

# 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 as well as 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

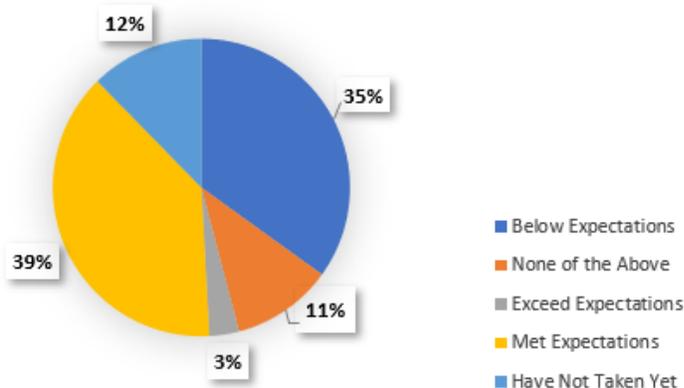
Of the 1,933 members that responded to the survey, approximately:

- one-third have practiced fewer than 10 years, one-third have practiced between 10 to 20 years and one-third have practiced more than twenty years.
- 95% work in clinical dental hygiene practice
- 73% wrote the Assessment Tool prior to 2021, 13.5% have not yet written and 13.5% completed the Assessment Tool in 2021.

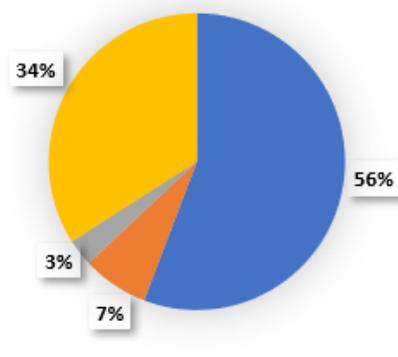
### Expectations of Results

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%** when compared to those who wrote prior to 2021.

#### All Respondents (1933)



#### 2021 Respondents (239)

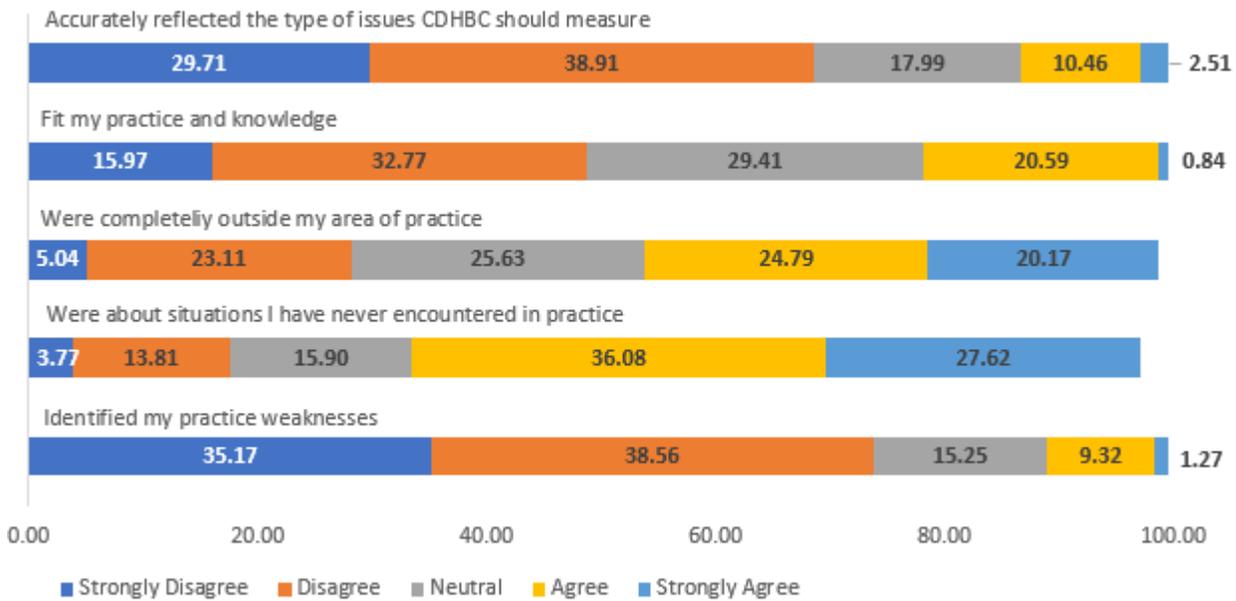


### Fee increases related to QA changes

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.

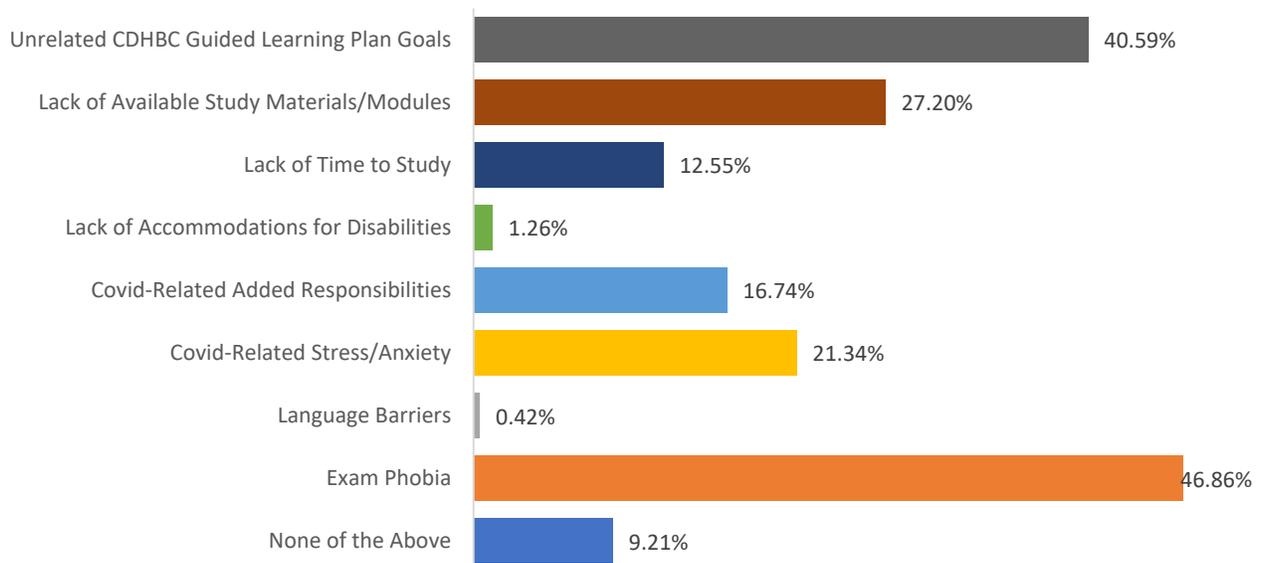
### How Members who wrote the exam in 2021 Ranked the Value of the Questions

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



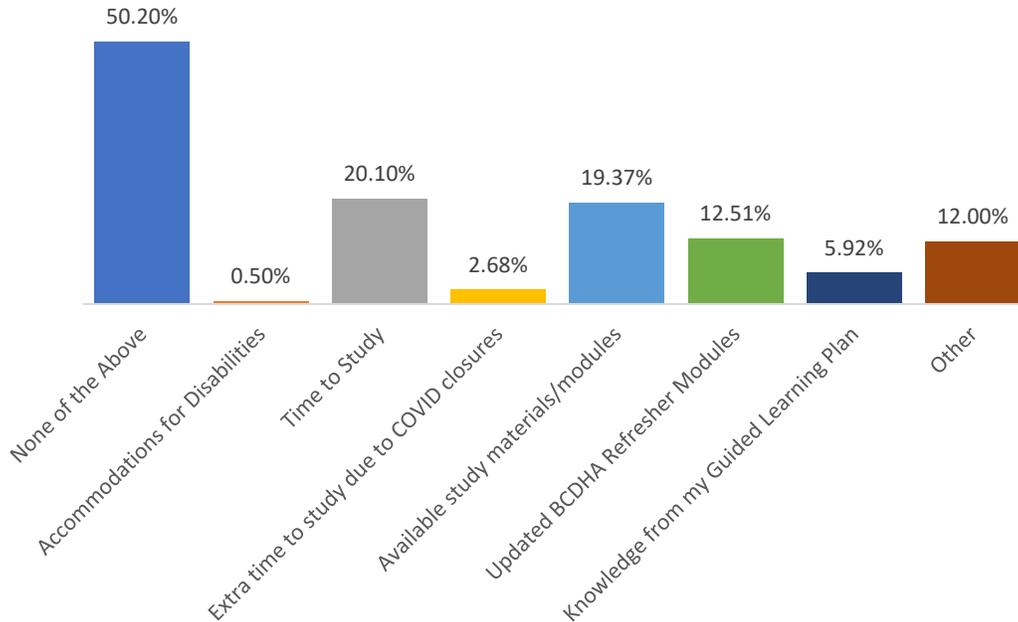
### Barriers Experienced by Members

Members identified exam phobia the greatest barrier to successfully completing the Assessment Tool. Research tells us 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 were raised about the focus and suitability of the Guided Learning Plans.



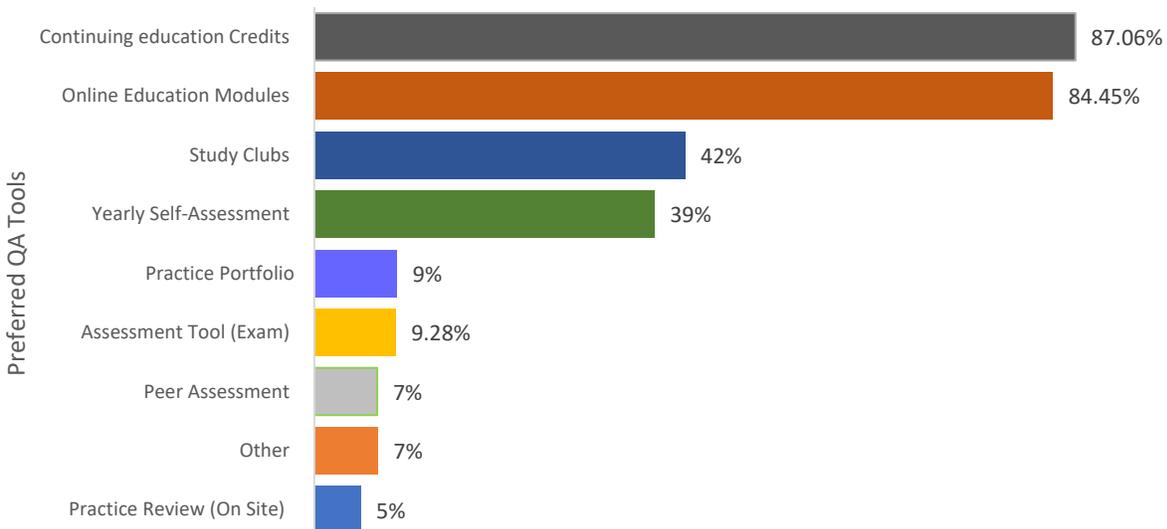
## Supports That Helped Members

Based on member responses in the survey and from direct communication, there is a need for more supportive resources if an Assessment Tool continues to be used. Member feedback indicated that there was some confusion as to how the questions were built and would like more information about where questions were drawn from (i.e., it would be helpful if the College indicated they use the BCDHA Refresher Modules to develop questions).



## Future QAP Preferences

One of the considerations of the QA Committee has been to propose a concept to the CDHBC where dental hygienists would have the opportunity to choose two activities from a 'menu' or list of options to 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 prefer to write the QA Assessment Tool to do so. Hygienists were asked to choose from a list of suggestions (with the understanding that if this type of concept was adopted, most likely two would be required).



## Written Responses

Many commenters identified similar concerns, and often several concerns at once. Many of the 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); and 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 cost prohibitive for many (particularly in a year when most dental hygienists were off work for an extended period of time). While a Quality Assurance Program is necessary, dental hygienists are concerned that they already pay significant fees to the College, and question why CDHBC cannot administer the QA Program out of existing annual fees.

## Positive Comments

There were 18 comments from members who valued the current exam format. Most who were open to maintaining the current QA exam expressed the following preferences:

- Eliminate the 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 noted that they could fail the exam, rewrite a second time and have fewer learning goals than those who wrote the exam only once and passed. 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 has no authority to determine how the College will go forward with their QA Program, we will continue to impress upon the CDHBC the significant challenges that dental hygienists are facing, and advocate for change to the existing QA program.