Dental Assisting (Levels I and II)
Program Standard

The approved program standard for all Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Certificate delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 41629)

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
March 2007
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This version replaces the program standard released in June 1996. Inquiries regarding this program standard should be directed to the address noted above.

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- The Committee of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) and of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) for the use of its definition of Essential Employability Skills (EES).
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I. Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for all Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) programs of instruction leading to an Ontario College Certificate delivered by Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology (MTCU funding code 41629). This version replaces the program standard released in June 1996.

Development of System-Wide Program Standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Colleges Branch of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for the development, review, and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario colleges of applied arts and technology.

Program Standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by colleges across the province. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- **Vocational standard** (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),

- **Essential employability skills** (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction), and

- **General education requirement** (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual colleges of applied arts and technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods, and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.
The Expression of Program Standards as Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation of one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The Presentation of the Learning Outcomes

The learning outcome statement sets out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The elements of the performance for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the learning outcome. The elements do not stand alone but rather in reference to the learning outcome of which they form a part.

The Development of a Program Standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools, and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty, and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.
Updating the Program Standard

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities at the address or telephone number noted on the inside cover page.
II. Vocational Standard

All graduates of Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) programs of instruction must have achieved the 7 vocational learning outcomes listed in the following pages, in addition to achieving the essential employability skills learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Preamble

The Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) program provides students with the knowledge and practice required to be a chair side dental assistant and an intra oral dental assistant. Upon successful completion of the program, the graduate will receive an Ontario College Certificate.

The vocational learning outcomes articulate a range of fundamental skills necessary for entry level positions as dental assistants. To practice as an intra oral dental assistant in Ontario, the graduate must complete all professional certification requirements.

Graduates perform a variety of roles, including clinical, educational, health promotion, business administration, and laboratory assisting in accordance with relevant legislation. The dental assistant works interdependently and collaboratively with other health professionals in a variety of practice environments including private practice, public health services and hospitals, and the dental industry. In all roles and practice environments, the dental assistant, working with the client*, practices according to the current theory of dental assisting practice. Dental assistants are employed as chair side dental assistants and intra oral dental assistants, as well as receptionists, practice managers, treatment coordinators, and educators.

* Please see Glossary of Terms
The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to

1. maintain client* and personal safety in the practice environment.

2. contribute to the development of a comprehensive client* profile* by using a variety of data collection methods in collaboration with the client and other health professionals and in compliance with privacy legislation.

3. contribute to the development of a comprehensive plan* for oral health services and programs* in collaboration with the client* and other health professionals.

4. provide oral health services and programs*, as identified in the comprehensive plan* and as permitted within the scope of practice.

5. contribute to the evaluation and reporting of appropriate aspects of the oral health services and programs* by using a variety of sources including the client* profile*.

6. act in a professional and competent manner.

7. maintain client* records and manage office procedures in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

* Please see Glossary of Terms
The Vocational Learning Outcomes

1. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to maintain client* and personal safety in the practice environment.

**Elements of the Performance**

- apply relevant legislation and standards of health and safety to the practice environment
- apply principles of client and practitioner safety
- employ Standard Precautions*
- maintain stationary and portable equipment to ensure their effective operations and compliance with manufacturers' directions, and in accordance with health and safety standards
- maintain instruments, materials, and supplies to ensure their effectiveness and compliance with manufacturers' directions, and in accordance with health and safety standards
- assist with, and where necessary, implement emergency responses
- manage hazardous substances and wastes according to all relevant legislation, regulations, standards, and manufacturers' guidelines
- document accurately and in a timely manner health and safety incidents in accordance with health and safety protocols
- implement ongoing professional strategies to improve client and personal health and safety

* Please see Glossary of Terms
2. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

contribute to the development of a comprehensive client* profile* by using a
variety of data collection methods in collaboration with the client and other
health professionals and in compliance with privacy legislation.

**Elements of the Performance**

- collect information in keeping with privacy legislation regarding the client's
  health and determinants of health*, and include in the client profile
- collect information about the client's oral health condition, knowledge, history, and
  practices and include in the client profile
- contribute to the assessment of the client's general and oral health and include
  assessment results in the client profile
- contribute to the identification of barriers to and the resources required for the
  provision of optimal oral health services and programs*

* Please see Glossary of Terms
3. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

contribute to the development of a comprehensive plan* for oral health services and programs* in collaboration with the client* and other health professionals.

**Elements of the Performance**

- contribute to the planning of coordinated oral health services and programs
- coordinate the scheduling and sequencing of oral health services and programs, resources, and personnel required
- contribute to the establishment of an atmosphere that supports client participation in planning his/her oral health services and programs
- contribute to the identification of the client’s present and future oral health service and program requirements

* Please see Glossary of Terms
4. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

   *provide oral health services and programs* as identified in the comprehensive plan* and as permitted within the scope of practice.*

*Elements of the Performance*

- apply theory and research of health, disease, teaching and learning, and preventive and therapeutic interventions in the communication of the objectives of oral health services and programs
- contribute to the effective management of oral health and other resources in the provision of services and programs
- employ preventive interventions and assist with therapeutic interventions by following accepted principles and techniques, as permitted within the scope of practice
- explain to the client* and other health professionals the preventive and therapeutic interventions planned and implemented
- work collaboratively to provide oral health services and programs
- assist other health care professionals with oral health procedures as identified in the comprehensive plan

*Please see Glossary of Terms*
5. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

contribute to the evaluation and reporting of appropriate aspects of the oral health services and programs* by using a variety of sources including the client* profile*.

**Elements of the Performance**

- evaluate client satisfaction with those oral health services and programs provided by the dental assistant
- evaluate the effectiveness and safety of dental assisting services and programs with respect to the client's oral health
- evaluate own role as a dental assistant in the provision of the client's oral health services and programs
- assist in the modification of dental assisting services and programs based on evaluation responses, and report modifications in client profile
- contribute to the modification of oral health services and programs based on an evaluation of their effectiveness and client satisfaction
- contribute, on an ongoing basis, to the review of client information with the client or other health care professionals to help determine the effectiveness of oral health services and programs

* Please see Glossary of Terms
6. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

**act in a professional and competent manner.**

**Elements of the Performance**

- perform competently, safely, and ethically by complying with current legislation, accepted practice standards, and code of ethics
- take responsibility for own behaviour in the practice environment
- recognize professional limitations and seek help accordingly
- engage in ongoing self evaluation to promote professional competence
- articulate learning goals and implement learning strategies to improve skill level
- collaborate with other health professionals to ensure the provision of optimal health services and programs for the client*
- advocate for the client’s rights to privacy, confidentiality, self determination, and informed consent
- develop and use effective time management and organizational skills to accomplish personal and professional goals

* Please see Glossary of Terms
7. *The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to*

maintain client* records and manage office procedures in compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Elements of the Performance**

- maintain confidentiality of client information, records, and documents including and not limited to paper based and/or electronic forms
- collect and record current and historical client information, special considerations, or precautions relevant to the provision of oral health services and programs using paper based and/or electronic methods
- record the provision, processes, and outcomes of oral health services and programs using paper based and/or electronic methods
- maintain documentation of client information and oral health services and programs using paper based and/or electronic methods
- maintain and manage office functions, such as filing systems, appointments, financial records, and inventory control

* Please see Glossary of Terms
Glossary of Terms

**Client** – a recipient of oral health services. This term is broad and inclusive and may refer to an individual of any age or gender, a family, a group, and/or a community. The client, as a consumer of oral health services, will be unique with diverse needs, demands, and definitions of wellness, motivations, and resources. The client is assumed to be seeking out a broad range of oral health services that are effective and efficient.

**Client Profile** – the collection, analysis, and organization of information pertinent to the client's oral health and health.

**Comprehensive Plan** – an organizational framework for the provision of dental services and programs. This plan reflects the client assessment, current theory and research in health and disease, and the proposed and implemented preventive and therapeutic interventions and services.

**Determinants of Health** – the factors and conditions which have an influence on the health of individuals. The key determinants are income and social status, social support networks, education employment/working conditions, social environments, physical environments, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, biology and genetic endowment, health services, gender and culture.

**Oral Health Services and Programs** – broad range of care offered by health practitioners. Oral health services and programs are designed to achieve the desired goals and objectives related to the attainment and maintenance of optimal oral health and general health. Oral health services and programs are client centred; that is, they are individualized according to client need and resources. These services and programs may be preventive and therapeutic.

**Standard Precautions** – measures designed to protect client, health professionals, and their families from exposure to infectious elements. Standards and guidelines for universal precaution protocols are developed by a number of provincial, federal, and international authorities and must be in accordance with current legislation. These precautions include surface disinfecting, caring for and sterilizing instruments and equipment, proper hand washing, using barriers (for example, gloves, glasses, and body coverings), and correct handling of sharps (for example, instruments, needles) that have been in contact with body fluids, and safe disposal of hazardous waste.
III. Essential Employability Skills

All graduates of Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) programs of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed on the following pages, in addition to achieving the vocational learning outcomes and meeting the general education requirement.

Context

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are skills that, regardless of a student’s program or discipline, are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living, and for lifelong learning.

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario’s colleges of applied arts and technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

• These skills are important for every adult to function successfully in society today.
• Our colleges are well equipped and well positioned to prepare graduates with these skills.
• These skills are equally valuable for all graduates, regardless of the level of their credential, whether they pursue a career path, or they pursue further education.

Skill Categories

To capture these skills, the following six categories define the essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills and knowledge.

• Communication
• Numeracy
• Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
• Information Management
• Interpersonal
• Personal
Application / Implementation

In each of the six skill categories, there are a number of defining skills, or sub skills, identified to further articulate the requisite skills identified in the main skill categories. The following chart illustrates the relationship between the skill categories, the defining skills within the categories, and learning outcomes to be achieved by graduates from all postsecondary programs of instruction that lead to an Ontario College credential.

EES may be embedded in General Education or vocational courses, or developed through discrete courses. However these skills are developed, all graduates with Ontario College credentials must be able to reliably demonstrate the essential skills required in each of the six categories.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SKILL CATEGORY</th>
<th>DEFINING SKILLS: Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:</th>
<th>LEARNING OUTCOMES: The levels of achievement required by graduates. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:</th>
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| COMMUNICATION                      | • Reading  
• Writing  
• Speaking  
• Listening  
• Presenting  
• Visual literacy  | 1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken, and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.  
2. respond to written, spoken, or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication. |
| NUMERACY                           | • Understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning  
• Analyzing and using numerical data  
• Conceptualizing  | 3. execute mathematical operations accurately. |
| CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING| • Analysing  
• Synthesising  
• Evaluating  
• Decision making  
• Creative and innovative thinking  | 4. apply a systematic approach to solve problems.  
5. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems. |
| INFORMATION MANAGEMENT             | • Gathering and managing information  
• Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project  
• Computer literacy  
• Internet skills  | 6. locate, select, organize, and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.  
7. analyze, evaluate, and apply relevant information from a variety of sources. |
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</tr>
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| INTERPERSONAL  | • Team work  
• Relationship management  
• Conflict resolution  
• Leadership  
• Networking | 8. *show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems, and contributions of others.*  
9. *interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.* |
| PERSONAL       | • Managing self  
• Managing change and being flexible and adaptable  
• Engaging in reflective practices  
• Demonstrating personal responsibility | 10. *manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.*  
11. *take responsibility for one’s own actions, decisions, and consequences.* |
IV. General Education Requirement

All graduates of Dental Assisting (Levels I and II) programs must have met the general education requirement described on the following pages, in addition to achieving the vocational and essential employability skills learning outcomes.

Requirement

The General Education Requirement for programs of instruction is stipulated in the Credentials Framework (Appendix A in the Minister’s Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction).

While the inclusion of General Education is locally determined for programs of instruction leading to either a college certificate or an Ontario College Certificate, it is recommended that graduates of the Ontario College Certificate programs have been engaged in learning that incorporates some breadth beyond the vocational field of study.