

HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACT 56 OF 1974

REGULATIONS DEFINING THE SCOPE OF THE PROFESSION OF DENTAL ASSISTANTS

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The Minister of Health has, in terms of [section 33](#)(1) of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No 56 of 1974), and on the recommendation of the Health Professions Council of South Africa, made the regulations in the Schedule

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SCHEDULE

1. Definitions

In these regulations the “**Act**” means the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974), and any expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act shall bear that meaning, unless the context otherwise dictates -

“**board**” means the Professional Board for Dental Therapy and Oral Hygiene established in terms of [section 15](#)(1) of the Act;

“**dental assistant**” means the person registered as such in terms of the Act; and

“**oral health practitioner**” means an oral hygienist and include a dentist, dental specialist or dental therapist.

2. Scope of the profession

The following acts are hereby specified as acts which shall, for the purposes of the application of the Act, be deemed to be acts pertaining to the profession of dental assistants:

- (1) preparing and managing the dental clinical environment before, during and after patient care;
- (2) sterilising instruments, and disinfecting surfaces and equipment in the dental environment;

- (3) monitoring infection control, sterilisation processes, biological, medical and / or bio hazardous waste management within the dental environment;
- (4) preparing dental materials and instruments (including dental hand pieces) for use in clinical procedures performed by the oral health practitioner;
- (5) assisting with the patient's needs and comfort during dental treatment;
- (6) providing clinical assistance using four handed dentistry which includes instrument transfer, high speed suctioning and debridement techniques in procedures that are performed by an oral health practitioner;
- (7) recording patient data gathered during patient interview, oral assessment of the hard and soft tissues and oral assessment of other oral structures and during the treatment of the patient;
- (8) processing dental radiographs;
- (9) caring for and maintaining equipment used in the dental clinical environment; and
- (10) assisting the oral health practitioner in the event of a medical emergency in the dental environment and applying the necessary measures during clinical emergencies.

3. Performance of professional acts by a student in dental assisting

A student in dental assisting shall perform acts pertaining to the profession of dental assisting under the supervision of a registered dental assistant, dental specialists, dental therapists or oral hygienist, and shall, limit such acts to acts directly related to his or her education and training in dental assisting.

4. Short title

Regulations Defining the Scope of Dental Assistants, made in terms of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974).

DR. A MOTSOLEDI, MP
MINISTER OF HEALTH
DATE: 17/4/2012