

Competencies for Dental Assistants in Saskatchewan

Only individuals registered and currently licensed with the Saskatchewan Dental Assistants' Association can use the title "dental assistant" or designation, abbreviated or otherwise, to imply that they are a member of the Saskatchewan Dental Assistants' Association and eligible to practice dental assisting in Saskatchewan.

A dental assistant licensed with the Saskatchewan Dental Assistants' Association is an individual who has completed formal education in dental assisting theory and practical education at an approved program. *Note: The SDAA requires that all dental assistants applying for registration have competency in "blood pressure measurement" (February 11, 2006).*

All listed intraoral skills may be practiced after successful completion of approved formal education and/or assessment with verification filed with the Saskatchewan Dental Assistants' Association. Skills may only be performed by members who are registered with the SDAA and hold a practicing license. If all or part of a skill was not included in previous formal education, the skill may be acquired through an approved course or prior learning assessment conducted by an accredited program in dental assisting.

The SDAA office has a complete skill list for every dental assistant registered in Saskatchewan. A copy of any skill list is available on request. Dental assistants are advised to review their list closely, and forward verification of your training if there are discrepancies on your report. Your skill list must be current to ensure that you have professional liability protection.

A dental assistant who has a **Full Practicing** license has at minimum all of the following skills:

- ◆ *Chairside Dental Assisting*
- ◆ *Dental Radiographs, expose, process and mount*
- ◆ *Dental Dam, place and remove*
- ◆ *Preliminary impressions and bite registration*
- ◆ *Matrix bands and wedges, place and remove*
- ◆ *Rubber cup polish*
- ◆ *Fluoride application, topical*
- ◆ *Oral hygiene instructions*
- ◆ *Dietary counseling*

A dental assistant who has a **Restricted Practicing** license may have a restriction applied through an order of the Discipline Committee or may be missing some of the aforementioned skills. Employers are encouraged to review the Member Skill Verification held by the member or contact the SDAA office. Post graduate skills may be acquired by formal training or prior learning assessment (as defined by an accredited dental assistant program). All post graduate skills must be approved for practice by the Council of the Saskatchewan Dental Assistants' Association and must be included in the member's record.

A **Restricted (Temporary) Licence** may be available for applicants who do not as yet meet all of the registration requirements such as successful completion of the Written Examination and/or Clinical Practice Evaluation available through the National Dental Assisting Examining Board. Applicants who are in the process of acquiring their intra oral skills may qualify for this licence. This licence will have an expiry date and may authorize at minimum one skill.

Additional Skills:

The following intraoral skills are included in the scope of practice for dental assistants in the province of Saskatchewan (provided that formal training has been taken and the skill is listed on the dental assistants personal skill list):

- ◆ Treatment Liners, Place (liners, bases, varnishes and bonding systems) in teeth which do not have pulpal exposures (*includes graduates of Kelsey 1981 onward & selected students from SIAST-Wascana 1981 onward*)
- ◆ Pit and fissure sealants and acid etching, Application (*graduates Kelsey 1975 onward & SIAST-Wascana 1978 onward*)
- ◆ Topical Anaesthetic, application (*all Kelsey graduates and 1998 & onward at SIAST-Wascana*)
- ◆ Remove sutures, surgical dressings and retraction cord
- ◆ Desensitizing agents, application (*all Kelsey graduates and graduates of 1999 & onward at SIAST-Wascana*)
- ◆ Pulp vitality testing *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Polish amalgam restoration *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Fabricate temporary crowns (*graduates of 1990 & onward at Wascana-SIAST*)
- ◆ Temporary crowns, cement and remove (*SIAST-Wascana graduates of 1997 onward AND offered post-graduate*)
- ◆ Amalgam insertion and carving *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Perform appropriate medical emergency procedures
- ◆ Orthodontic Module *** (*Offered Post Graduate*)
- ◆ Provisional Restorations, Place *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Take plaque indices
- ◆ Elastic Separators, Place *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Restorative Implant Assisting Technology *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Gingival Retraction Cord, Place & Remove *** (*Offered Post-Graduate*)
- ◆ Coronal Whitening (*SIAST-Wascana graduates of 1999 forward AND offered post-graduate*)

*** These courses have only been taught as a post-graduate extension course and are not included in the core curriculum of any dental assistant program in Saskatchewan.

Pulp Vitality Testing:

Was taught to dental assistants in Saskatchewan from 1968 until 1987 at Kelsey and to the graduates of 1999 & 2000 at SIAST/Wascana and is now ONLY available as a post graduate course at SIAST/Wascana.

Polish Amalgam Restorations:

Was taught to dental assistants in Saskatchewan from 1972 until 1999 at either Kelsey or SIAST/Wascana. This course is considered redundant, but the skill could be acquired through post graduate training.

Temporary Crowns, Cement and Remove:

This course was included in the dental assistant curriculum in Saskatchewan in 1997 and is also available as post graduate training.

Amalgam Insertion and Carving:

On successful completion of the SIAST Wascana Amalgam Insertion and Carving Course the student will be able to justify and demonstrate competency in the following procedures:

- ◆ *Restoration of preparations in primary and permanent teeth using amalgam (Amalgam to be handled in a manner that will optimize its physical properties)*
- ◆ *Relationship of restorative procedures to the biology of the pulp, the periodontium, and the occlusion*
- ◆ *The use of appropriate precautions in dealing with the occupational hazards present in the current practice of restorative dentistry*
- ◆ *The application of the common types of matrices*

Note: Qualification in Amalgam Insertion and Carving **does not** qualify the dental assistant to placement and/or finishing of composite restorations.

Orthodontics for Allied Dental Personnel:

The Orthodontic Course offered at SIAST Wascana is based on the following outcomes. If you have taken an alternate orthodontic assisting course, and wish to “legally” perform these procedures, your course must be evaluated and approved. An upgrade module may be required for out of provinces graduates.

- ◆ *Take and trace cephalometric x-rays*
- ◆ *Fabricate study models*
- ◆ *Expose intraoral and facial photographs*
- ◆ *Place and remove separators*
- ◆ *Select, fit and cement bands*
- ◆ *Cement bands*
- ◆ *Place bonded brackets & attachments*
- ◆ *Place and remove archwires, ligature ties, and accessories such as springs and elastics*
- ◆ *Remove brackets, bands and attachments from teeth using hand instruments*
- ◆ *Remove supragingival bulk cement from teeth by use of hand and ultrasonic scaler*
- ◆ *Remove excess bonding resin from teeth by use of band removing pliers, low speed hand-piece/discs and hand scaler*
- ◆ *Place removable orthodontic appliances*
- ◆ *Provide client education*

Place Provisional Restorations:

On successful completion of the SIAST Wascana Provisional Restoration Course the student will be able to justify and demonstrate competency in the following procedures:

- ◆ *Place and finish provisional restorative materials in all classes of cavity preparations*
- ◆ *Evaluate margins*
- ◆ *Evaluate occlusion*

Elastic Separators, Place:

This skill is taught in the Orthodontic Module but is also available as a post graduate module.

Restorative Implant Assisting Technology:

This course was developed in 2004 and is available to dental assistants interested in performing expanded function patient services in practices that perform restorative implant services.

- ◆ *Provisional appliance adjustment (for fixed & removable prosthetic procedures)*
- ◆ *Provisional appliance relining (for fixed & removable prosthetic procedures)*
- ◆ *Installation and adjustment of healing abutments*
- ◆ *Placement of surgical pac (perio pac)*
- ◆ *Manipulation of final impression materials (silicone and polyether) or impression plaster*
- ◆ *Placement of impression coping, seat subframes with verification by radiograph*
- ◆ *Prepare acrylic jigs*
- ◆ *Joining abutments with acrylics*
- ◆ *Tighten abutment screws with a torque controller and place appropriate sealing materials (silicone)*
- ◆ *Fabrication of custom trays*
- ◆ *Oral hygiene instructions*

Gingival Retraction Cord, Place & Remove:

This course has been offered through SIAST/Wascana on a post graduate basis since 2007.

Coronal Whitening:

This course was included in the SIAST/Wascana dental assistant program in 1999; and is available on a post graduate basis.

Ethics:

A dental assistant licensed in Saskatchewan is legally bound to practice in an ethical manner. A dental assistant must only perform skills for which they have been formally trained or assessed, are listed with the licensing body and are authorized by a dentist. It is generally understood that dental assistants should not perform skills for which they do not feel competent. If training was received some time ago and the skill has not been practiced recently, the dental assistant may consider reviewing the skill with the support of a licensed and qualified co-worker or take a course through an approved training facility.

Professional Development:

A licenced dental assistant with practising status is required to attain 10 professional development credit hours annually. Those licenced after the mid point in the year are only required to obtain 6 credits. Proof of 10 professional development credits in the previous 12 months is required for any non-practising dental assistant seeking an upgrade to practising status.

Non Practicing Membership:

If you are not working as a dental assistant you may wish to purchase a non-practicing license. This class of licensure is intended to give the non-practicing member a break from professional development courses along with a lower cost license. This is a great option for members who are at home with children, attending school or perhaps working in another field. This type of membership has no professional development credit requirement and offers no professional liability insurance.

Members can hold non-practicing status for 4 years and retain their eligibility to return to practising status without retraining. During your fourth year of non-practicing status you will be required to acquire ten (10) professional development credits of which one course **MUST** be related to infection control. During the fifth year the member will be required to return to practicing status and again obtain ten (10) professional development credits. A dental assistant holding non practising status for longer than five years will be required to hold the NDAEB certificate and successfully complete a Clinical Practice Evaluation prior to qualifying for practising status.

Dental assistants employed in a dental office who are not providing intra oral client services are still advised to hold a practising licence in order to ensure that they are covered by professional liability insurance.

Note: dental assistants practising and in good standing in another dentally related profession or province can hold non practising status indefinitely.

Lapsed Dental Assistants:

A dental assistant who fails to renew their annual licence is considered lapsed. All lapsed members must reinstate within three years and pay their annual fee, a reinstatement fee and must meet all current registration standards (i.e. hold the National Dental Assisting Examining Board Certificate).

Scaling:

Dental assistants in Saskatchewan cannot perform scaling, as of the proclamation of the Dental Disciplines Act in 1998. The "scaling" function has been protected for dentists and "debridement of supragingival and subgingival deposits" has been protected for dental hygienists.

Periodontal Screening:

Dental assistants in Saskatchewan cannot perform Periodontal Screening. Saskatchewan Dental Assistants have not been taught to measure pocket depths with a probe and this skill will not be sanctioned.

May 13, 2009

