

# Executive Summary

## 2021 BCDHA QAP Member Experience Survey

In May 2021 BCDHA members were surveyed about their Quality Assurance Program (QAP) experience. The survey consisted of nine questions related to the QAP and an opportunity to provide written feedback. 428 comments were logged with many additional emails sent privately to the BCDHA.

Over the past few months, several themes regarding the QAP have surfaced:

- The content and technology used for the new Assessment Tool was problematic for members
- The exam pass/fail component significantly increased member anxiety,
- The new Assessment Tool did not address clinical competency effectively
- The new Assessment Tool did not provide appropriate Ongoing Learning goals.

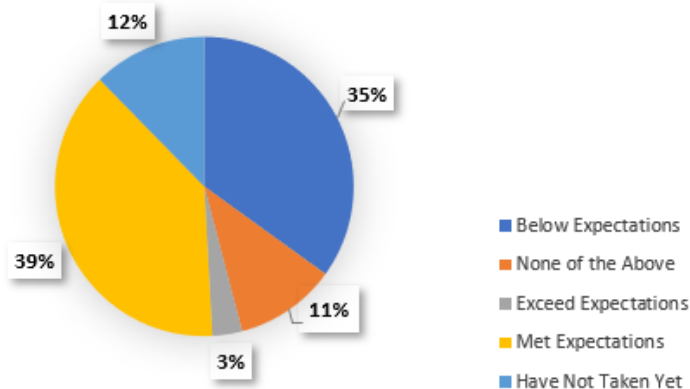
### Respondents

Of the 1933 members that responded to the survey approximately, the respondents were split fairly evenly with one-third having practiced fewer than 10 years, one-third having practice between 10 to 20 years and one-third having practice more than twenty years. Most respondents (95%) work in clinical dental hygiene practice. Most dental hygienists (73%) wrote the Assessment Tool prior to 2021 and 13.5% have not yet written. A small number (13.5%) completed the Assessment Tool in 2021.

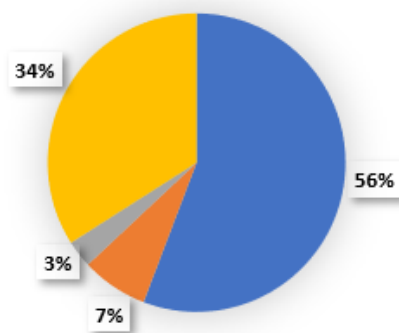
### Expectations of Results

56.5% of 2021 QA writers indicated that they felt their results were **significantly below** their personal expectations. This is an **increase of over 35%** versus all respondents answering the same questions.

All Respondents (1933)



2021 Respondents (239)

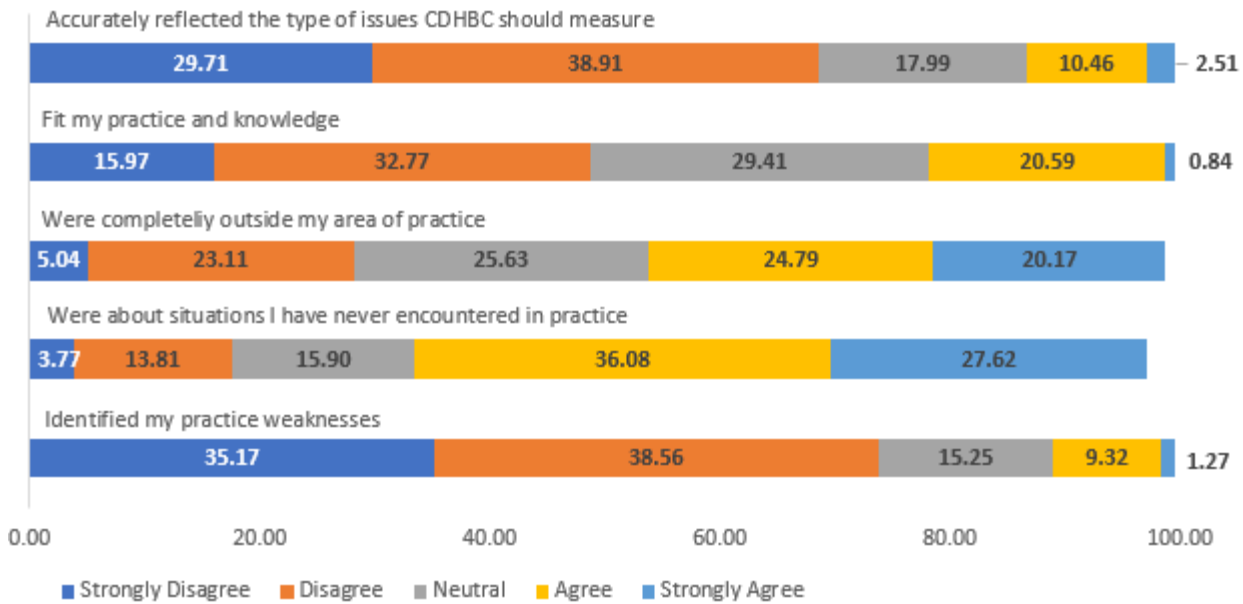


### Fee increases related to QA changes

The results for this question were fairly evenly spread across all member groups, indicating that there is no clear indication of the effect of fee increases related to changes in QAP. Nevertheless, BCDHA recognizes that fee increases can have a significant impact on members, and this will be an ongoing discussion with the College going forward.

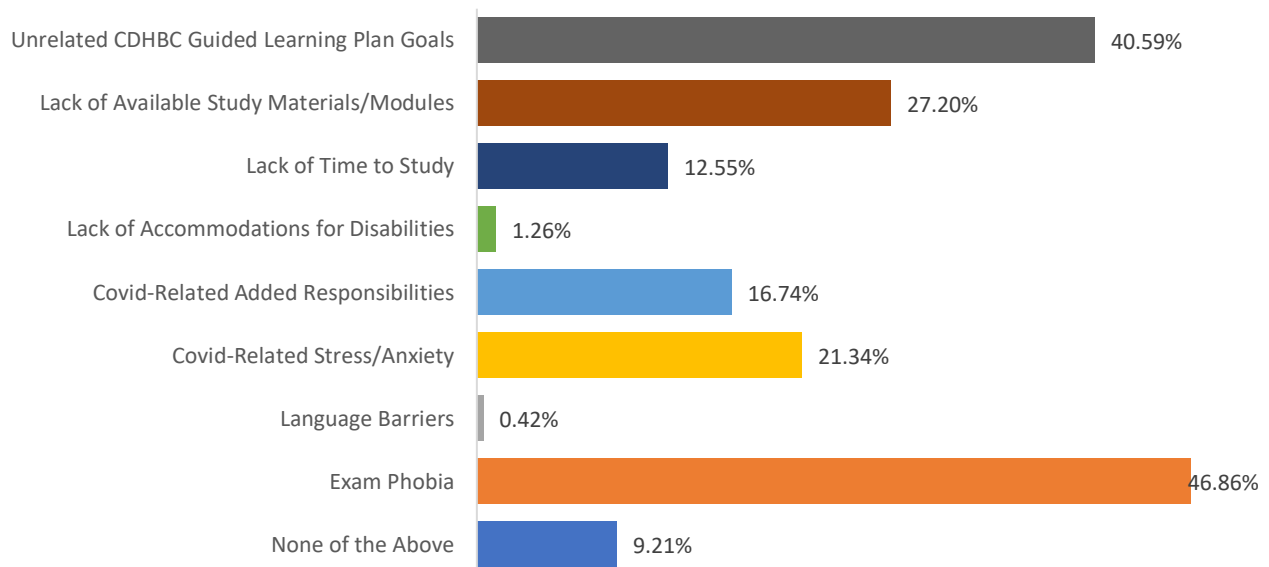
### How Members who wrote the exam in 2021 Ranked the Value of the Questions

BCDHA was particularly interested in hearing from hygienists who wrote the ‘new’ exam in 2021 (most of whom have previously written the older, national version). There was clear discomfort with some of the questions, how they were framed and how they were organized. Survey participants were asked to rank a series of statements about the questions on a scale strongly disagree to strongly agree).



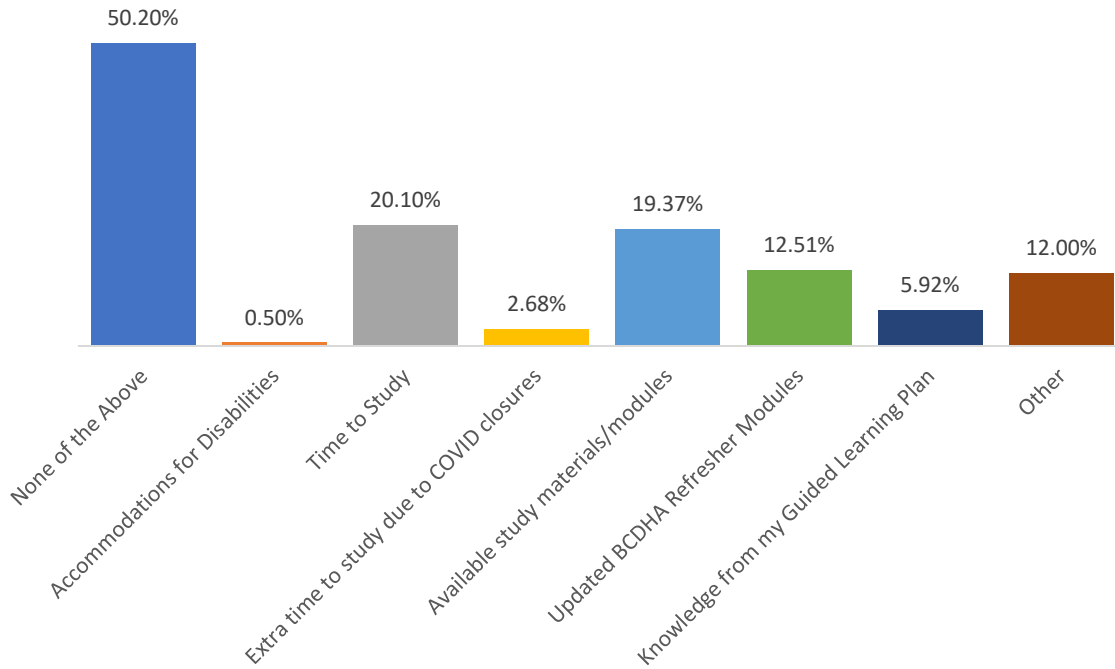
### Barriers Experienced by Members

Members identified exam phobia as the greatest barrier to them feeling they could achieve success in completing the Assessment Tool. Research tells us that this is not unusual, particularly as individuals move further from their education program and their familiarity with writing exams in their daily life. Additional barriers were strongly identified, and concerns raised particularly about the focus and suitability of the Guided Learning Plans.



### Supports That Helped Members

Based on member responses and what we have heard from members, there is a need for much stronger support resources if any sort of Assessment Tool will be used. There is some confusion as to how/where the questions for the exam were drawn from and if this was made clear (e.g., if the College indicated that they would use the BCDHA Refresher Modules to develop questions), this would be helpful.



### Future QAP Preferences

One of the considerations of the QA Committee has been to propose a concept where dental hygienists would have the opportunity to choose two activities from a 'menu' or list of options that would complete their QAP obligations. This would enable individuals who are not comfortable with an 'exam' to opt for a combination of continuing education credits and study clubs (for example), while continuing to allow individuals who actually prefer to write the QA Assessment Tool to do so. Hygienists were asked to choose from a list of suggestions (three options could be chosen, with the understanding that if this type of concept was adopted, most likely two would be required).

Continuing education Credits	88.89%
Online Education Modules	85.04%
Study Clubs	43.16%
Yearly Self-Assessment	38.89%
Assessment Tool (Exam)	16.24%
Practice Portfolio	9.40%
Peer Assessment	8.97%
Other	7.26%
Practice Review (On Site)	2.14%

## Written Responses

Many commenters identified similar concerns, and often several concerns at once. The majority of comments (>400) focused on the exam in its current format (>400). Additional concerns were expressed around the effect that exam phobia, or test anxiety, had on members (95 comments); the inadequacy of a written exam to assess clinician competency (73 comments); the format of the test (question readability and technical issues) (41 comments).

It's important to note that the current cost of the QA exam, when coupled with the cost of required resources to study has become extremely difficult for many to manage (particularly in a year when most dental hygienists were off work for an extended period of time). While the Quality Assurance Program is necessary, dental hygienists already pay significant fees to the College, and questions continue as to why CDHBC cannot administer the QA Program out of existing funds.

## Positive Comments

There were 18 comments from members who valued the current exam format. Most who mentioned being open to maintaining the current QA exam expressed that they would like the following occur:

- Change pass/fail component
- Allow the member the ability to reflect on wrong answers.
- Combine the QA tool with other QAP components such as yearly self-assessment or peer assessment.

## Unique Issues Related to the exam

One member pointed out that they could fail the exam, rewrite a second time and have fewer learning goals than those who wrote only once. Technical issues also were a unique issue for the 2021 group and caused significant stress, with limited support from the CDHBC.

## Conclusion

The member survey provided rich and meaningful information which is being further analyzed to inform a briefing document containing recommendations to be sent to the CDHBC prior to their fall board meeting. While BCDHA cannot make a final decision on how the College will go forward with their QA Program, we intend to continue to discuss with CDHBC the significant challenges that dental hygienists are facing, and the increased anxiety and confusion over the new Quality Assessment Tool.