

# Memo

**To:** Canadian Dental Assisting Education Programs

**From:** Canadian Dental Assisting Regulatory Authorities  
Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada  
National Dental Assisting Examining Board

**RE:** Consensus Statement as of April 15, 2020

The COVID-19 public health emergency has created challenges that none of us could have imagined. As you are aware, various officials have mandated physical distancing, postponement of in-person classes at educational institutions, and suspension of non-essential and elective services. Our most important priority is the safety and well-being of people and supporting our stakeholders any way we can.

With that, we recognize the stress you and your faculty and students are in as you continue to try to meet the dental assisting students' educational objectives. We are committed to providing you with as much information and guidance as we can. The following constitutes our current collective position as of April 15, 2020 with respect to dental assisting education programs in Canada and the impact of COVID-19. Accordingly, as the pandemic progresses these statements may also change.

1. You have a responsibility to ensure that all your program graduates have the knowledge, skills and professional attributes necessary to:
  - a) meet all your program outcomes in place prior to the pandemic;
  - b) be eligible to sit the National Dental Assisting Examining Board written examination;
  - c) qualify for certification/licensure/registration in regulated Canadian jurisdictions; and,
  - d) competently practice the profession of dental assisting in a manner that is safe and ethical.

Your students must have access to clinical learning experiences involving manikins, student partners and external patients needed to meet your program outcomes and practicum requirements. This means, in some cases, your program completion may need to be delayed until the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted and access to clinical environments and opportunities are once again available.

2. If your program holds an accreditation status by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC), you are expected to ensure your program continues to meet the requirements described in the CDAC Accreditation Requirements for Dental Assisting Programs.

Temporarily shifting to an online format for the delivery of theoretical curriculum is acceptable until the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted. If you are implementing alternate delivery models, you are expected to operationalize measures that maintain student privacy and to document, at minimum, the following which may be requested for inspection during a future accreditation site survey visit:

- a) a brief description of how online training will be delivered;
- b) what is being communicated to students regarding a potential date of return to in-person curriculum delivery;
- c) how students will be accommodated if they choose not to transition to online education opting for postponement of their education;
- d) how the program intends to track academic progress and attendance; and,
- e) any alternative arrangements that are being made for program delivery and or evaluation.

Temporary suspension of programs is acceptable until the COVID-19 public health emergency is lifted. If you are suspending education, you are expected to document, at minimum, the following which may be requested for inspection during a future accreditation site survey visit:

- a) what is being communicated to students regarding the suspension of education including a potential date of return;
- b) the plan to accommodate students upon return to in-person education; and,
- c) any alternative arrangements that are being made for program delivery.

3. If permitted in your respective jurisdiction and you choose to continue to enroll cohorts, you should consider the previous statements as well as student admission criteria, student support, and program resources. This would include the availability of clinical requirements to adequately support current and future cohorts.
4. You are also reminded that you must continue to comply with your provincial government licensing requirements and directives.
5. The onus remains with you to keep all appropriate parties informed of, at minimum, your program's current status, developments, any steps taken and of major changes such as curriculum revisions and program start and completion dates so assessment of their impact on the program can occur, as necessary. It is requested that your reports and updates be communicated in writing.

We will continue to closely monitor the evolving situation surrounding COVID-19 and provide you with information and guidance, as available.

If you have questions, please contact the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada, the dental assisting regulatory authority in your jurisdiction or the National Dental Assisting Examining Board. A list of contact details is provided below.

Organization	Email	Phone
College of Alberta Dental Assistants	<a href="mailto:programapproval@abrda.ca">programapproval@abrda.ca</a>	780-486-3146 ext 223
College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia	<a href="mailto:lriva@cdsbc.org">lriva@cdsbc.org</a>	604-736-3621
Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada	<a href="mailto:cdac@cda-adc.ca">cdac@cda-adc.ca</a>	613-523-7114
Dental Council of Prince Edward Island	<a href="mailto:info@dcpei.ca">info@dcpei.ca</a>	902-628-8156
Manitoba Dental Association	<a href="mailto:office@manitobadentist.ca">office@manitobadentist.ca</a>	204-988-5300
National Dental Assisting Examining Board	<a href="mailto:office@ndaeb.ca">office@ndaeb.ca</a>	613-526-3424
New Brunswick Dental Society	<a href="mailto:info@nbdent.ca">info@nbdent.ca</a>	506-452-8575
Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Board	<a href="mailto:nldb@nf.aibn.com">nldb@nf.aibn.com</a>	709-579-2391
Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia		902-420-0083
Saskatchewan Dental Assistants Association	<a href="mailto:sdaa@sasktel.net">sdaa@sasktel.net</a>	306-252-2769