



Nova Scotia Regulator
OF
DENTISTRY AND DENTAL ASSISTING

Dental Practice Review Program¹

¹ Approved by the PDBNS Board 2025-04-07

1.0 Preamble

The Nova Scotia Regulator of Dentistry and Dental Assisting (the “NSRDDA”) is the organization which oversees the practices of dentistry and dental assisting in the province. The role² of the NSRDDA, with respect to the practices of dentistry and dental assisting, is to:

- protect the public from harm;
- serve and promote the public interest;
- preserve the integrity of the professions of dentistry and dental assisting, subject to the public interest; and
- maintain the public confidence in the ability of the NSRDDA to regulate dentistry and dental assisting.

One of the ways the NSRDDA fulfills its role is through quality assurance measures such as the Dental Practice Review (DPR) Program for dentists.

The intent of the DPR Program is to provide dentists with the opportunity, through consultation and feedback, to potentially identify areas of their practice that need improvement. The Dental Practice Review audit requires mandatory participation by dentists.

2.0 Definitions (for the purposes of this document)

- 2.1 “committee” means the practice review committee;
- 2.2 “dental assistant” means a dental assistant who is currently registered and licensed with the NSRDDA;
- 2.3 “dentist” means a dentist who is currently registered and licensed with the NSRDDA;
- 2.4 “Dental Practice Review Program” means the program established in this document for conducting practice reviews;
- 2.5 “practice review” means an on-site inspection and assessment of a dentist’s practice conducted in accordance with this document;
- 2.6 “report” means a written report;
- 2.7 “RHPA” means the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#);
- 2.8 “self-assessment document” means a document that lists specific criteria to be checked in a practice review.

² In accordance with Section 6 of the [Regulated Health Professions Act \(RHPA\)](#), modified for profession-specific context.

3.0 Practice Review Committee

- 3.1 The committee shall consist of a minimum of three dentists (each of whom has practised dentistry for at least five years), a minimum of one dental assistant (who has practised dental assisting for at least 5 years), and one public representative³ appointed by the NSRDDA board.
- 3.2 From among the dentists on the committee, the board shall appoint a chair and a vice-chair of the practice review committee.
- 3.3 Terms for committee members are three years.
- 3.4 Committee members may be appointed for a maximum of three consecutive three-year terms.
- 3.5 The committee is responsible for administering the DPR Program in accordance with this document as well as other functions outlined in Section 132 of the [RHPA](#) and Sections 47 through 50 of the [Regulated Health Professions General Regulations](#).

4.0 Self-Assessment Document

- 4.1 A self-assessment document shall be in a form recommended by the committee and approved by the board.

5.0 Random Selection for Self-Assessment

- 5.1 Once a year, the committee, using a random sampling process that is approved by the board and stratified by district⁴, shall select 15% of dentists in private practice⁵ to complete a self-assessment document.
- 5.2 A dentist selected to complete a self-assessment document shall complete and return the self-assessment document to the committee.
- 5.3 The committee shall review and evaluate all returned self-assessments.

³ Section 132(1) of the [RHPA](#) states that "... a board shall appoint a practice review committee composed of such number of registrants and public representatives as determined by the Board, but must include at least one public representative".

⁴ For NSRDDA purposes, the districts are:

- Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM),
- Southwest Nova Scotia (SW) and
- Northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton (NCB)

⁵ For the purpose of this document, "private practice" means an oral health facility that is not located in a hospital, academic institution, correctional facility, or military base.

6.0 Selection for Practice Review

- 6.1 After reviewing and evaluating returned self-assessment documents under Article 5.3, the committee, using a random sampling process that is approved by the board and stratified by district, shall select 15% of the dentists who submitted self-assessment documents for a practice review.
- 6.2 A dentist is required to undergo a practice review in any of the following circumstances:
- 6.2.1 the dentist is selected at random under Article 6.1;
 - 6.2.2 the dentist is directed to the committee by the registrar, the complaints committee, or by another statutory committee⁶; or
 - 6.2.3 the committee directs it after reviewing and evaluating a self-assessment document.
- 6.3 A dentist who is required to undergo a practice review as a result of being directed to the committee by the registrar, the complaints committee, or by another statutory committee may be required to complete a self-assessment document before undergoing a practice review.

7.0 Appointing Assessors

- 7.1 The committee shall appoint assessors to conduct practice reviews. An assessor may be the registrar, or another individual delegated in accordance with the [RHPA](#) and the [Regulations Respecting Dentistry and Dental Assisting](#).
- 7.2 For practice reviews which take place under the Dental Practice Review Program (as outlined in 6.2.1 and 6.2.3) the assessor shall be a dentist currently licensed in Nova Scotia.⁷

⁶ Statutory committees under the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#) include the registration and licensing committee, registration and licensing review committee, complaints committee, professional conduct committee, fitness-to-practise committee, reinstatement committee and practice review committee. Referral for practice review by the registrar or a statutory committee is outlined in Section 49 of the [Regulated Health Professions General Regulations](#).

⁷ For practice reviews which take place following a referral from another statutory committee, the assessor shall normally be a dentist currently licensed in Nova Scotia but may be someone else depending on the nature of the referral.

8.0 Practice Review Procedure

- 8.1 After a practice review, the assessor shall send a report to the dentist summarizing the findings of the review and any deficiencies identified in the dentist's practice.
- 8.2 In their report, the assessor shall indicate a timeframe within which the dentist must reply indicating whether they have remedied the noted deficiencies (if any). If no deficiencies were identified, no further action will be required on the part of the dentist.
- 8.3 A dentist who receives a report under Article 8.1 may make written submissions to the committee no later than 30 days after the date the dentist receives the report if the dentist believes that the report contains omissions or errors of fact.
- 8.4 If a submission is made under Article 8.3, the committee shall consider the submission along with the assessor's report and determine whether there are deficiencies in the dentist's practice.
- 8.5 If the committee decides that there are no deficiencies in a dentist's practice, the committee must advise the licensed dentist of the decision, and no further action is required.
- 8.6 If the committee decides that there are deficiencies in a dentist's practice, the committee must make written recommendations to the licensed dentist on ways to correct the deficiencies and indicate to the licensed dentist the timeframe⁸ to inform the committee that the deficiencies have been corrected.
- 8.7 A person⁹ involved in the administration of any part of the Dental Practice Review program will report to the registrar¹⁰ if at any time they have reasonable grounds to believe that a registrant:
 - 8.7.1 has engaged in professional misconduct, incompetence or conduct unbecoming the profession;
 - 8.7.2 is incapacitated; or
 - 8.7.3 is practising in a manner that otherwise constitutes a danger to the public.

⁸ This timeframe will normally be 30 days from the date the written recommendations are sent to the dentist.

⁹ Such a person may be NSRDDA staff, members of the practice review committee, or an assessor.

¹⁰ As required under Section 60(1)(g) of the [Regulated Health Professions Act](#).

9.0 Further Practice Review

- 9.1 In addition to making recommendations to a licensed dentist under Article 8.6 respecting deficiencies in the dentist's practice, the Committee may require the dentist to undergo a further practice review to determine whether the deficiencies have been corrected.
- 9.2 Articles 8.1 through 8.3 (dealing with the report and the dentist's right to make written submissions to the Committee) apply with the necessary modifications to a further practice review under Article 9.1.
- 9.3 After considering a report on a further practice review and any other information that the committee considers relevant to the further practice review, as well as any written submissions from the dentist, the committee must decide whether there are still deficiencies in the dentist's practice.
- 9.4 If the committee decides that there are no longer any deficiencies in a dentist's practice, the committee must advise the dentist of the decision, and no further action is required.
- 9.5 If the committee decides that there are still deficiencies in a dentist's practice, the committee must refer the matter to the Registrar and must include in the referral all of the committee's practice review reports and all of the dentist's submissions, if any, in response to the practice review reports.
- 9.6 If the committee refers a matter to the registrar under Article 9.5, the registrar may conduct an investigation of the matter in accordance with the [RHPA](#) and the [Regulated Health Professions General Regulations](#).
- 9.7 If, during or after a practice review, the practice review committee has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that a matter may involve professional misconduct, conduct unbecoming the profession, incompetence or incapacity that cannot be resolved through the practice review process, the practice review committee may refer the matter to the registrar¹¹, who must consider whether to file a complaint or refer the matter to the fitness-to-practise committee or other regulatory process.
- 9.8 If a matter is referred to the registrar under Article 9.7, any documents or material gathered, produced or created as part of the practice review process and any decisions rendered by the practice review committee are admissible in evidence in any regulatory process conducted under the Act, regulations or bylaws.¹²

¹¹ This process is outlined in Section 50(1) of the [Regulated Health Professions General Regulations](#).

¹² This is as set out in Section 50(3) of the [Regulated Health Professions General Regulations](#).

Acknowledgements

This document is based heavily on the *Dental Practice Review Regulations* pursuant to the *Dental Act* S.N.S. 1992 with additions and modifications reflecting the requirements of the [*Regulated Health Professions Act \(RHPA\)*](#) and the [*Regulated Health Professions General Regulations*](#).

Document History

First approved by the Provincial Dental Board of Nova Scotia on January 31, 2025 for circulation to registrants for consultation.

The final version was approved by the Board on April 7, 2025 to come into effect when the PDBNS is migrated under the [*Regulated Health Professions Act \(RHPA\)*](#) later in 2025.

Approximate date of next review: 2026