



2026 Canadian Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene Blueprint

BACKGROUND

Graduates of non-accredited Dental Hygiene programs are required to complete a clinical examination. The Canadian Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene™ (CPEDH™) is required for registration with provincial and territorial regulators in Canada. The purpose of the CPEDH™ Blueprint is to depict the major content areas of the exam, provide a structural map indicating the relative distribution of desired content and reflect the way in which exam stations are coded. In addition, the Blueprint provides direction to the station development process, the construction of each exam and informs candidates and other interested parties of the main exam areas. It ensures that candidates are tested in a fair and comparable manner across exam administrations, despite completing different exams.

The previous CPEDH™ Blueprint was built around a competency profile that was developed specifically for the exam (the NDHCE Competency Profile [2016]). The updated Blueprint uses the domains of expertise described in the 2021 [Entry to Practice Canadian Competencies for Dental Hygienists \(EPCCoDH\)](#):

- A Professionalism**
- B Evidence-informed Practice**
- C Communication**
- D Collaboration**
- E Practice Management**
- F Prevention, Education, and Health Promotion**
- G Clinical Therapy**

This Blueprint must be used in conjunction with the [EPCCoDH](#), found on the FDHRC website.

The following CPEDH Blueprint was approved by the FDHRC Board of Directors on December 3rd, 2025, for implementation in exams in **September 2026 onwards**.

CPEDH™ BLUEPRINT

Structural Variables

Structural variables include the characteristics that determine the general appearance and design of the exam. They define the length of the exam, the number and topics of stations, and the distribution of competencies from domains of expertise across exam stations.

Examination Length and Format

The CPEDH™ is an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) consisting of nine stations. At each station, a candidate is asked to perform one or more tasks that a dental hygienist may be asked to perform in clinical practice. Some of the stations feature a standardized client with whom the candidate must interact to complete station tasks. The standardized clients are trained to communicate with candidates based on a script. Several stations feature dental mannequins that the candidate will use to complete the tasks.

Most CPEDH™ stations have an assessor in attendance. The assessor observes the candidate performing the task(s) and evaluates the process of task performance and/or its output (e.g., dental hygiene care plan). Assessors are experienced Registered Dental Hygienists who have been trained to provide impartial and fair evaluations. A candidate's performance on the stations is assessed using a combination of binary checklists and four-point global rating scales with behavioral indicators. All assessment instruments were derived from the EPCCoDH.

The topics of stations include:

1. Client Interview
2. Evaluation of Oral Lesion
3. Radiography Exposure
4. Dental Hygiene Care Planning
5. Communication of a Dental Hygiene Care Plan
6. Evaluation of Dental Hygiene Care
7. Prevention of a Medical Emergency
8. Periodontal Assessment and Tooth Debridement I
9. Periodontal Assessment and Tooth Debridement II

Domains of Expertise

The EPCCoDH are grouped into seven domains of expertise for dental hygienists in Canada. The exam is developed to ensure that competencies from all domains of expertise are assessed. The table below shows the distribution of competencies from each domain across exam stations.

DOMAIN OF EXPERTISE	PERCENTAGE OF COMPETENCIES ACROSS STATIONS
A Professionalism	2–5%
B Evidence-informed Practice	2–5%
C Communication	5–15%
D Collaboration	2–5%
E Practice Management	5–15%
F Prevention, Education, and Health Promotion	3–7%
G Clinical Therapy	55–65%
<i>G.1 Assess oral and general health status</i>	15–25%
<i>G.2 Formulate a dental hygiene diagnosis</i>	5–10%
<i>G.3 Create a dental hygiene care plan</i>	5–10%
<i>G.4 Implement the dental hygiene care plan</i>	18–28%
<i>G.5 Evaluate effectiveness of dental hygiene care</i>	3–7%
TOTAL	100%

Exam Stations

Each of the nine stations on the exam evaluates a subset of competencies from the EPCCoDH. These competencies pertain to various domains of expertise. The table on the right provides the mapping of exam stations onto domains of expertise. It shows which domains of expertise are evaluated in each station.

DOMAIN OF EXPERTISE	STATIONS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A Professionalism									
B Evidence-informed Practice									
C Communication									
D Collaboration									
E Practice Management									
F Prevention, Education, and Health Promotion									
G Clinical Therapy									
<i>G.1 Assess oral and general health status</i>									
<i>G.2 Formulate a dental hygiene diagnosis</i>									
<i>G.3 Create a dental hygiene care plan</i>									
<i>G.4 Implement the dental hygiene care plan</i>									
<i>G.5 Evaluate effectiveness of dental hygiene care</i>									

Contextual Variables

The CPEDH™ represents the demographic realities of the Canadian population that requires dental hygiene care in a variety of practice settings. Therefore, when appropriate, the clinical scenarios in exam stations may specify client's age and gender.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the CPEDH™ Blueprint was a collaborative effort of subject matter experts, FDHRC staff, dental hygienists, and a Senior Psychometrician from For Good Measure Inc., Natasha Parfyonova.

We wish to thank the Blueprint Working Group which consisted of the following members who lent their subject matter expertise to the process, representing a variety of backgrounds, jurisdictions and practice settings:

- Matilda Berg, RDH, M.Ed.
- Alyssa Boyer, B.A., RDH
- Dayna Braham, BGS, RDH
- Deanna Mackay, DHP (C), M.Sc.
- Christie Daye, RDH, BScDH, M.Ed., HSE
- Christine Ta, BScDH, M.Ed., RDH
- Tammy Wolf, RRDH

For questions regarding the Blueprint, please contact the FDHRC directly at info@fdhrc.ca.