



Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada
Commission de l'agrément dentaire du Canada

Frequently Asked Questions about Dental Hygiene Programs

Are there benefits to attending an accredited Dental Hygiene education program versus a non-accredited Dental Hygiene education program?

The benefits to attending an accredited program include:

1. Accredited Dental Hygiene educational programs have demonstrated their ability to meet CDAC accreditation requirements;
2. Graduates of accredited Dental Hygiene educational programs automatically qualify to write the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) examination.
3. Accredited Dental Hygiene educational programs are accountable to CDAC and are required to inform CDAC of any changes that might impact the quality or the delivery of the program, on a yearly basis. It is within CDAC's mandate to closely monitor accredited programs and apply the CDAC's complaint policy if warranted. *However, CDAC has no authority whatsoever upon non-accredited programs and cannot ensure due process in case a complaint is made against a non-accredited program.*

If an accredited Dental Hygiene program is given notice from CDAC of the intent to withdraw the program's accreditation status, how does this affect students currently enrolled in the program?

Students enrolled in an accredited program will graduate from an accredited program. Should CDAC notify the program of the intent to withdraw the program's accreditation, this decision will impact FUTURE students admitted to the program ONLY. It is the responsibility of the program to inform future students admitted to the program of the possibility of CDAC withdrawing the program's accreditation.

Can CDAC withdraw the program's accreditation immediately?

NO. Accredited Dental Hygiene educational programs are granted a grace period of one year to address the issues/concerns identified by CDAC. Programs failing to address these issues within the 12-month period will have their accreditation withdrawn by CDAC once the grace period expires.

For example, in November 2008, a program was informed of CDAC's intent to withdraw the accreditation status in November 2009. Students enrolled in the program PRIOR and UP TO November 2008 will graduate from an accredited program. Students who enroll in the program AFTER November 2008 may graduate from a non-accredited program.

How do I know if a program was given an *'intent to withdraw'* notice?

Accredited Dental Hygiene educational programs are listed in the program database on CDAC's website. CDAC adds an asterisk (*) next to the name of the programs that are given an *'intent to withdraw'* notice.

I am planning on attending a non-accredited program. What are the most important questions that I should be asking the program prior to accepting an admission offer?

Before you accept an admission offer from a non-accredited program, you must ensure you get definite answers to the following questions:

- Is the Dental Hygiene Program Director a Registered Dental Hygienist in the institution's province?
- Are the faculty members dental hygienists and do they have adequate teaching experience?
- How many full-time faculty members teach in the institution offering the Dental Hygiene program? (The full-time status of faculty members adds to the stability of the program).
- What are the clinical requirements that I have to complete in order to graduate AND will I realistically be able to complete those (e.g. a program may require students to successfully complete care for 30 clients before graduation)?
- Do I need to recruit my own clients?
- In case I do not complete the program's clinical or theory requirements, will I be asked to pay to take extra time in order to complete these requirements? Or do I have to take the courses again?
- In case of disagreement with a faculty member/clinical instructor, what is the process in place to file my grievance?
- *It is important that you attend an institution which willingly shares information and does not openly discredit other Dental Hygiene educational programs.*

If I attend a non-accredited Dental Hygiene program, am I eligible to obtain licensure/registration to practice as a dental hygienist in Canada?

Further questions concerning licensure/registration must be directed to the provincial dental hygiene regulatory authority. A list of these organizations can be found at: http://www.cda-adc.ca/cdacweb/en/about_CDAC/related_organizations/