Dental Hygienists

Pathway to Registration for Internationally Educated Professionals (IEP) in New Brunswick

Dental Hygienists are regulated professionals in New Brunswick (NB). You must be registered with the New Brunswick College of Dental Hygienists (NBCDH), the regulatory authority, to be authorized to practice and to use the title "dental hygienist", "registered dental hygienist", or the initials "D.H.", "R.D.H.", or any similar words or initials.

Dental hygienists provide dental hygiene treatment and services related to oral health promotion and disease and mouth injury prevention. They are employed in a variety of settings including dentists' offices, hospitals, private clinics, educational institutions, public health agencies or they may be self-employed.[1]

For work opportunities and other information, visit NBHealthJobs.com or NBjobs.ca.

STEPS TO REGISTRATION

PART 1: COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT

Step 1 – Academic Credentials: The minimum Canadian education requirement for certification in NB is a diploma/degree in dental hygiene accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC). All IEPs must demonstrate equivalency through the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada (FDHRC). Eligibility requirements include a minimum 2-year dental hygiene diploma/degree recognized by your country's government and meeting the FDHRC Entry-to-Practice Canadian Competencies for Dental Hygienists. Eligible applicants must undergo an equivalency assessment by applying online and submitting supporting documentation, including a credential evaluation report from an FDHRC approved source. If your credentials are deemed equivalent to a Canadian accredited program, you will be eligible to write the national certification exam (see Step 3). If your credentials are deemed not equivalent, you will be notified of any gaps and provided suggestions on how to address them—your file will be closed, and you must reapply in the future. Through a reciprocal agreement, US dental hygiene programs accredited by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA/CODA) are recognized as equivalent. Current equivalency assessment fees can be found here, and a sample credential evaluation service fee can be found here.

Step 2 – Language Proficiency: NBCDH does not have a specific benchmark for language proficiency, but applicants must be able to speak, read and write either English or French[2] to competently discharge the duties and obligations of a dental hygienist. Language proficiency might also be needed for employment, immigration, or academic upgrading purposes.

[1] National Occupational Classification definition. See also NBCDH definition.
[2] English and French are the official languages of New Brunswick.

Step 3 – Examination: After receiving a positive equivalency assessment, you will be informed on how to apply for the next National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE) session at a Canadian test centre. A maximum of three attempts are allowed. Once you pass the NDHCE, you must also complete the Canadian Performance Examination in Dental Hygiene (CPEDH), a 2-day practical exam held in a central Canadiana location, before registering with NBCDH. Candidates must apply and provide supporting documentation. A maximum of three attempts are allowed. Exam fees can be found here.

PART 2: REGISTRATION WITH THE NEW BRUNSWICK REGULATORY BODY

Step 4 – NBCDH Registration: After passing the NDHCE and the CPEPH exams, you can apply to register with the NBCDH by completing the online form, providing the required supporting documentation, and paying the application and registration fees. Current fees can be found here.

If you're in New Brunswick: Contact a WorkingNB office for help navigating the registration process and to access employment counselling services.

REGISTRATION COSTS AND TIMELINE[3]

The total fees to become licenced by NBCDH are approximately $6,240 CAD. The equivalency assessment can take 12-20 weeks, including 4-10 weeks for an independent credential evaluation report. The NDHCE is offered three times per year and the CPEPH is offered once per year. Overall, it can take a one to one and a half years to receive a licence to practice.

Pre-arrival: You may apply to FDHRC to have your credentials assessed for equivalency before arriving in Canada.

WORKING IN NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA

To work legally in Canada, you must be a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, or hold a valid work permit. For immigration assistance, visit Immigration New Brunswick. If you are already in Canada, WorkingNB employment counsellors are available to assist you prior to your arrival in New Brunswick.

New Nouveau Brunswick CANADA

[3] Fee and timeline estimates are as of February 2025 and are subject to change. Individual situations may increase costs and timelines—some examples include: document translation into English or French, international couriers, document notarization, travel and living to exam sites, professional liability insurance requirements, etc.