



# **New Graduate Wage Survey Results**

*2025*



# Report Overview

## INTRODUCTION

In 2025, BCDHA collaborated with the BC Dental Hygiene (DH) Articulation Committee, a group of representatives from all academic institutions that offer dental hygiene programming in BC, to launch the annual BCDHA New Graduate Wage Survey. This report offers 2026 new graduate members information about initial compensation packages to assist them in negotiating their first contracts after graduation by understanding typical employment compensation packages in BC. This report breaks each of the questions from the full survey into the following categories:

- Basic Demographics
- Employment & Practice information
- Compensation details
- Employee benefits
- Employment policies
- Compensation satisfaction
- Respondent Feedback
- Summary

## SURVEY APPROACH & CONSIDERATIONS

When interpreting the results of this survey, it is important to keep in mind the following limitations:

- Data reported is a “snapshot in time” of data collect-

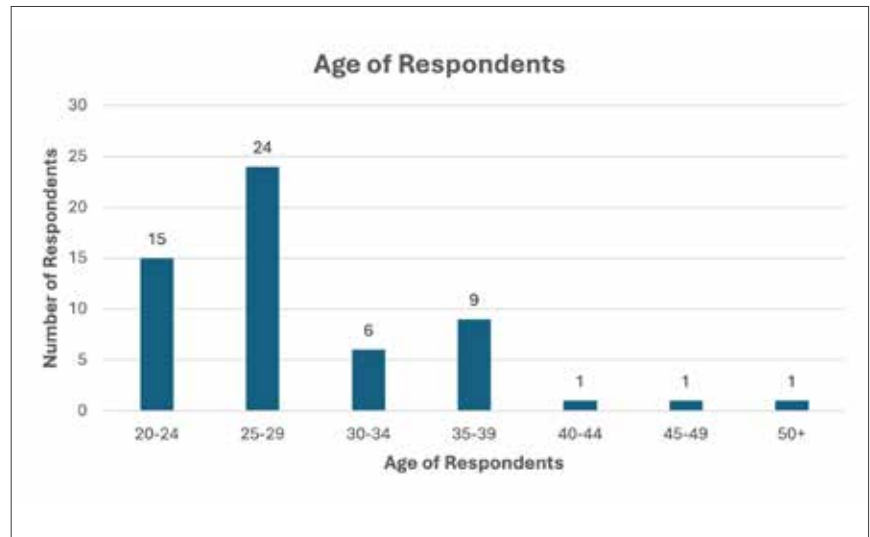
ed from August to November 2025.

- This survey was conducted using the BCDHA new graduate dental hygiene member list and is not a random sample. A total of 59 initial responses were received, with two responses removed from the survey data; 57 survey responses evaluated (n=57).
- Survey respondents were concentrated in urban and suburban regions, with nearly half of responses coming from the Metro Vancouver Area, followed by moderate representation from the Fraser Valley and Okanagan. Other regions, including Vancouver Island (particularly the Upper Island), the Kootenays, and Northern BC, were represented by small sample sizes. As a result, the findings are more reflective of employment experiences and conditions in higher-density regions of British Columbia. Results from rural and northern areas should be interpreted with caution, as limited regional participation may underrepresent location-specific wage patterns, incentives, or employment practices and may skew provincial averages toward urban labour market conditions.
- This Wage Report reflects the opinions of 2025 New Graduates regarding their initial contract negotiations and compensation packages and is only as accurate as the data provided to the Association.

# Basic Demographics

## Survey Question 1: What is your age?

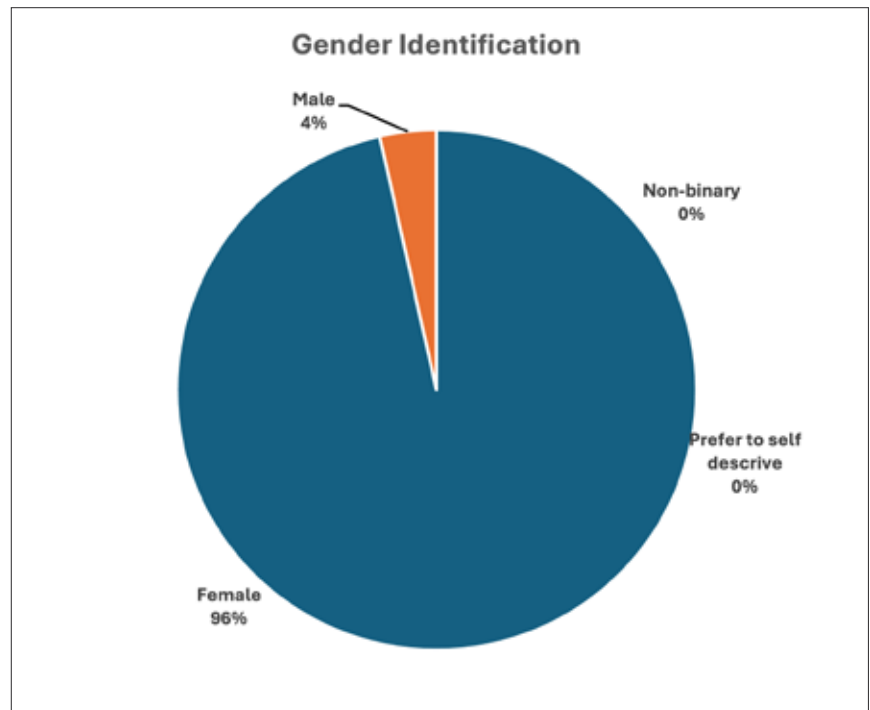
Consistent with the 2024 findings, most 2025 new graduate respondents are under age 30 (68%), indicating that the profession continues to attract graduates early in their working life, while a smaller proportion enter dental hygiene later in life.



## Survey Question 2: Gender; how do you identify?

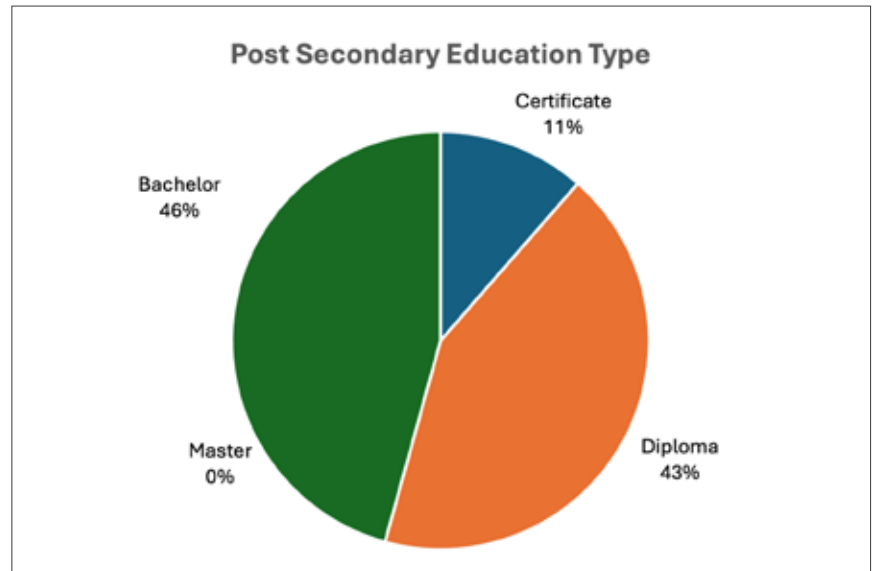
Gender distribution of respondents in this survey was predominantly female, with 55 of the 57 participants (96%) identifying as female. Two respondents (4%) identified as male. Response options also included non-binary and prefer to self-describe; however, no respondents selected these categories (n=57).

This pattern is consistent with trends commonly seen across oral healthcare professions, where women make up the majority of the workforce. As a result, the findings of this survey may largely represent the perspectives and experiences of women within the profession (n = 57).



### Survey Question 3: Have you completed any post-secondary education in a field other than dental hygiene?

Approximately 58% of respondents reported having prior post-secondary education before entering their dental hygiene program.

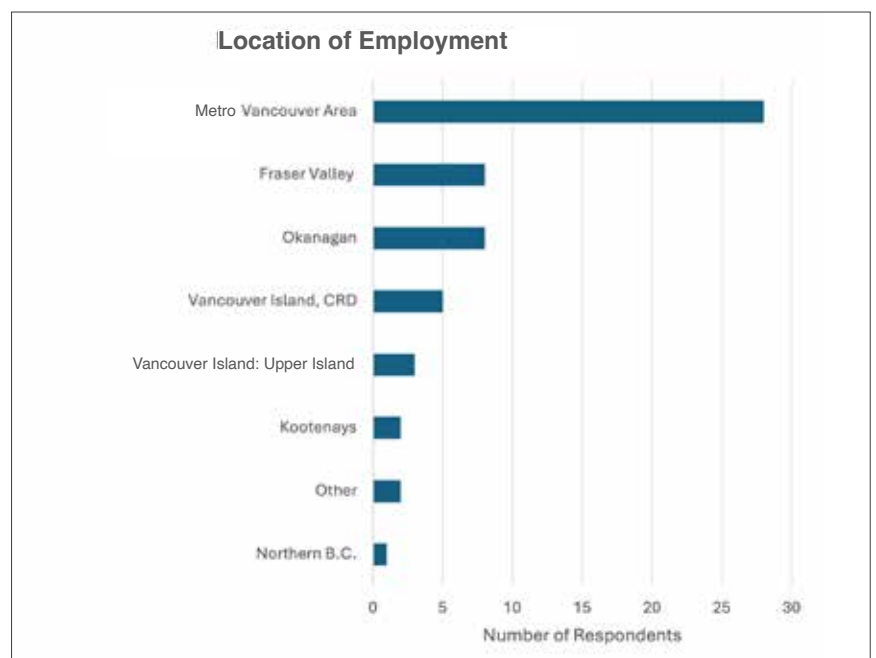


## Employment & Practice Information

### Survey Question 4: What province, territory, or other location did you find employment as a DH?

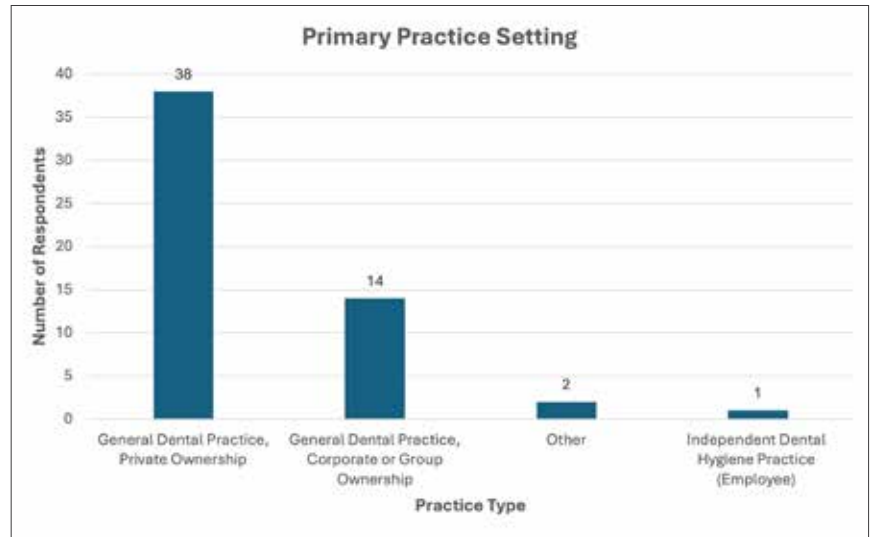
For location distribution, the survey locations were divided into the following sections:

- Metro Vancouver Area
- Fraser Valley
- Vancouver Island; Capital Regional District (CRD)
- Vancouver Island; Upper Island
- Northern BC
- Okanagan
- Kootenays
- Other (outside of BC)



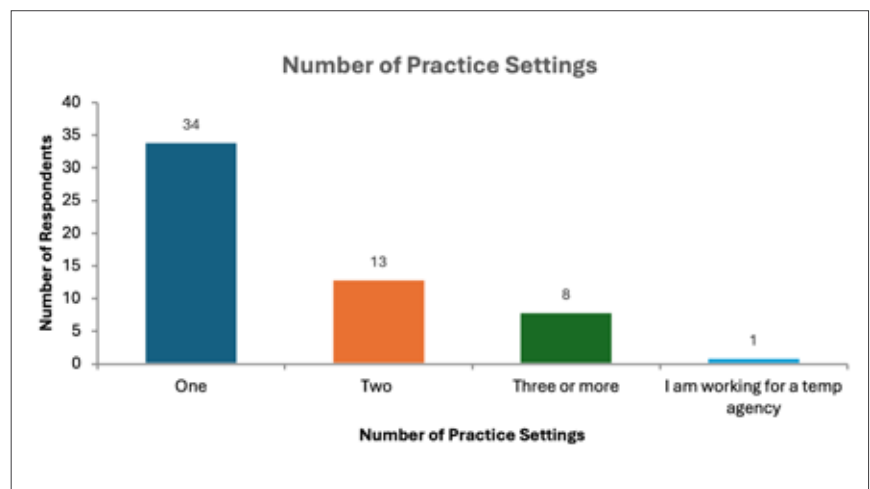
### Survey Question 5: For your primary practice setting, please indicate what type it is.

Most respondents (69%) reported being employed in privately-owned general dental practices, while a further 25% are working in general dental practices owned by dental corporations or group practices. Only a small proportion of new graduate dental hygienists reported employment in an independent dental hygiene practice as an employee (2%) or in other settings (4%). (n=55)



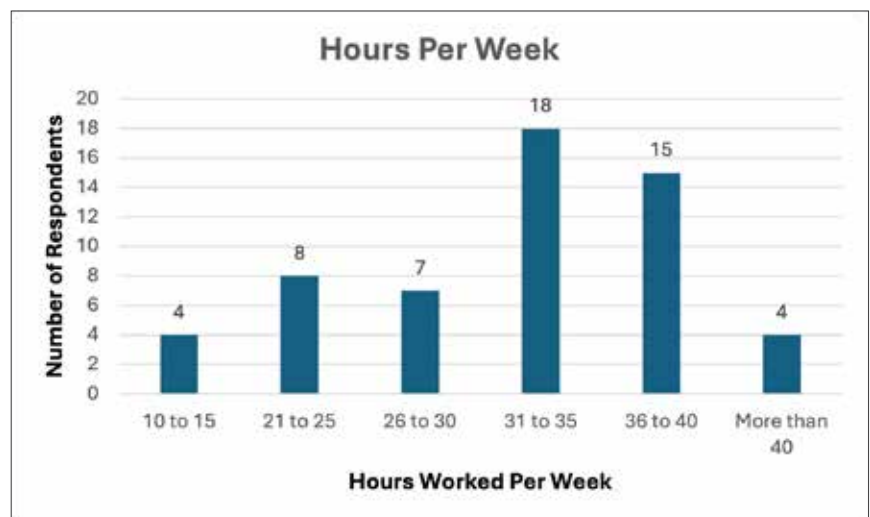
### Survey Question 6: How many different practice settings are you employed as a DH?

Most new graduate respondents (61%) reported working in a single practice setting. Among those working in multiple locations, two practice settings was the most common arrangement (23%), while 14% reported working in three or more settings. Only 2% indicated they were working through a temporary placement agency. (n=56).



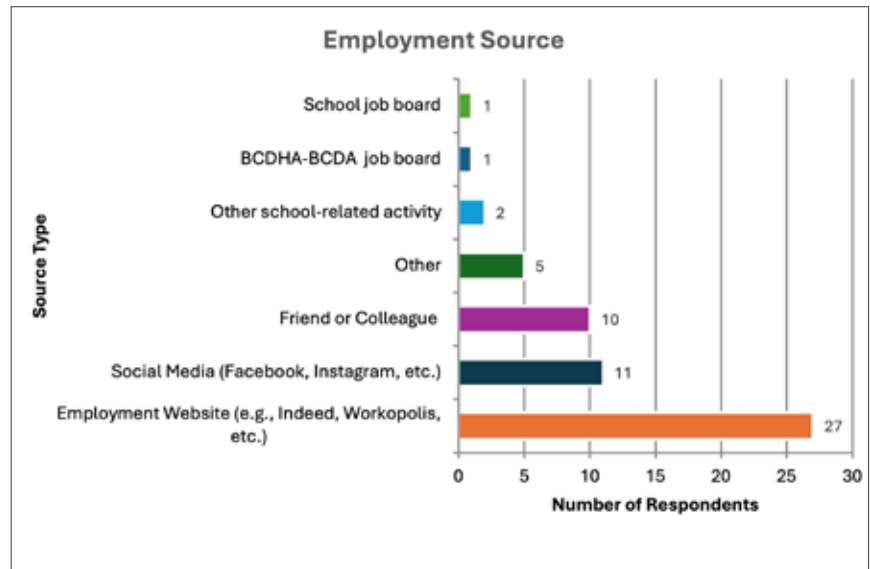
### Survey Question 7: How many hours will you work per week (cumulative across all practice settings)?

For the purposes of this survey, full-time employment was defined as working 31 hours or more per week. Based on this definition, 66% of new graduate respondents reported working full-time hours. The most common work schedule was 31–35 hours per week (32%), followed by 36–40 hours per week (27%). The remaining 34% reported working 30 hours per week or less (n = 56).



### Survey Question 8: How did you first hear about the job you accepted?

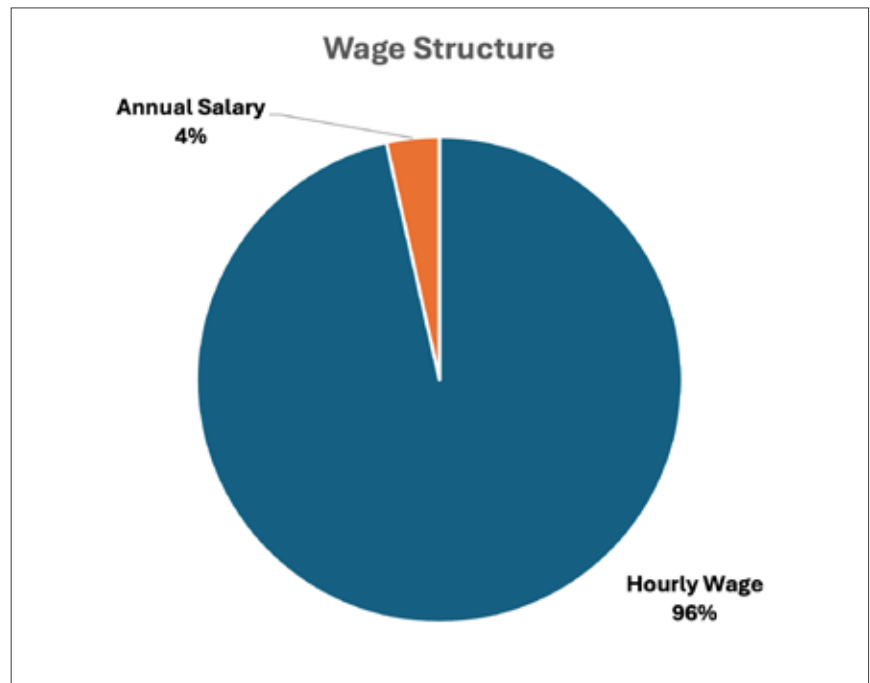
Nearly half of respondents (47%) reported finding their job through an employment website (e.g., Indeed, Workopolis). The next most common sources were social media (19%) and referrals from a friend or colleague (18%). A smaller proportion reported finding employment through other sources (9%), while few found employment through other school-related activities (4%), the BCDHA-BCDA job board (2%), or a school job board (2%). (n = 57).



## Compensation Details

### Survey Question 9: Which best describes your negotiated wage?

Ninety-six percent of new graduate respondents reported negotiating an hourly wage as part of their compensation package, while only 4% reported an annual salary. This reinforces that hourly pay remains the overwhelming norm for new graduate dental hygienists in B.C., offering a consistent and predictable entry point into the workforce. (n=57)

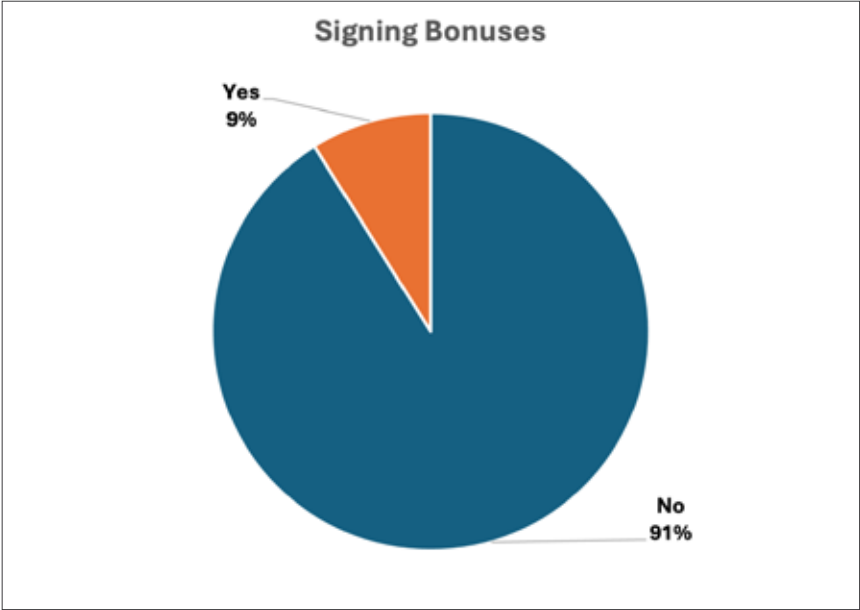


**Survey Question 10: If you are paid an hourly wage, what is your negotiated hourly wage?**

| Region of BC                   | Average | Min     | Max     | Mode    |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Vancouver Island; CRD          | \$56.20 | \$55.00 | \$57.00 | \$56.00 |
| Fraser Valley                  | \$56.29 | \$55.00 | \$58.50 | \$55.00 |
| Kootenays                      | \$54.00 | \$52.50 | \$55.50 | \$52.50 |
| Metro Vancouver Area           | \$58.00 | \$50.00 | \$65.00 | \$58.00 |
| Northern BC                    | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 | \$50.00 |
| Vancouver Island; Upper Island | \$59.00 | \$58.00 | \$60.00 | \$58.00 |
| Okanagan                       | \$57.06 | \$50.00 | \$63.00 | \$58.00 |

**Survey Question 11: Did you receive a signing bonus or retention benefit for taking this job?**

Signing bonuses were uncommon among new graduate respondents in B.C., with 5 out of 56 respondents (9%) reporting a signing bonus or retention incentive. In this year’s sample, the bonuses reported were concentrated in the Okanagan (n=2), Kootenays (n=2), and Vancouver Island CRD (n=1). (n=56)



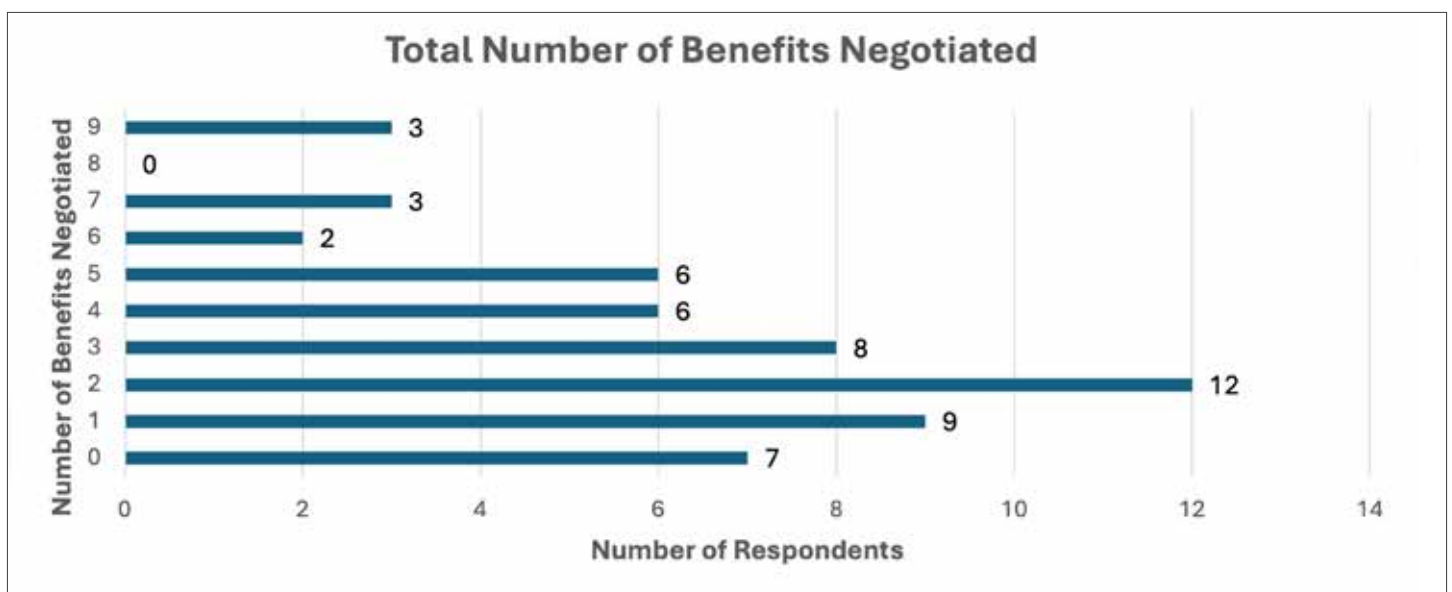
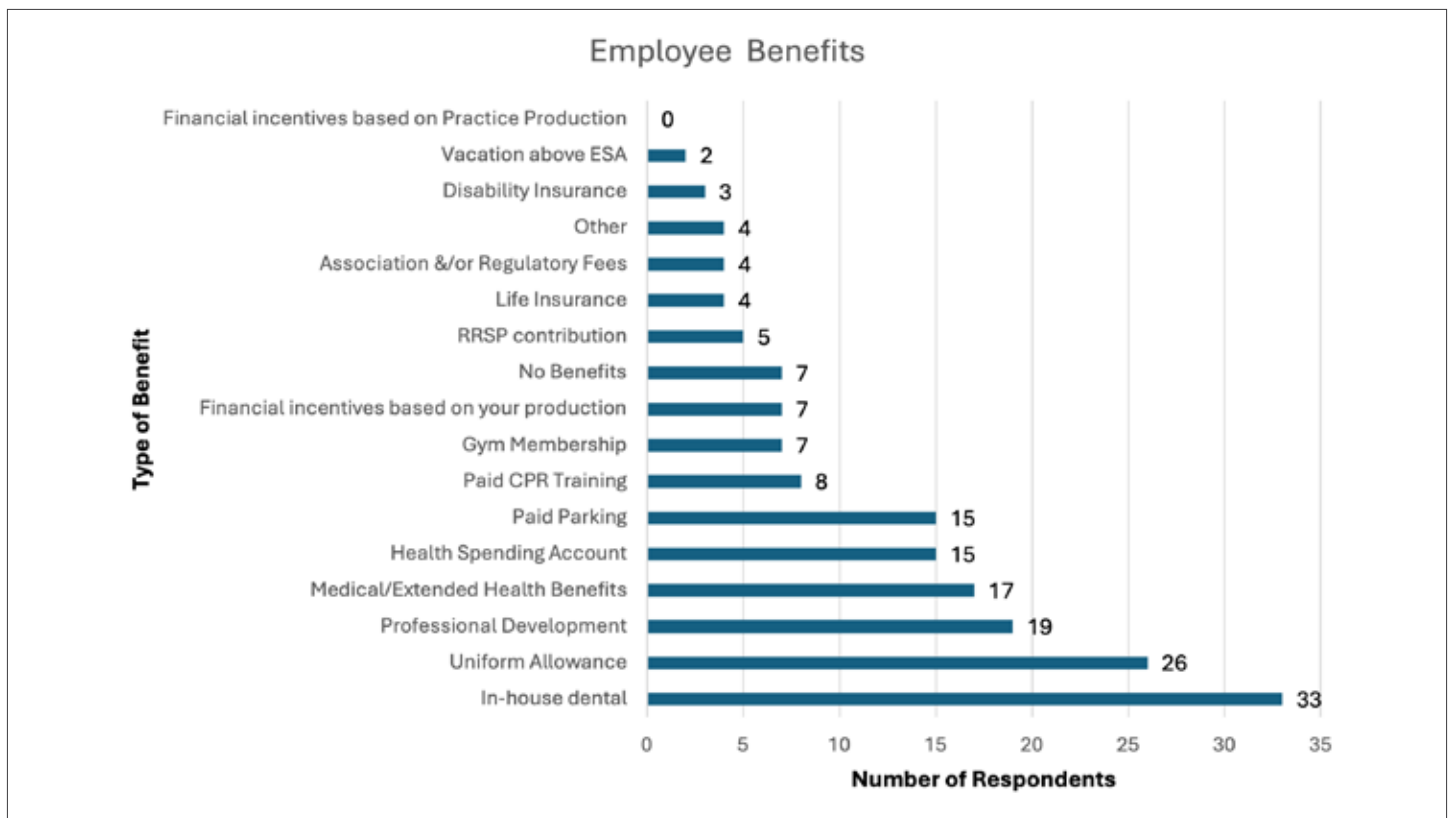
**Survey Question 12: If you answered “Yes” to the previous question, how much did you receive?**

Bonuses reported by 2025 new graduates were relatively modest and ranged from \$1,000 to \$10,000, with most falling between \$5,000 and \$10,000 (median \$5,000; average \$6,200). Compared with 2024 findings where substantially larger bonuses were reported in some rural regions, no high-value signing bonuses were captured in this year’s responses; however, this should be interpreted cautiously given the small number of respondents reporting bonuses and limited representation from Northern BC in the 2025 sample. (n=5)

# Employee Benefits

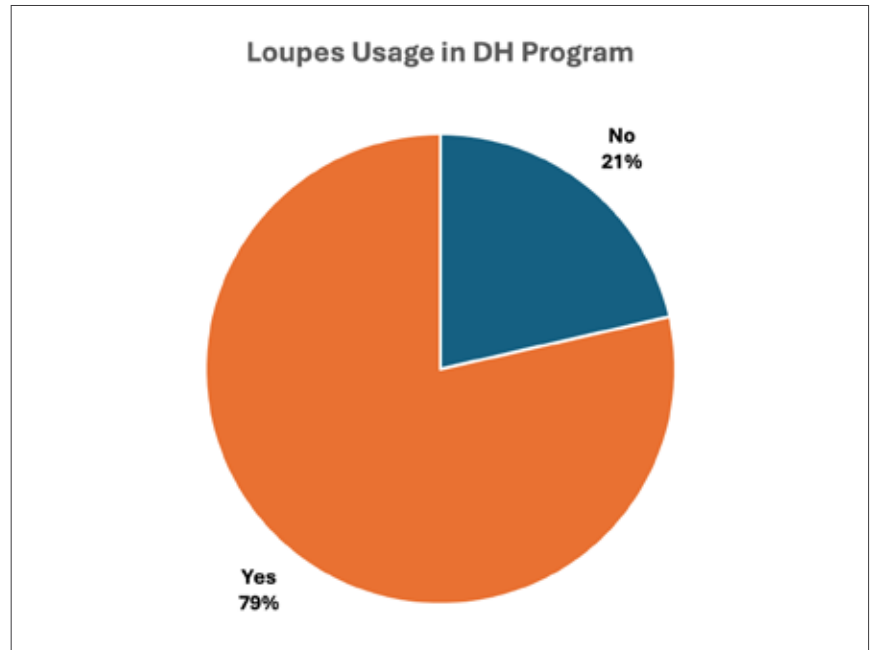
## Survey Question 13: What benefits were negotiated into your employment contract? (please select all that apply)

Most new graduate respondents reported negotiating at least one employment benefit, with in-house dental care (59%) and a uniform allowance (46%) being the most commonly reported. Professional development support (34%), medical/extended health coverage (30%), health spending accounts and paid parking (27% each) were also frequently included in compensation packages. At the same time, 13% of respondents reported receiving no benefits, and the total-benefits data suggests that most new graduates negotiated few benefits.



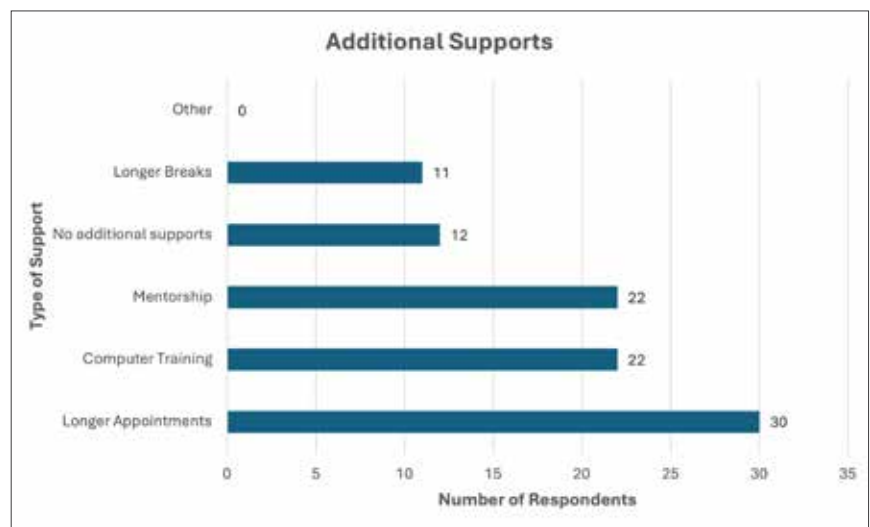
**Survey Questions 14 & 15: Did you have loupes while you were in DH school? If you did not have loupes as a student, did your employer require you to have loupes for work?**

Most new graduate respondents reported using loupes during their dental hygiene program (79%). (n=56) However, once in practice, loupes were rarely an employer requirement and were typically not employer-funded: 47 of 54 respondents (87%) indicated their employer did not require loupes and did not compensate them for the purchase. Only 5 respondents (9%) reported that loupes were required by their employer, and just 4 respondents (7%) reported receiving compensation toward their loupes (whether required or not). (n=54)



**Survey Question 16: Within the first months of DH employment, did your employer provide you with any of the following to help you acclimate to “real-world scheduling and practice management?”**

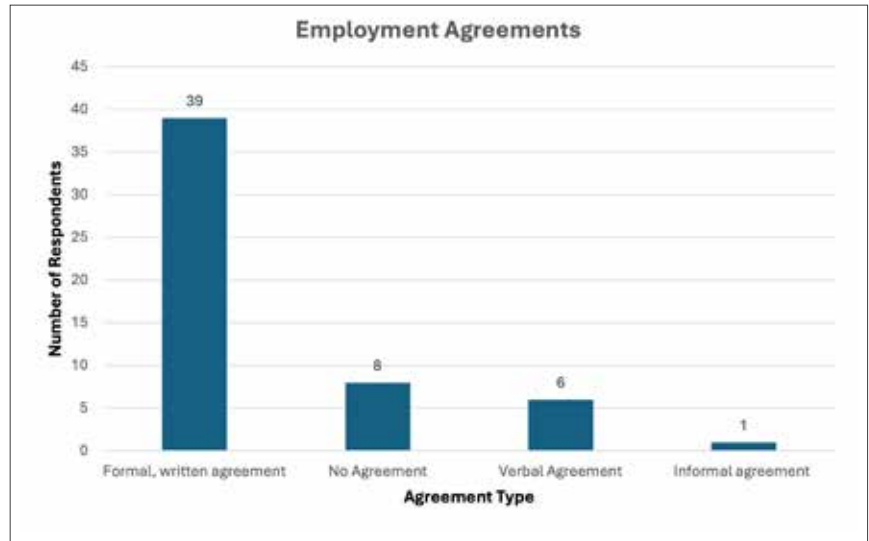
79% of respondents reported being given additional support, with the most common being longer appointment times, followed by mentorship and computer training.



# Employment Policies

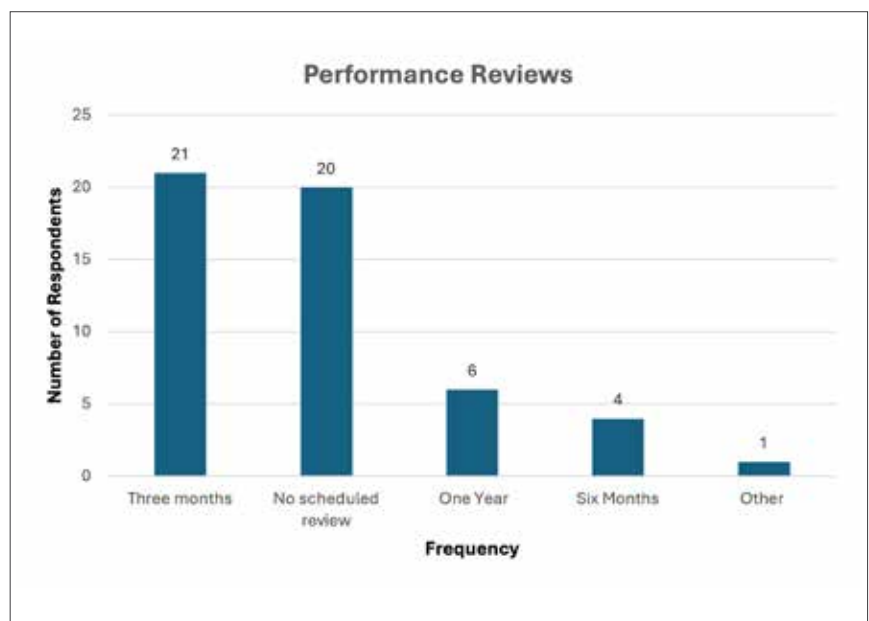
## *Survey Question 17: Which of the following describes your employment contract at your primary practice setting?*

In the survey, 85% of new graduates reported having some form of employment contract in their primary practice setting. Formal written contracts were reported for more than seven out of 10 respondents (72%).



## *Survey Question 18: When will your next performance evaluation be held? (FT vs PT vs Other)*

Over half of new graduate dental hygienists have a performance evaluation within the first year, with nearly 38% reporting a 3-month review in their primary practice setting.



# Compensation Satisfaction

## *Survey Question 19: How many hours are you scheduled to work compared to your ideal number of hours?*

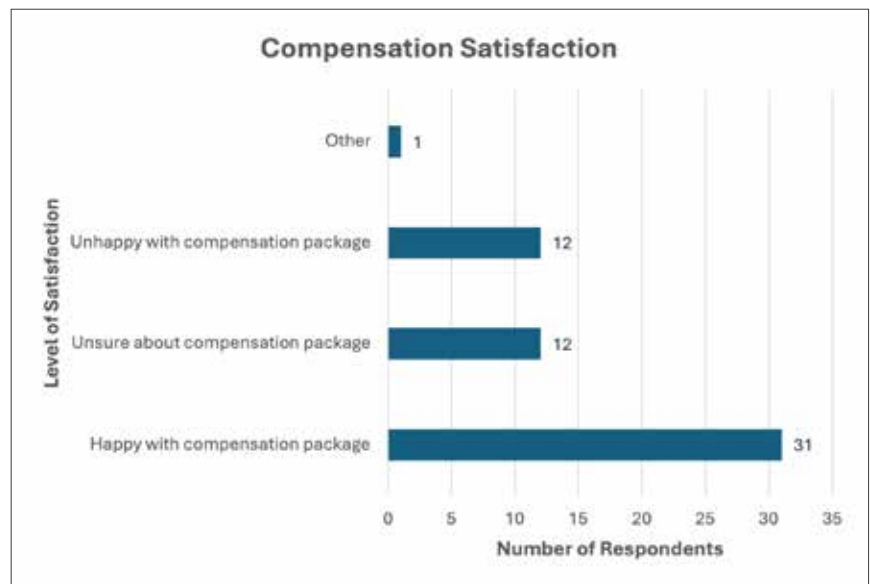
73% of new graduates are happy with the number of hours they are working in 2025.



## *Survey Question 20: Are you satisfied with your current compensation package?*

55% of respondents expressed satisfaction with their compensation package, with the remainder almost split between being unsure (21%) or unsatisfied (21%).

Health Benefits appeared as a factor that would improve satisfaction.



# Respondent Written Feedback

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## *Survey Question 21: Do you want to share anything about your compensation package or experience as a new graduate dental hygienist?*

This year's written feedback emphasized that new grads value supportive onboarding and mentorship as much as (or more than) small wage differences. Many described a gap between being "welcome to new grads" and real workplace expectations, especially around pace, needing adequate appointment time, and feeling pressure to prove themselves.

Several comments also highlighted the importance of clinic culture and respect for dental hygiene standards of care, and noted that negotiating the full compensation package (benefits, statutory holiday pay, and coverage across multiple part-time workplaces) can be challenging but worth advocating for.

## Summary

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The BCDHA Dental Hygiene New Graduate Wage Report is intended to assist new graduate dental hygienists in negotiating their first employment contracts after graduation. Critical information for new graduates and educators regarding wages, other compensation, and practice expectations is provided through the New Graduate Wage Survey. Data from this survey also informs future wage surveys and provides evidence for all BCDHA members to understand typical compensation packages for dental hygienists in BC.

The average wage in BC for new graduate DHs was found to be \$55.79 CAD, with 96.5% of respondents receiving an hourly wage. In the survey, 66% of respondents reported obtaining full-time positions with six out of ten graduates employed in a single practice setting, most often in private-owned dental clinics. The data showed that 85% of respondents have an employment contract in place, with 72% indicating that it is a formal written agreement.

*Thank you to all new graduate respondents who shared their experiences and practical advice about negotiating wages and compensation packages.*



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