



Quality Assurance

Guidelines for Continuing Competency  
**Requirement Program**

**Preface:**

**Initial Continuing Competency Cycles**

The Dental Hygienists Act of Nova Scotia (2007) and Regulations came into effect May 15, 2009, as a result initial continuing competency cycles were assigned by the CDHNS with the 2010 licence renewals for all practicing members. All future cycles will be for three years and require 45 points. Initial cycles were adjusted to accommodate the administration of the audit system. The following table represents the initial cycle schedule.

Members may contact the College of Dental Hygienists at any time to confirm the dates of their continuing competency cycle.

**Initial Continuing Competency Cycles**

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Category 3</b>
3 years	January 01, 2009	December 31, 2011	45	Minimum 15	Maximum 30	Minimum 5 Maximum 15
4 years	January 01, 2009	December 31, 2012	60	Minimum 20	Maximum 40	Minimum 7 Maximum 20

**Continuing Competency Credits and the Self Initiation Course**

The Self Initiation Course, which all members must complete within two years of initial licensing by the CDHNS, will be credited 33 Continuing Competency Credits in Category 1. For members who were licensed on May 15, 2009 when the Dental Hygienists Act (2007) came into effect this means they must complete the Self Initiation Course **before** the licence renewal date of **November 1, 2011**. Points from the Self Initiation Course **only** may be carried over to a second cycle where appropriate. Members are required to inform the CDHNS if they intend to use the points over two cycles at the completion of the first cycle in which they claim points for the Self Initiation Course.

**Documentation for Carrying over Self Initiation Course Points**

Members who wish to carry over credits for the Self Initiation Course to a second cycle are required to retain all documents from both cycles. In the case of an audit members will be required to produce documentation from both cycles in which they claimed credits for the Self Initiation Course.

## Quality Assurance Program

### 1 Definitions

#### 1.1 In this document

- 1.1.2 "Act" means the Dental Hygienists' Act of Nova Scotia;
- 1.1.3 "College" means the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia;
- 1.1.4 "Committee" means the Continuing Competence Committee of the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia;
- 1.1.5 "continuing competence" means the maintenance of competence (combined knowledge, skills, attitudes, and judgment) and the enrichment of the provision of professional services;
- 1.1.6 "Council" means the Council of the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia;
- 1.1.7 "CDHNS" means the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia;
- 1.1.8 "Credentials Committee" means the Credentials Committee of the College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia;
- 1.1.9 "three year cycle" means the current three year period in which the member is collecting credits in the Continuing Competency Program;
- 1.1.10 "Program credit" means the unit (hours) of credit awarded to a member for undertaking a learning activity in accordance to the guidelines approved by the Council. The general credit hours are set out in each category in these guidelines. Where the hours are not predetermined the Committee can assign hours;
- 1.1.11 "member" means a member who is on the register of the College and holds a practicing license;
- 1.1.12 "practicing license" means a practicing license issued under subsection 17(1) of the Act, the license authorizing a member to engage in the practice of dental hygiene.
- 1.1.13 Words imparting a gender are meant to include the other.

## 2 Introduction and General Information

### Quality Assurance Program

#### *2.1 Continuing Competence Program*

Lifelong learning is a hallmark of a profession. It is fundamental to professional development and remaining current in ones discipline. It is of particular importance in light of the rapid changes in health care delivery, technological advances, regulatory changes and the development of new clinical procedures. Quality assurance refers to activities and programs intended to assure or improve the quality of care. To acknowledge its commitment to continuing competence and to meet the mandate of the Dental Hygienists Act and Regulations the College has developed a professional Quality Assurance Program which **requires continuing competence credits** for all members who hold a practicing licence.

#### *2.2 Personal Scope of Practice*

Under the Act members have a professional responsibility to practice within their own personal scope of practice. It is the member's responsibility to determine their unique learning needs and to seek courses and other forms of learning which meet those self identified needs.

#### *2.3 Continuing Competence Learning Activities*

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 member. The individual member's practice setting or environment will be considered by the Continuing Competence Committee when reviewing any requests for credit under the continuing competence program. Learning activities that support the regulated 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, health and safety, record keeping, administration and conflict resolution.

## 2.4 Pertinent areas of the Nova Scotia Dental Hygiene Act and Regulations

### Dental Hygiene Act

#### Section 7 (4)

The Council may, with the approval of the Governor in Council and subject to this Act, make regulations

- (d) respecting a quality assurance program, including requirements for members to participate in any such program, and including continuing education requirements or practice-hour requirements of members for registration or licensing.

### College of Dental Hygienists of Nova Scotia Regulations

#### Regulation 8(1)

(d) for an applicant who graduated from an accredited dental hygiene program more than 3 years before their application, they must

- (i) have completed, in the 3 years immediately before their application, 45 hours of continuing competency requirements approved by the Council, and
- (ii) have been practicing dental hygiene in the 3 years immediately before the date of their application;

#### Regulation 8 (1)

(h) for an applicant who intends to engage in self-directed clinical practice and for an applicant applying for a practising licence 2 years after being issued an initial licence under the Act, they must

- (i) have successfully completed the self-initiation module, or
- (ii) have equivalent education or experience to that provided by the self-initiation module, as determined by the Registrar.

### 3. Continuing Competency Program Requirements

These Requirements and guidelines are drawn in compliance with the Dental Hygienists Act of Nova Scotia Section 7 (4) (d) and the Regulations pursuant to that act 6(1) and (2).

#### 3.1 Requirements: **45 Credit** Hours in a Three Year Cycle

#### 3.2 Reporting Period

3.2.1 The Committee will establish the implementation date (anniversary date) for the Continuing Competency Requirement Program.

3.2.2 Only first-time members of the College will be awarded credits from the date of licensure. The three-year cycle will begin on the anniversary date next following licensure.

3.2.3 A member who is not renewing his/her practicing licence for the coming year must advise the Registrar **in writing**. These members may apply for a non practicing license and have their three year cycle continue or have their three year cycle interrupted and have the cycle continue upon reapplying for a practicing licence. The cycle will be extended to include the unexpired term and will conclude on the appropriate December 31st. A maximum of one extension per cycle will be granted.

3.2.4 A member who is removed from the Register for late payment of fees or as a result of disciplinary activity does not begin a new cycle upon reinstatement. The original three-year cycle remains in effect.

3.2.5 A member who, for health reasons, is unable to pursue continuing education credits for more than a cumulative six-month period during a three-year cycle will be eligible to apply to have his/her cycle extended to conclude on the appropriate December 31st. It is the responsibility of the licensee to apply, in writing, to the Registrar for an extension of the cycle, as soon as possible prior to completion of the present three year cycle. Documentation is to be submitted if requested. A maximum of one extension per cycle will be granted.

## 4 Recording and Audit

4.1 Recording and verification of mandatory continuing education credits is the responsibility of the member.

4.2 A copy of a recording form is available to members for the members use.

4.3 An annual audit of Continuing Competency requirements will be performed on randomly selected members at the end of each group's cycle. Members who are selected for audit will be notified and required to submit their Continuing Competency Recording Form and appropriate verification of programs attended. Other documentation maybe requested by the Committee.

4.4 The Committee reserves the right to audit a member's Continuing Competency Record at any time.

4.5 For audit purposes, verification must be maintained for one year following cycle completion. In the case of credits carries forward from the Self Initiation Course members must maintain records for both cycles in which they have claimed credits.

4.6 Falsification of any records or information will be considered professional misconduct, and is considered an offence under the act.

## 5 Assigning Program Credits

5.1 Credits obtained prior to commencement of a three-year cycle do not count towards necessary credits for that cycle, excepting first-time members, as in Guideline No.3.

5.2 Self Initiation course credits taken prior to proclamation of the DH Act approved by the College will be credited to the member's first Continuing Competency cycle following proclamation. It is the member's responsibility to notify the College of their completion of the Self Initiation Program.

5.3 Continuing education taken as a result of a Board or Discipline Committee ruling cannot be used towards the total number of credits necessary to satisfy the Continuing Competency requirement.

5.4 The Continuing Competence Committee of the College of Dental Hygienists is given the authority to approve or disapprove credits for courses or equivalents that it considers to be of questionable content to the practice of dental hygiene. Courses and credits maybe approved in part or in whole by the committee.

## 6. Continuing Competency Program Categories

All learning activities shall have significant intellectual or practical content related to the practice of dental hygiene, overall health or the professional responsibility and ethical obligations of the member. The individual member's practice setting or environment will be considered by the Continuing Competence Committee when reviewing any requests for continuing competence program credit. Learning activities that support the member's specific learning needs and areas(s) of practice will be considered.

The following three categories are established for the purposes of assigning continuing competency program credits.

### 6.1 Category 1: Scientific/Clinical Experiences

A **minimum** of 15 credit hours in each three year cycle **must** be obtained from this category.

6.1.1 Learning activities that contribute significantly to the scientific, clinical, and ethical aspects of the member's practice of dental hygiene will generally be eligible for continuing competency program credits. One credit hour is awarded per hour of participation.

6.1.2 Scientific/clinical hands-on participation. These experiences will be awarded two credit hours for each hour of participation. This does not apply to CPR or First Aid courses.

6.1.3 Annual CPR is required for licence renewal. The following apply to the course:

- a) must be at a minimum of Level C, with CPR for Health Care Providers recommended.
- b) must be offered by a recognized institution.
- c) must include both a **classroom instruction and a practical component**
- d) must cover CPR Level C adult, child and infant
- e) must be delivered in accordance with the recommendations of the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) and
- f) must be completed no longer than 12 months prior to application for the CDHNS licence or licence renewal.
- g) A **maximum** of 7 credit hours will be permitted per cycle for CPR courses.

6.1.4 A maximum of 5 credit hours per cycle is permitted for First Aid training.

6.1.5. The following sponsors of a continuing education course or equivalent would likely be approved for credit hours under this category if it fulfills the criteria:

- a) Accredited dental hygiene and dental programs, universities and colleges.

- b) Provincial, state and national and international dental hygiene and dental regulatory authorities, associations, and their societies.
- c) Federal government health agencies, including the Canadian Forces.
- d) Provincial and local government departments of health.
- e) Hospitals accredited by the Canadian Council of Hospital Accreditation.
- f) National and international dental hygiene and dental organizations recognized by the Canadian or American Dental Hygiene or Dental Associations.
- g) Non oral health associations /commercial organizations if the learning activity is applicable to dental hygiene.
- h) Attendance at scientific presentations at conventions or meetings.
- i) Other health care organizations.

6.1.6. Individual scientific self-study courses qualify for credit hours if the member successfully completes a monitored post-course examination, presentation, or paper.

6.1.7. A maximum of 2 points per year will be granted to attendees at Dalhousie University Dental Hygiene Table Clinics.

## 6.2 Category 2: Development and Delivery of Dental Hygiene Educational Activities

A **maximum** of 30 credit hours in each three year cycle may be obtained from this category.

6.2.1 Non-course scientific/clinical hands-on participation will be awarded two credit hours for each hour of participation.

6.2.2 The number of credit hours obtained will vary according to the activity involved. Credit hours awarded are as follows:

- a) Part-time or full-time faculty who are appointed by their institution to an instructor position (e.g. lecturer or clinician in direct student contact in clinics will receive 1 credit hour for every 7 faculty hours to a maximum of 20 credit hours per year).
- b) Presenters will receive two credit hours per one hour presentation time. These include formal courses, lectures or talks at dental hygiene meetings, school or community presentations and study club presentations. Presenters are required to submit a course description / syllabus along with their verification of attendance to receive credit.
- c) For each dental hygiene related article published in a refereed journal of dental hygiene/dental literature, 20 credit hours will be given.
- d) Where a dental hygiene related article is authored by more than one person, each author will receive credit hours proportionate to the total number of authors.
- e) Authors of books or chapters in books will be awarded credits on an individual basis.

- f) The presenter of a research paper or abstract at a scientific meeting will receive five credit hours.
- g) A learning contract can consist of a variety of learning activities, e.g. literature review, clinical practice, internship, etc., designed to meet a specific learning objective. A formal learning contract must exist between a mentor and one or more individuals this contract is subject to approval by the continuing competency committee. Total credit hours will be based on the recommendation of the mentor as the reasonable amount of time necessary to learn the material.

### 6.3 Category 3: Professional Promotion and Responsibilities

A **maximum of 15 and a minimum of 5 credit** hours in each three year cycle must be obtained from this category.

6.3.1 These experiences are to encourage professional responsibility and ethical obligations of the members as well to encourage intra and inter professional cooperation. One credit hour is awarded per hour of participation or attendance.

6.3.2 The following would likely be approved for continuing education credit hours under this category:

- a) A course attended for all aspects of practice management directly of benefit to the practice of dental hygiene.
- b) Professional Ownership: CDHNS - representing the CDHNS to another agency, membership on Council or Committee, other recognized CDHNS activities.
- c) Participation or attendance at **meetings** of interdisciplinary health associations, health committees, or health boards.
- d) Participation or attendance at **meetings and presentations** of dental hygiene societies, or study clubs.
- e) Participation or attendance at **meetings** of interdisciplinary health conferences, whether local, provincial, national or international.
- f) Participation in the Nova Scotia School Fluoride Rinse Program. Volunteers will receive a maximum of 5 points per year.
- g) Individual self-study courses related to practice management and professional responsibility qualify for credit hours if the member successfully completes a monitored post-course examination, presentation, or paper.

## 7. Other Considerations

Consideration will be given to other areas of study on an individual member basis with proper documentation and notification. It is the member's responsibility to notify the College regarding all changes in status or other situations.

### 7.1 FULL TIME STUDY

Degree completion, graduate study, internships, residencies and members engaged in acceptable full-time programs, will fulfill their requirements for the period of their full-time program and a new three-year cycle will commence on the anniversary date following successful completion of the program.

### 7.2 STUDY CLUBS:

#### 7.2.1 Credits

Members of registered/approved study clubs who present will receive two credit hours per one hour presentation time in Category 2 (b).

Study Club members who attend this presentation will receive, hour per hour credit, in Category 3.

Study club presentations, related to the practice of dental hygiene by a presenter, not a member of the Study Club, may receive Category 1 or 3 credits depending on the subject matter and proper verification. Hands on activity will be awarded two credit hours for each hour of participation.

#### 7.2.2. Registration/ Membership

Study Clubs must be registered/ approved by the Registrar, providing the following information:

1. Name of study club;
2. Subject matter:
  - a. can be of specific interest to oral health;
  - b. can be of general interest to the practice of dental hygiene
  - c. can be of interest to overall health
3. Membership
  - a. minimum of five members;
  - b. name of chairperson, including address;
  - c. name of members, including address;
  - d. members must be licensed health profession practitioners.
4. Verification  
Study clubs are responsible for recording and providing documentation of all presentations. Documents should record the date, speakers name, qualifications, topic and length of the presentation. Each member in attendance should receive a signed record of attendance for the presentation.

### 7.3 Appeal

A decision of the Continuing Competency Committee may be referred to the Council. Decisions of the Council are final.

#### **Forms**

The following forms are available on the web site:  
CDHNS Continuing Competency Record Form  
Attendance Form (under review, to be posted)