the profession.

The FDHRC assessment of educational credentials and qualifications exists for the sole purpose of determining eligibility to write the NDHCE. The fact that an applicant who graduated from a non-accredited dental hygiene program might be deemed eligible to write the NDHCE after an assessment of their educational credentials is completed, does not mean that the dental hygiene program from which the applicant graduated from is deemed accredited or equivalent to an accredited dental hygiene program in Canada. All assessments of educational credentials and qualifications are done on an individual basis.

## **8. Notice of Right to Appeal**

Any applicant who is denied eligibility and believes that they were treated unfairly can request an appeal, as outlined in the FDHRC's Appeal Policy.

## **9. List of Appendices**

**APPENDIX A** – APPLICATION FORM FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF CREDENTIALS

**APPENDIX B** – DOCUMENT RELEASE FORM

**APPENDIX C** – ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

**APPENDIX D** – APPLICANT SELF-EVALUATION OF CREDENTIALS FORM

**APPENDIX E** – APPLICANT CONTINUING COMPETENCE ACTIVITIES REPORT

**APPENDIX F** – APPLICANT CURRENT AND FORMER EMPLOYERS REPORT