

Office of the
fairness
commissioner

Bureau du
commissaire à
l'équité



Study of Registration Practices of the

COLLEGE OF DENTURISTS 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 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 Denturists 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 Denturists 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 is 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 Denturists of Ontario (CDO) operates in accordance with the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, the Denturism Act, 1991 and Ontario Regulation 833/93.

B. Protected Titles

“Denturist” is the protected title that is regulated by the CDO.

C. Definition of the Profession

According to the Denturism Act, 1991, “the practice of Denturism is the assessment of arches missing some or all teeth and the design, construction, alteration, ordering and fitting of removable dentures.”

A denturist must be educated to fulfill the responsibilities of:

- complete denture fabrication
- partial denture design and fabrication
- immediate denture fabrication
- implant-supported denture fabrication
- relines, rebases and repairs of patient- or practitioner-removable dentures

Denturism is regulated in all provinces and territories across Canada with the same scope of practice.

D. Labour Market/Economic Trends

Half of CDO’s membership is heavily concentrated in the Golden Horseshoe area of southern Ontario. Outside of that area there is a great need for denturists.

The CDO demographic is also “top heavy,” which means that when the current older cohorts of denturists begin to retire, Ontario will begin to experience a shortage of denturists in the context of an aging population. It is difficult to predict the dimensions of the shortage because it is difficult to know what size a community must be to support a denturist practice. Unlike dentists, who see patients every six months, denturists may not see a patient for two to three years after dispensing new dentures, and therefore larger populations are needed to support each practice.

E. New Developments Within the Profession

Quality of care is improving in denturism, and a broader range of treatment options are being made available to the public.

To keep pace with the clinical and technological advances being adapted to all areas of intra-oral health care, the CDO makes professional development a large component of its work. With increasing demand for dental implants and implant prosthetics, the CDO has begun to develop course training standards to reflect this change in the marketplace.

Since 1974, George Brown College in Toronto has been the only post-secondary institution in Ontario to offer a program in denturism. A new private career college, George Yonge College, has applied to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for approval of a denturism program.

Other important developments in denturism across Canada include discussions about creating a National Qualifying Exam and about reviewing the accreditation process among the various regulatory colleges across Canada. This idea will be revisited later in 2008.

Denturism is not commonly found outside of Canada as a self-regulated profession.

F. Staffing

The CDO staff consists of three full-time and two part-time employees. One part-time staff member works four days per week, and the second, the Registrar, works three days. One full-time staff member and one part-time staff member are involved in the registration process.

3. REGISTRATION PRACTICES

A. Registration Requirements and Application Process

According to the career map jointly produced by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and the CDO, an eligible applicant must fulfill all these requirements:

- Show proof that he or she has completed a denturist program that is equivalent to a denturist program offered at George Brown College
- Be reasonably fluent in English or French
- Show that he or she is mentally competent to practise the profession and will practise the profession with decency, integrity and honesty in accordance with the law
- Show that he or she can communicate effectively with and will display an appropriate attitude toward patients and colleagues
- Be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada or have authorization under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of Canada to practise as a denturist
- Have successfully completed both written and practical qualifying exams set by the CDO.

When an applicant submits an application, he or she must include the following:

- Two passport photographs with applicant's name, printed in block letters, and applicant's signature on the back
- A certified copy of applicant's birth certificate
- Official transcripts of marks at college or university, also certified
- A notarized application for registration form that authorizes the CDO to collect additional information if necessary
- A certified cheque or money order in the amount of \$175.

The requirements are the same for internationally trained individuals.

B. Documentation Required from Internationally Trained Individuals

i. Standard Documentation

Internationally trained applicants and applicants from non-accredited institutions must have their credentials assessed by a third-party credential assessment agency. The CDO will then review the assessment for equivalency with the George Brown College program in denturism.

In addition to the detailed credential assessment reports provided by the third-party agencies, applicants whose credentials are not in English must also provide the CDO with a notarized translation of their transcripts.

ii. Options for Applicants with Unavailable/Destroyed Documents

The CDO must have some form of documentation in order to assess an applicant's credentials and proceed with the registration process. The CDO has not yet encountered an applicant who could not provide information, and the CDO is interested in knowing the best practices at other regulatory bodies.

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

The CDO refers its applicants to World Education Services (WES) to have their credentials assessed. Credential assessments done by International Credential Evaluation Services (ICES) or the International Credential Assessment Service (ICAS) are also accepted by the CDO.

D. Academic/Program Requirements

To date, the CDO has accepted applicants with diplomas from or equivalent to the three-year denturism program at George Brown College. However, if new denturism programs become available in the province of Ontario, the CDO would amend its registration regulation to remove the specific reference to George Brown College, so that the academic requirement specified is a “diploma from an accredited school of denturism.”

E. Work Experience Requirements

The CDO has no specific work experience or practical requirements for registration beyond the practical components already built into the George Brown denturism program. The CDO expects that any applicant with academic credentials in denturism from another jurisdiction will have practical experience similar to that provided in the George Brown program.

F. Examinations

The CDO Registration Committee administers the CDO’s qualifying examination once a year. It consists of both written and clinical parts.

Once an applicant’s credentials are accepted, he or she becomes eligible to take the qualifying examination. The CDO holds an orientation session which informs eligible applicants of exam protocol, detailing the examination process and evaluation criteria as well as the exact date, time and location of the next examination.

Applicants can prepare for the written examination by participating in mock examination sessions. A session consists of 100 randomly selected questions and costs \$75. There is no limit to the number of times applicants can write the mock examination. Sessions are available by appointment only and are held at the CDO office in Toronto.

The written portion of the qualifying examination is offered twice each year, in May and June.

The written examination costs \$500 and takes one full day. It consists of two sessions, morning and afternoon, with 100 multiple-choice questions in each session. The questions pertain to denture prosthodontics and to the health sciences that support the practice of the profession. The passing score is 70 per cent.

Candidates are advised in writing whether they have successfully passed the examination and are eligible to proceed to the next stage of the registration process. Candidates who fail the written examination are eligible to take a supplemental examination held at the next available exam session.

Candidates who fail the examination twice may request permission from the Registration Committee to participate in the next examination session. The committee may recommend or require candidates to complete upgrading education at George Brown College before attempting the examination for a third time.

Previously, it was the policy of the CDO that the written portion of the examination had to be successfully completed before an individual could take the clinical component. Currently, the written and clinical exams can be taken in either order.¹

The clinical examination costs \$2,000, is held over five days and consists of four projects that must be successfully completed. If an individual fails to complete one or more of the four projects, those failed components can be retaken without having to redo the successfully completed projects. Candidates will pay only for those parts of the exam that they have to take. Candidates who do not successfully complete the clinical exam on their first attempt are automatically eligible to take a supplemental exam. Individuals who wish to take the exam a third time must make a written request to the Registration Committee and may be required to do remedial work before a third attempt.

Internationally trained individuals tend to fail the examination process. Their success rate is only 5 per cent. However, in the last year, 11 of the 30 George Brown graduates failed the CDO's qualifying examination. The success rate for graduates fluctuates from one academic year to another.

Both components of the examination are non-exemptible.

G. Language Requirements

Applicants who received post-secondary instruction in a language other than English or French must complete a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) examination with a minimum score of 580 points or the Diplôme d'études en langue française/Diplôme approfondi de langue française (DELF/DALF) with a score of 60 per cent.

Furthermore, the licensing process involves exams that require excellent oral and written English- or French-language skills. Applicants lacking a proficiency in English or French may find it difficult to complete these exams.

¹ The CDO is considering whether to return to its previous policy.

H. Fees

All fees listed below are subject to GST.

Fee	
Application fee	\$175
Annual membership fee ²	\$1,398.45
Qualifying Examination	
Written examination	\$500
Practical (clinical) examination	\$2,000
Each mock examination session	\$75
Appeals of examination results	\$500

I. Third Parties

Name of Third Party	Relationship to Regulatory Body
World Education Services (WES)	CDO refers internationally trained applicants to WES to have their credentials evaluated for equivalency with the denturism program of George Brown College.
International Credential Evaluation Services (ICES)	CDO accepts credential evaluations from this institution.
International Credential Assessment Service (ICAS)	CDO accepts credential evaluations from this institution.
Denturist Association of Canada (DAC)	The national constituent association of the provincial denturist associations from across Canada. DAC accredits denturism programs in Canada.

² Annual membership dues are prorated from the time that new registrants become members.

J. Typical Length of the Registration Process

In the simplest of cases, when applicants apply for registration with fully recognized credentials, the process can take as little as four months. When applicants have failed portions of the qualifying exam, the process can take a couple of years.

K. Accredited Programs

Currently, the only post-secondary denturism program in Ontario is the program at George Brown College in Toronto. The CDO requires that eligible applicants must have completed a program in denturism equivalent to the one at George Brown College.

Only three other denturism programs are offered in Canada:

- Collège Édouard-Montpetit, Longueuil, Quebec
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Edmonton
- Vancouver Community College, Vancouver

Of the four denturist programs in Canada, the Denturist Association of Canada (DAC) has accredited the programs in Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton. The program in Longueuil was accredited earlier but has not renewed its accreditation.

L. Internal Review/Appeal Process

When the academic credentials of an applicant are not deemed equivalent to the George Brown denturism program, the Registrar will refer the applicant's case to the Registration Committee, which consists of one non-Council professional member, two professional members who sit on Council and one public appointee. The Registration Committee will then carry out a more comprehensive assessment of the applicant's credentials for equivalency. If the applicant's credentials are not deemed equivalent, the Registration Committee may recommend a course upgrade. This decision cannot be internally reviewed or appealed. The next step for applicants wishing to appeal such decisions is to take their case to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board (HPARB).

Decisions regarding examination results can, however, be appealed internally. Within 30 days of receiving examination results, applicants can write a letter to the CDO stipulating the grounds for their appeal and requesting a rewrite. The Executive Committee of the CDO then appoints an appeal panel to review the examination results. The panel has no ties to the Council or to committees of the college. Written submissions to the appeal panel can be made from all sides. It costs \$500 to initiate the appeals process.

Information regarding the appeal for examinations is made available to applicants in the examination protocol that all candidates receive before taking a qualifying exam. They are apprised again when they receive their exam results. Information regarding appeals processes is not available online.

4. BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Applicants who meet all the eligibility criteria to take the qualifying examinations may enrol in a mentorship program, offered by the CDO, in order to prepare themselves for the clinical component of the examination. The mentorship program is a recent development of the CDO, and approximately 20 people have completed the program since its inception.

5. MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

The scope of practice of denturism related to complete and partial dentures across Canada is almost completely uniform. All provinces and territories have denturism legislation and all are signatories to the Denturist Association of Canada's "DAC Agreement" for mutual recognition of denturism across the country. Under this labour mobility agreement, graduates from a two-year denturism program must supplement their education with a one-year internship in order to meet equivalency with the three-year George Brown College program, which is a requirement to be eligible to take the CDO qualifying exam.

6. APPLICANTS' INTERACTIONS WITH REGULATORY BODY

A. Nature and Frequency of Communication

Once the CDO has received an application, it will reply to the applicant with a letter of acknowledgment. An applicant will also be informed, in writing, if his or her documents are sent to the Registration Committee for review; this happens in cases when the equivalency is not immediately granted by the Registrar, and applicants are advised of the next committee meeting. The CDO also takes a proactive approach in following up with applicants regarding the next available examinations and also, once applicants have completed their exams, in contacting them regarding examination results. The CDO provides copies of examination evaluations to unsuccessful applicants.

B. Backlogs

The CDO has a number of open files at any given time; however, there is no backlog in processing applications. Files remain open for extensive periods for several reasons: the applicant must submit required documents; the applicant has deferred taking the examinations; or the applicant is required to take remedial courses.

C. Complaints Regarding the Registration Process

Beyond the Registration Committee, complaints regarding the registration decisions of the CDO would be forwarded to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board. The college has received no complaints regarding the registration process to date.

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.

These are some of the changes the CDO has made to its registration practices in recent years:

- The creation of the mentorship program
- Changes to the examination process that have introduced more objective criteria, anonymous evaluations, and greater transparency to candidates regarding exam results
- Applicant referrals to post-secondary institutions for course upgrades when academic deficiencies are identified by the Registration Committee
- Change to professional misconduct regulations to permit the delegation of a dentist's controlled act (for example, the fitting and dispensing of dentures) to applicants who have been deemed eligible to take the qualifying exam
- Requirement that applicants who graduated from a denturist program that was not taught in English or French must submit, with their application, proof of English- or French-language proficiency
- Requirement that applicants who graduated from a denturist program outside of Canada must submit, with their application, a Comprehensive Credential Report from an approved credentialing agency (WES, ICAS, ICES) to enable the College of Denturists of Ontario to assess equivalency with the George Brown College program.

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 Denturists of Ontario has no alternative classes of licence.

Applicant: a person 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 Denturists of Ontario within the year specified.

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

Member: a person who is currently able to use the protected title or professional designation of “denturist.”

Languages in which application information materials were available

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

Countries where internationally educated applicants were initially trained in denturism

Applications Received	2005¹	2006¹	2007
Largest number	Philippines	Lebanon	Russian Federation
Second-largest number	Azerbaijan	Pakistan	Philippines
Third-largest number	Ukraine	Iran	Iran
Fourth-largest number		South Africa	Iraq
Fifth-largest number			Israel

¹ For 2005 and 2006, there was only one applicant from each of the listed countries

Staff employed by the College of Denturists of Ontario

Number of Staff	2005	2006	2007
Involved in registration process	2	2	2
Involved in appeals process	0	0	0

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

Members	Ontario	Other Canadian Provinces	USA	Other International	TOTAL
Total members	500	4	2	12	518
Non-practising members	15	0	0	1	16

Applicants processed by the College of Denturists of Ontario in 2005

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in denturism (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 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	18	2	1	5	26	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who became members	18	2	1	5	26	
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

¹ The CDO has indicated that this information is not tracked.

Applicants processed by the College of Denturists of Ontario in 2006

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in denturism (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 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	19	1	0	4	24	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
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	19	1	0	4	24	
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	

¹ The CDO has indicated that this information is not tracked.

Applicants processed by the College of Denturists of Ontario in 2007

Jurisdiction where members were initially trained in denturism (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 ¹	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants actively pursuing licensing	15	0	0	22	37	
Inactive applicants	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Applicants who met all requirements and were authorized to become members but did not become members	0	0	0	0	0	0
Applicants who became members	15	0	0	22	37	
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

¹ The CDO has indicated that this information is not tracked.

9. SOURCES

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International Federation of Denturists website: <http://www.international-denturist.org/>. Last accessed: January 15, 2008.

Representatives of the College of Denturists of Ontario met with staff of the Office of the Fairness Commissioner on January 7, 2008, to provide further information for this study.

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