



College of Dental Technologists of Ontario
Ordre des Technologues Dentaires de l'Ontario

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Access to Dental Technology II Project

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Consultant

Client: The College of Dental Technologists of Ontario

&

Canadian Alliance of Dental Technology Regulators

Solicitation Number: ADT2 - 001

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1. Background

1.1 Organization Overview

The Canadian Alliance of Dental Technology Regulators (CADTR) is the national membership of provincial dental technology regulators. It is composed of six provincial dental technology regulators that collectively license 2,100 professionals across Canada including:

- Nova Scotia Dental Technicians Association
- New Brunswick Dental Technicians Association
- Ordre des technologues en protheses et appareils dentaires du Quebec
- College of Dental Technologists of Ontario
- College of Dental Technologists of Alberta
- British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals

CADTR regulators serve and protect the public by ensuring that individuals seeking registration to practice dental technology meet education and professional competence standards. A letter of support signed by CADTR members accompanies this proposal.

On behalf of its member regulators, CADTR provides credential evaluation and competency assessment services for dental technologists seeking a license to practice. This involves a review of education and experience of Canadian and international applicants to determine whether or not they are equivalent or substantially equivalent to approved dental technology programs in Canada. In addition, CADTR administers the Dental Technology Entry-to-Practice-Assessment (DTETPA) for both domestic and internationally educated professionals to determine their readiness for safe, effective and independent dental technology practice in Canada.

The College of Dental Technologists of Ontario (CDTO) has received funding from the Government of Canada, through the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP), to administer a three-year the Access to Dental Technology (ADT) II project on behalf of CADTR.

A key component of this project and the focus of this RFP is the development of a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) pathway to licensure for internationally educated applicants.

1.2 Project Overview

The regulatory landscape in Canada has changed significantly in recent years. The Canadian Free Trade Agreement states that recognition of professional qualifications in one jurisdiction must be recognized by all other jurisdictions (including the internationally educated cohort) without any additional requirements. The inauguration of provincial “fairness” legislation in six provinces requires that assessment processes employed by regulators adhere to transparency, objectivity, impartiality and fairness. International legislation, such as the Lisbon Convention, necessitates that organizations involved in evaluating and recognizing international credentials do so within a prescribed set of conditions. In late 2022, IRCC announced that Canada will welcome a historic number of 1.45 million newcomers through its economic, family, humanitarian and refugee class streams between 2023 and 2025. The collective effect of these developments as well as a significant increase in immigration necessitates that special attention be paid to the way the qualifications and skills of international applicants are assessed and recognized.

Widespread retirements in the dental technology profession are occurring and expected to accelerate. In 2019, there were 2,521 registered dental technicians/technologists in Canada; in 2023 this number has decreased to 2,129.

Currently, there are many internationally educated dental technologists that work as dental lab assistants/associates (DLAs), also known as “bench workers”. This position is generally unregulated and has a much narrower range of practice activities as compared with a registered dental technologist (RDT)¹. DLAs typically work under supervision and perform similar tasks as those who work as registered dental technologists. A 2019 study conducted as part of the Phase I project identified 2,771 of these individuals working in Canada. Many of them received their education outside of Canada and might be eligible to become licensed dental technologists. There are several benefits of encouraging these individuals to become registered:

- Public Protection: Every registered dental technologist must meet provincial standards to enter the profession as well as standards for professional conduct and practice.
- Scope of work: RDTs have a broader scope of practice and greater professional responsibility as compared to DLAs. Registering internationally educated individuals as RDTs will allow skilled individuals to perform a broader array of tasks, enhancing work opportunities, earning and professional fulfillment.
- Becoming a recognized professional: Many internationally educated individuals feel a sense of pride, achievement and accomplishment upon becoming a licensed professional in Canada.

Presently, there is no mechanism in place to fairly assess academic and previous work experience of DLAs, or reliably reintegrate them into dental technology profession. A similar challenge exists for internationally educated and trained dental technologists (IETDTs) who are or will be moving to Canada in the future. To this end, CADTR and its member regulators are looking to create a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) model for internationally educated dental technologists.

Bidders are encouraged to review CADTR’s current assessment and examination process here: <https://cadtr-acord.com/>

¹ Note that the College of Dental Technologists of Alberta recognizes the professional titles of both Registered Dental Technologist (RDT) and Registered Dental Technician (DT). The British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals use the term Registered Dental Technician (RDT). Reference to RDT in this document is intended to encompass all professional titles used by CADTR member regulators.

2. Project Objectives and Expected Results

Presently, all internationally educated applicants must undergo a profession-specific credential assessment (PSCA) as a means of determining eligibility to challenge a knowledge-based and performance-based exams (required by most regulators as a condition of registration). This process, developed as part of the Access to Dental Technology Project (Phase I), is only available to individuals with specific, formal education. There is no pathway to registration for those who may be qualified through non-traditional routes.

The new PLAR process will aim to enhance the fairness, objectivity and validity of assessment of internationally trained dental technology applicants and direct them to licensing, education and/or upgrading options as needed. This will be achieved by developing an approach, where individuals are assessed based on their informal learning and relevant experience. The design and administration of the assessment is to be evidence-based and psychometrically defensible and tied to professional competencies which demonstrate knowledge and competence to practice dental technology in Canada. Depending on the finding and recommendations of the successful bidder, structured interviews and/or case studies may also be included as part of the PLAR process.

A series of interrelated deliverables will be carried out in support of this objective:

- An internal and external environmental scan aimed at informing a PLAR process for dental technology that meets the needs of regulators and considers an Equity Impact Assessment.
- Development of a PLAR pathway and psychometrically valid scoring rubric.
- Validation and refinement of the PLAR process through a structured pilot.

2.1 Project Objectives

Project objectives, that directly tie to the Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP) funding, are provided below:

- Strengthen, harmonize and expedite the registration of internationally educated dental technologists (IETDTs);
- Address the human resources deficit/skills shortage and sustain the diversity and growth of dental technology profession in Canada;
- Support inter-provincial labour mobility;
- Provide pre-arrival support and engage in outreach and communications strategies.

2.2 Expected Results

The expected outputs of the successfully completed ADT II project are:

- A new approved pathway (PLAR) for IETDT to receive foreign credential recognition;
- Best practices report in the field of PLAR in Canada;
- A Pan-Canadian PLAR tools and a scoring rubric;
- A bilingual online portal;
- 50 IETDTs credential assessed through the PLAR and referred to competency assessment, upgrading and/or formal education, as needed;
- An environmental scan and literature review report on similar professions' international credential, education, and licensure requirements;
- A final report on the new PLAR credentialing pathway.

These outputs will lead to expected outcomes which are:

- Increased collaboration with regulatory colleges involved in the FCR processes;
- Increased awareness among skilled newcomers of the credential recognition process
- Improved interprovincial labour mobility;
- Improved access to information on the various pathways to full licensure for IETDTs;
- Increased opportunities for IETDTs who do not meet entry-to-practice standards;
- Increased number and rate of IETDTs accessing licensing/registration; and
- Reduced barriers for credential recognition of IETDTs.

4. Deliverables

The purpose of the PLAR pathway is to provide qualified applicants without formal/approved education in dental technology a means of becoming licensed. It is to be designed such that learning obtained through work experience can be objectively collected, measured and assessed and recognized in lieu of a formal academic credentials.

The practice of dental technology consists of four disciplines:

- Removable Partial Prosthetics
- Removable Full Prosthetics
- Fixed Partial Prosthetics
- Fixed and Removable Orthodontics and Periodontal Appliances

The PLAR pathway is intended to be diagnostic in nature. That is to say, the process should be designed to confirm whether the applicant has work experience which has yielded similar learning outcomes as an approved program. The assessment should also be constructed in such a way to identify which if any of the four disciplines listed above the applicant is proficient in as a means of supporting discipline-specific licensure in those jurisdictions whose regulations allow it. A number of different possible PLAR outcomes are anticipated:

- a. The applicant achieves academic substantial equivalency in all four disciplines. If successful on the entry-to practice exams (i.e., KBA and full PBA²), may apply for a RDT license.
- b. The applicant is found to be substantially equivalent in 1-3 sub-disciplines and if successful on the KBA and relevant components of the PBA may be eligible to register with a discipline-specific license (where available). It is possible that future upgrading will lead to full RDT/RT designation.
- c. The applicant is found to have gaps in one or more disciplines that can be remediated through upgrading programs deemed acceptable by CADTR. Once these gaps have been addressed, the individual may move onto the competency-based exam phase.
- d. The applicant has significant gaps in all four disciplines that cannot be remediated. The applicant is directed to a full-time dental technology program.

To inform the development of the PLAR pathway, the consultant will carry out an environmental scan designed to:

- Understand the regulatory requirements of each jurisdiction;

² Knowledge-Based Assessment and Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) – see: [Competency Assessment - Canadian Alliance of Dental Technology Regulators \(cadtr-acortd.com\)](http://www.cadtr-acortd.com)

- Review the current CADTR assessment model to ensure proper integration with the new PLAR process;
- Identify best practices in the field of PLAR that may be applicable to the dental technology profession;
- Identify the appropriate standard(s) (i.e. academic, competency, etc.) that the PLAR pathway and scoring rubric should be based on.
- Based on the above, provide the details/structure of a recommended Pan-Canadian PLAR program.

Eligibility criteria, processes, decision-points, a cost-recovery financial model and necessary human resources will be determined as part of the environmental scan. Research findings and recommendations will be shared with the Advisory Committee to determine the best approach to assess IETDTs’ education and verified work experience.

The PLAR consultant will work with a team of Subject Matter Experts (sourced by participating regulators) and a qualified Psychometrician (retained through an RFP process) to draft and refine the PLAR-based assessment tools, acceptable forms of evidence, scoring rubric and passing rates.

The PLAR process and associated tools will be validated during an 18-month pilot managed by the consultant (in multiple provinces) with a sample of applicants including DLAs (roughly 50 applicants are anticipated). Feedback will be collected from these individuals via a brief online survey. CADTR assessors will also complete a project evaluation aimed at informing improvements to the system. Refinements and adjustments will be made to the PLAR once the pilot phase is complete.

5. Proposed timeframe

The follow table sets out suggested timeframes and activities for the development of PLAR but may be adapted based on input from the successful bidder.

Timing	Activity/Deliverable
March, 2024	Secure PLAR Consultant
April, 2024	Kick-off meeting with the SC to confirm methodology, deliverables and timelines
April-June, 2024	Conduct internal and external environmental scan
July, 2024	Presentation of Preliminary Findings of Environmental Scan to SC
July, 2024	Identify and recruit SMEs, and retain a Psychometrician to help develop the scoring rubric
Aug-Nov, 2024	Facilitate meetings with SMEs/ Psychometrician to draft the PLAR
Dec, 2024	Present draft PLAR to SC
Dec-Feb, 2025	Facilitate additional in-person meetings with SMEs/Psychometrician to complete development of PLAR tools and processes
March, 2025	Present the complete draft of PLAR to SC for revisions and/or approval

March, 2025	Train pilot assessors
April, 2025	Launch 18-month pilot (April 2025-September 2026)
Oct, 2026	Upon completion of PLAR pilot, review collected pilot data and evaluation surveys
Nov, 2026	Conduct a meeting with SC to review/assess the success of PLAR Pilot and determine if or what adjustments are required
Nov, 2026	Final changes to PLAR process/Issue final report

6. Price

Bids are not to exceed \$80,000.00 CAD (maximum bid amount), this is exclusive of all applicable taxes.

Estimated travel costs, incidentals, and other possible costs (inclusive of HST), fall outside of the maximum bid amount.

7. Assumptions

- CDTO reserves the right to:
 - refuse all proposals received;
 - enter into negotiations with Bidders on any or all aspects of their proposal;
 - accept any proposal in whole or in part without negotiations;
 - cancel and/or reissue this RFP at any time;
 - seek clarification and verify any or all information provided with respect to this RFP;
 - negotiate with the sole compliant Bidder to ensure best value to CDTO.
- The Bidder certifies that the persons proposed in its proposal will be available to commence performance of the work as required and at the time specified within or agreed to.
- As part of signing the contract, the consultant will undertake to respect the confidential nature of CDTO, CADTR and the Funding Agreement documentation and content.
- All information shall be destroyed in accordance with any instructions issued by CDTO.
- The Bidder agrees to and understands that confidential information supplied to the College may be disclosed by the College where the College is obliged to do so under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)*, by an order of a court or tribunal otherwise required at law.
- The Bidder shall notify CDTO immediately after they become aware that a breach of any provision of this contract governing the protection of personal information has occurred.
- Any intentional breach by the Bidder of any provision of this contract governing the protection of personal information constitutes a fundamental breach of contract such that the contract may be terminated by CDTO.
- No part of this project is to be subcontracted without prior permission of CDTO and CADTR.
- The Consultant will be available as prescribed in proposed timeline.

- Translations will be arranged through CDTO. The Bidder should indicate in their proposed work plan where translation services may be required.
- Any travel required to complete the described work or present findings to key stakeholders must be preauthorized.
- Travel expenses will be reimbursed at cost within the travel directive of the National Joint Council: www.njc-cnm.gc.ca, and CDTO policies.
- Reasonable expenses including travel, accommodation, meals and other expenses will be outside of the bid amount.
- Bids are not to exceed \$80,000.00 CAD, exclusive of applicable taxes (exclusive of estimated travel costs).
- Contracts, letters of agreements, Invoicing and payment terms will be in accordance with CDTO policies.
- Note that the lowest bid will not necessarily be awarded the contract.

8. Proposal requirements and deadline

8.1 Proposal Requirements

The proposal must include the following components:

1. An introductory section that describes the intended methodology and shows that the applicant clearly understands the scope and intent of the project and how to approach this type of work.
2. A brief account of any similar projects the applicant has completed in the past.
3. A general work plan and timeline.
4. Total bid price to complete deliverables (excludes travel expenses) + estimated applicable taxes (shown separately).
5. Projected travel costs, incidentals, and any other possible costs that fall outside of the bid price plus estimated applicable taxes (shown separately).
6. Three references from organizations for which you have completed similar work in the past five years.

8.2 Preparation of Proposals

- Proposals must address all the requirements of this RFP.
- The proposal is not to exceed eight (8) pages in length.
- All prices within the bids must be in Canadian funds and any applicable taxes are shown separately.
- The Bidder's name and return address, the solicitation number and the RFP closing date should be clearly visible on documents containing the proposal. Proposals submitted in response to this RFP will not be returned.

8.3 Proposal Deadline and Submission

Proposals are to be received no later than April 4, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. EST.

- Proposals are to be sent by email to the Project Manager, Giedre Johnson at giedrejohnson@gmail.com.
- Questions regarding the RFP are to be sent in writing to giedrejohnson@gmail.com. No questions will be answered within 48 hours of the submission deadline.
- It is the Bidder's responsibility to ensure their proposal and all associated documents are received in full and on time. It is advised that Bidders send the proposal in advance of the closing time to ensure confirmation of receipt.

9. Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- 80% Technical Merit – Work Plan, Availability, Experience, References and Qualifications
- 20% Price

The basis of selection will be the highest combined rating of technical merit and price.

10. Conflict of Interest

"Conflict of Interest" includes, but is not limited to, any situation or circumstance where:

- (a) in relation to the RFP process, the Bidder has an unfair advantage or engages in conduct, directly or indirectly, that may give it an unfair advantage, including but not limited to (i) having or having access to information in the preparation of its proposal that is confidential and not available to other Bidders; (ii) communicating with any person with a view to influencing preferred treatment in the RFP process; or (iii) engaging in conduct that compromises or could be seen to compromise the integrity of the open and competitive RFP process and render that process non-competitive and unfair; or
- (b) in relation to the performance of its contractual obligations in a Client contract, the Bidder's other commitments, relationships or financial interests (i) could or could be seen to exercise an improper influence over the objective, unbiased and impartial exercise of its independent judgment; or (ii) could or could be seen to compromise, impair or be incompatible with the effective performance of its contractual obligations;

The Bidder must declare: (1) there was no Conflict of Interest in preparing its proposal; and (2) there is no foreseeable Conflict of Interest in performing the contractual obligations contemplated in the RFP.

Otherwise, the Bidder must declare that there is an actual or potential Conflict of Interest relating to the preparation of its proposal, and/or the Bidder foresees an actual or potential Conflict of Interest in performing the contractual obligations contemplated in the RFP.

If the Bidder declares an actual or potential Conflict of Interest, the Bidder must set out details of the actual or potential Conflict of Interest in its proposal.