

Office of the
fairness
commissioner

Bureau du
commissaire à
l'équité



Study of Registration Practices of the

**COLLEGE OF DENTAL TECHNOLOGISTS OF
ONTARIO, 2007**

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The Office of the Fairness Commissioner is an arm's-length agency of the Ontario government, established under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006. Its mandate is to ensure that certain regulated professions have registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) undertook a study of registration practices of Ontario's regulated professions during the fall and winter of 2007–2008. The purpose of the study was to understand each regulated profession's 2007 registration practices and to establish baseline data and information to enable the OFC to measure progress as it fulfills its mandate under the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006.

This report reflects the registration practices of the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario as of December 31, 2007. Information in this report was gathered from

- face-to-face meetings with registration staff of the regulatory body
- additional documentation provided by the regulatory body
- relevant websites
- career maps for the profession posted on the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration's website (where applicable).

The College of Dental Technologists of Ontario also provided registration information and statistics for 2005, 2006 and 2007 through a standard spreadsheet designed by the OFC.

An analysis and summary of the findings for all of the regulated professions are contained in the OFC's *Ontario's Regulated Professions: Report on the 2007 Study of Registration Practices*.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE REGULATORY BODY

A. Legislation

The College of Dental Technologists of Ontario operates in accordance with the Dental Technology Act, 1991 and the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991. Ontario Regulation 711/93 and Ontario Regulation 874/93, made under the Dental Technology Act, 1991, govern the CDTO's examinations and registration requirements respectively.

B. Protected Titles

The CDTO registers dental technologists in accordance with the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHPA) and the Dental Technology Act, 1991. No person can work as a dental technologist or use the titles "dental technologist," "registered dental technologist," "dental technician" or "registered dental technician" (RDT) without a registration certificate issued by the CDTO.

C. Definition of the Profession

RDTs are regulated health care professionals whose scope of practice includes the design, construction, repair or alteration of dental prosthetic, restorative and orthodontic devices. These devices include bridges, crowns, dentures, implants, and orthodontic and other dental appliances prescribed by dentists or other regulated health practitioners to replace or enhance their patients' teeth. Dental technologists also supervise the technical aspects of dental laboratory operation.

D. Labour Market/Economic Trends

The labour market outlook for dental technologists is good and should continue to be that way into the foreseeable future. Employment opportunities will increase as an aging population's need for dental services increases.

E. New Developments Within the Profession

The lack of dental technology education programs poses a threat to the future of the profession. Currently, 18 per cent of the membership of the CDTO is over 60 years of age. With the George Brown College program in dental technology, Ontario's only diploma program in dental technology, graduating just 20 students a year, the profession will begin to stagnate unless more academic programs are created. The CDTO encourages other academic institutions to offer programs in dental technology.

Illegal laboratories are also an issue for the CDTO from a health and safety perspective. In the absence of a "controlled acts" scheme, the CDTO relies on the Medical Devices Branch of Health Canada to regulate medical devices.

F. Staffing

The CDTO's staff consists of four full-time employees and one part-time employee. Two of these employees are involved in the registration process.

3. REGISTRATION PRACTICES

A. Registration Requirements and Application Process

i. Categories of Registrants

The CDTO has two categories of registrants:

1. A General Certificate of Registration allows a member to use the RDT designation and to practise the profession of dental technology in Ontario within the guidelines of the CDTO.
2. An Inactive Certificate of Registration also allows a member to use the RDT designation. However, he or she cannot provide dental technology services in Ontario. Inactive members can be reissued a General Certificate if they have been inactive for less than three years. After three years, upgrading and examinations are necessary for an Inactive Certificate to be reinstated as a General Certificate.

ii. General Requirements for Registration

Applicants for registration with the CDTO in the General Certificate category must meet the following requirements:

- Successfully complete a grade 12 education or equivalent 12 years of general education
- Successfully complete a recognized post-secondary education program in dental technology in which the curriculum encompasses at least 80 per cent of the Competency Profile of Canadian Dental Technicians/Technologists
- Have 1,950 hours (about one year) of supervised practical experience in Ontario performing the full range of activities described in the competency profile
- Pass the CDTO registration examinations
- Have Canadian citizenship or be legally allowed to work in Canada
- Hold professional liability insurance coverage to a minimum of \$500,000.

iii. Steps to Registration

Step 1 – Assessment of Education

Before applying to sit the CDTO Registration Examination, an applicant must first submit his or her transcripts and diploma/certificate to the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) for evaluation. ICAS is currently the only credential assessment agency that is capable of performing a course-by-course assessment of an applicant's dental technology program. (The CDTO encourages other assessment agencies to gain the expertise to assess dental technology programs.)

The credentials of *all* graduates of dental technology programs, Canadian or international, must be assessed by ICAS. The agency verifies the status of the school(s) attended by the applicant and compares course by course the post-secondary programs taken by an applicant. The agency reports on (1) whether the applicant has successfully completed an Ontario Grade 12 or equivalent education; (2) whether the applicant's dental technology program is from an accredited post-secondary school; and (3) whether the applicant's curriculum satisfies at least 80 per cent of the Competency Profile.

Applicants who fall short of the 80 per cent benchmark of the competency assessment may apply to write the Eligibility Examination.

Step 2 – Apply to the CDTO to Sit the Registration Examination

Applicants can apply to sit the CDTO Registration Examination once they have completed all the processes in Step 1, along with the 1,950 hours of supervised practical experience.

Step 3 – Apply for Registration

Upon successfully passing all parts of the Registration Examination, an applicant becomes eligible to apply for a General Certificate of Registration as a dental technologist. The applicant must contact the CDTO for an application package. An applicant must provide proof of professional liability insurance coverage issued in his or her name, character references and a declaration of any charge for criminal offence, professional misconduct, incompetence or incapacity related to his or her practice of the profession in or outside of Ontario.

The following documents are required of all applicants, domestic or internationally trained, for registration with the CDTO:

- two passport photos
- proof of citizenship or permanent residency status
- all education documents, including certified copies of transcripts and certificates or diplomas
- two character reference letters
- Certificate of Supervised Dental Technology Practical Experience in Ontario (1,950 hours)
- certified cheque or money order to pay the registration fee

B. Documentation Required from Internationally Trained Individuals

i. Standard Documentation

Internationally trained dental technologists have to submit the same documentation as domestically trained dental technologists, listed in section 3.a.iii.

ii. Options for Applicants with Unavailable/Destroyed Documents

The CDTO requires proof of education to process an application for registration. Applicants who are unable to obtain documents may consult the Registrar about alternatives. Options may be provided on a case-by-case basis.

C. Credential Assessment (Third Party and/or Internal)

All applicants for registration with the CDTO who have graduated from a dental technology program must have their academic credentials assessed by ICAS.

Applicants must submit the following documents to the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS), in addition to the documents submitted to the CDTO:

- certified copies of degrees, diplomas or certificates issued by the secondary and post-secondary schools attended by the applicant;
- certified copies of supporting transcripts, marks sheets, diploma addenda, etc.
- accurate certified translations of all documents not in English or French.

ICAS first evaluates the academic credentials of applicants to determine whether their secondary and post-secondary programs are equivalent to Canadian standards. Then it evaluates the curriculum of an applicant's post-secondary education in dental technology to determine whether he or she has attained at least 80 per cent of the Competency Profile. When ICAS completes its assessment, the applicant and the CDTO receive a detailed final assessment report.

D. Academic/Program Requirements

All applicants for registration with the CDTO must have successfully completed a recognized post-secondary education program in dental technology in which the curriculum encompasses at least 80 per cent of the Competency Profile. The main components of the Competency Profile are as follows:¹

- design, fabrication, modification and repair of removable prostheses
- design, fabrication, modification and repair of fixed prostheses
- design, fabrication, modification and repair of appliances used in orthodontics, oral and maxillo-facial surgery and other dental treatments.

Furthermore, an RDT must be able to describe and, where appropriate, to apply competently the following related theoretical and practical components of dental technology practice:

- general laboratory procedures, principles of physics and general science associated with the indirect fabrication of dental appliances
- characteristics and properties of dental materials associated with the indirect fabrication of oral appliances
- characteristics and operation of equipment and instrumentation associated with the indirect fabrication of oral appliances
- dental anatomy, dental physiology and dental morphology as well as basic elements of head and neck anatomy and pathological conditions relevant to dental technique/technology
- laboratory hygiene and safety, including infection control, as well as basic elements of toxicology and first aid
- basic principles of behavioural sciences and communications
- principles of professional ethics and legal obligations
- basic elements of business management, laboratory supervision and the relationship of dental technique/technology to other dental services and general health care.

George Brown College is the only post-secondary school in Ontario offering a diploma program in dental technology. It takes four years to become a dental technologist: three years in George Brown College's full-time educational program and one year to complete the 1,950 hours of practical experience.

¹For more details on these components, see the Regulations & Guides section of the CDTO website to view the full "Competency Profile of Canadian Dental Technicians/Technologists" document.

E. Work Experience Requirements

All applicants must provide evidence that they have completed no fewer than 1,950 hours of supervised practice in all areas of dental technology *after* graduation from a post-secondary dental technology program. A Certificate of Supervised Practical Dental Technology Experience must be signed by the applicant's supervising dental technologist (a member of the CDTO holding a General Certificate) or a dentist who is a member of the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

Applicants who have completed their supervised practice more than three years prior to the date of their application must successfully complete a refresher course approved by the CDTO Registration Committee.

F. Examinations

i. Eligibility Examination

An applicant who falls short of 80 per cent of the Competency Profile may apply to the CDTO Registration Committee to sit the Eligibility Examination.

The Eligibility Examination is a three-hour written examination. Section 1 of the examination tests general dental technology knowledge. It is multiple choice and contains several diagrams. Questions in this first section are based on the competency areas stated in the Competency Profile. Section 2 tests English reading and comprehension abilities. Applicants must achieve a score of at least 60 per cent in both section 1 and section 2 to pass the Eligibility Examination. This exam is offered four times a year.

Once an applicant has passed the Eligibility Examination and proved that he or she has completed 1,950 hours of supervised practical dental technology work experience in Ontario, he or she can apply to take the mandatory Registration Examination.

ii. Registration Examination

The Registration Examination consists of written and practical components, with the written component consisting of a theory examination and a jurisprudence and ethics examination.

The two-hour Theory Examination tests general and theoretical knowledge in all subject areas listed in the Competency Profile. It includes multiple-choice questions and labelling of diagrams. The passing score is 60 per cent.

The one-and-a-half-hour open-book Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination tests knowledge of the current legislation and ethics that govern the practice of dental technology in Ontario. It is made up

of multiple-choice questions. George Brown College normally offers a basic course on the jurisprudence and ethics of dental technology practice. Applicants can contact the George Brown College Continuing Education Department for course dates and fees.

The Practical Examination takes four to five days. It tests understanding and interpretation of prescriptions, technical skills, time management, organization skills, equipment operation and application of safety measures, to the standards listed in the Competency Profile. Applicants are asked to complete five or six dental technology projects according to prescriptions given. To pass the examination, an applicant must complete all projects according to prescriptions given and meet the marking criteria set for each of the assigned projects.

Once all components of the Registration Examination are successfully passed, an applicant is eligible to apply for a General Certificate of Registration.

The CDTO usually holds a briefing session on the Registration Examination in November or December of each year, to help applicants better understand the examination, its policies and regulations, and the legislation that governs dental technology in Ontario.

The Registration Examination must be completed within three years of the first application date. Remediation is available to applicants who fail any of the components. After three years, applicants must begin the registration process again.

When their application is approved, the CDTO sends an examination schedule and an examination handbook to assist applicants with examination preparation. The handbook details reference materials relevant to the topics on the examination, the dental technology theory and laboratory safety material for the written theory examination, the projects that will be given for the practical exam, and the regulations and exam procedures and policies.

When the applicant passes all components of the Registration Examination, he or she is eligible to apply for registration.

G. Language Requirements

While the CDTO does not require applicants to take specific language tests, section 2 of the Eligibility Examination tests English reading and comprehension abilities. The Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination also requires fluency in English to be successful.

H. Fees

The fees listed below do not include applicable GST charges.

Fee	
Eligibility Examination fee	\$100
Registration Examination:	
Application fee	\$200
Theory Examination fee	\$150
Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination fee	\$150
Practical Examination fee	\$900
Application for registration fee	\$150
Annual registration fee	\$1017.23
ICAS credential assessment fees	These vary depending on where applicant graduated from. See ICAS website for details.

I. Third Parties

Name of Third Party	Relationship to Regulatory Body
International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS)	Assesses diplomas/certificates of applicants, and conducts a curriculum comparison for equivalency to the Competency Profile.

J. Typical Length of the Registration Process

It usually takes individuals a minimum of eight months to become a member of the profession from the date application materials are sent to the CDTO. The timeline leading up to registrations is as follows:

- Applications are released in December each year.
- Application forms and payment are due to the CDTO by March 31 of the following year.
- Examinations take place in July/August.

- Examination results are provided approximately two months after the examination date.
- An individual can become a member as early as October.

The ICAS assessment process takes approximately four to six weeks.

K. Accredited Programs

The CDTO does not accredit specific programs in dental technology and there is no national accreditation body/association and no national standards for the profession.

George Brown College is the only post-secondary school in Ontario offering a diploma program in dental technology. The CDTO works closely with George Brown College regarding the competencies required of a graduate who is seeking registration.

L. Internal Review/Appeal Process

The CDTO has a Registration Examination Review Policy for both the written and practical components of the exam. The policies specify the conditions and procedures under which a candidate can request (1) that the answer sheet be manually rechecked, or (2) that the Registration Committee review any specified circumstances that might have affected the candidate's performance during the written or practical examination.

Review and appeal mechanisms also exist for final registration decisions. The relationship of the review and appeal bodies to the decision-making body in the registration process is an arm's-length one.

The Registration Committee is the body that handles reviews from the Registrar arising out of the need for administrative reconsideration for internal errors or procedural unfairness. It consists of one public appointee, and two registered professional members.

As set out in the RHPA, appeals are handled by the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB), an independent administrative tribunal that has the authority to review decisions of colleges' registration and complaints committees upon request of the parties involved.

The CDTO website has all policies and regulations listed on it and the college provides information about appeals in writing to all applicants. Upon request, applicants can access all information concerning the decisions made against their case.

4. BRIDGING PROGRAMS

The Registration Committee of the CDTO is currently in the process of developing a bridging program. In the past, there was a mentorship program; however, the profession of dental technology is small, which makes it difficult to sustain such a program.

George Brown College also offers a remediation program for applicants who have failed the Jurisprudence and Ethics Examination

5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

Currently, the CDTO has mutual recognition agreements with Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta (provinces whose regulation of the profession is substantially similar to that of Ontario). Based on agreed-upon competencies for dental technologists, the agreement is aimed at facilitating the mobility of RDTs between provinces.

Applicants from a jurisdiction that is party to the agreement need to write only the CDTO Jurisprudence and Ethics Exam and provide a letter of good standing from that jurisdiction, in order to be registered.

6. APPLICANTS' INTERACTIONS WITH REGULATORY BODY

A. Nature and Frequency of Communication

The CDTO communicates with applicants often by phone, written letter, email and in person.

B. Backlogs

The only current backlog is the small number of individuals waiting to take their examinations.

Currently, there are 25 students at George Brown College who may be applying to the CDTO. These candidates will be given the option to sit the Registration Examination in 2008. Twenty-two applicants from George Brown College and internationally trained individuals are repeating the examinations.

C. Complaints Regarding the Registration Process

At present, there are two complaints from candidates who do not meet one of the mandatory requirements of the college (a diploma in dental technology). These tend to be the only type of complaint about the registration process.

7. CHANGES SINCE THE 2005 SURVEY

The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration conducted a survey in 2005 to collect information about occupational regulatory bodies in Ontario.

As of January 28, 2008, the CDTO appointed a new Registrar, David McDonald, to replace Emily Cheung, who was appointed Registrar of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture in September 2007.

The CDTO Council approved recommendations from the Registration Committee to adjust certain entry-to-practice requirements. Currently, the CDTO administers three entry examinations (Theory, Jurisprudence and Ethics, and Practical) that constitute its Registration Examination. Percentage adjustments to the scope of practice within the Theory component were approved to better reflect required competencies and to avoid duplication. Also, the completion of an approved program in jurisprudence and ethics will now be accepted as an alternative to the current examination administered by the college.

The recent amendments to the Regulated Health Professions Act expand the scope of the work of the CDTO Patient Relations Program for the prevention and management of sexual abuse by health professionals, the funding for therapy and counselling of sexually abused victims, and education of CDTO members and staff. Effective June 2009, it will be the responsibility of the CDTO to enhance relations between the college and its members, and with other health profession colleges, key stakeholders and the public, as well as to promote interprofessional collaboration with other health profession colleges.

8. REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND STATISTICS

Definitions used in these tables:

Alternative class of licence: a class of licence that enables its holder to practise with limitations; additional registration requirements must be met in order to be fully licensed. The College of Dental Technologists of Ontario (CDTO) has no alternative classes of licence.

Applicant: an individual who has applied to start the process for entry to the profession.

Applicant actively pursuing licensing: an applicant who had some contact with the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario within the year specified.

Inactive applicant: an applicant who had no contact with the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario within the year specified.

Member: an individual who is currently able to use the protected title or professional designation of “dental technologist” or “registered dental technologist (RDT).”

Languages in which application information materials are available

Language	2005	2006	2007
English	Yes	Yes	Yes
French	No	No	No
Other(s)			

Countries where internationally educated applicants were initially trained in dental technology

Applications Received	2005	2006	2007
Largest number	South Africa	Slovakia	South Africa
Second-largest number	Jordan	South Africa	South Korea
Third-largest number	Bulgaria	Romania	Lebanon
Fourth-largest number	Lebanon	Ukraine	United Kingdom
Fifth-largest number	Albania	Uruguay	Bulgaria

Staff employed by the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario

Number of Staff	2005	2006	2007
Involved in registration process	2	2	2
Involved in appeals process	2	2	2

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in dental technology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)

Members	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	Grandfather Clause ¹	TOTAL
Total members	173	1	0	55	0	225
Non-practising members	14	0	1	5	9	29

¹ With the proclamation of the Regulated Health Professions Act in 1991 there were new registration requirements to become a dental technologist. However, individuals who had begun the educational and training requirements under the preceding regulations were given five years to register from the date of proclamation of the RHPA. The grandfather clause allowed individuals who did not have formal dental technology education but had acquired four years of practical experience under the supervision of a dental technologist or a dentist to sit the registration examination and to qualify for registration.

Applicants processed by the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario in 2005

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in dental technology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)						
In 2005 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL	
New applications received	17	0	1	9	27	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	13	1	1	12	27	
Inactive applicants	2	0	0	1	3	
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who became members	9	0	1	7	17	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Applicants processed by the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario in 2006

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in dental technology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)						
In 2006 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL	
New applications received	22	0	0	8	30	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	26	0	0	8	34	
Inactive applicants	0	0	0	1	1	
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who became members	15	0	0	1	16	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Applicants processed by the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario in 2007

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in dental technology (before they were granted use of the protected title or professional designation in Ontario)						
In 2007 (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31)	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL	
New applications received	17	0	0	11	28	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	29	2	0	17	48	
Inactive applicants	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	
Applicants who became members	13	1	0	8	22	
Applicants who were authorized to receive an alternative class of licence but were not issued a licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who were issued an alternative class of licence	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

9. SOURCES

College of Dental Technologists of Ontario website. <http://www.cdto.ca/>. Last accessed: February 7, 2008.

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Representatives of the College of Dental Technologists of Ontario met with staff of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner on December 11, 2007, to provide further information for this study.

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