

WSSO Orthodontic Assistant Competency Assessment

Purpose: To demonstrate the competency required to perform expanded orthodontic functions, specifically removal of orthodontic cement using a high- or slow-speed handpieces.

1. Demonstrate Knowledge

Dental Anatomy: Each orthodontist is responsible for training the orthodontic assistant about the anatomy of the tooth (i.e. enamel, dentin, etc.), the periodontium and basic oral health concepts that relate to appliance and cement removal. The WSSO will provide materials and resources to standardize training.

Armamentarium: The orthodontic assistant must understand the indications for the armamentarium used in the procedure, as well as comprehend the fundamental differences between high- and slow-speed handpieces. The orthodontist must define in his or her office which burs are acceptable for the orthodontic assistant.

2. Clinical Training

Simulation training: The orthodontic assistant must demonstrate the ability to remove cement with a high- and slow-speed handpiece on a typodont without altering the surface of the teeth. Proper sequencing and removal must be confirmed by the orthodontist. The orthodontic assistant should perform at least 5 hours of simulated training.

Supervised training: The orthodontic assistant must have direct supervision while removing cement for the first 5 hours. Proper removal must be confirmed by the orthodontist.

3. Competency exam

Clinical competency exam: Once the orthodontic assistant has completed his or her clinical training, a clinical competency exam will be performed on a typodont under close supervision. The orthodontist will grade the assistant using the WSSO Competency Assessment criteria sheet (page 2). This should be retained in the orthodontic assistant's employee records, indicating competency and certification in this expanded function. Previously certified orthodontic assistants must re-take the competency exam for new employers.

WSSO Competency Assessment		
Criteria	Comments	Pass/Fail*
<i>Armamentarium</i>		
<i>Clinical skill</i>		
<i>Cement Removal</i>		
<i>Tooth Integrity after removal</i>		
	<i>Overall</i>	

*For all the criteria, the assistant will be graded *Pass* or *Fail*. Failure in any section will result in failure of the exam. The expectations for each criterion are outlined below:

Armamentarium – The assistant must communicate the indications for the selected handpiece and burs used during the procedure.

Clinical Skill – The assistant will be evaluated for proper isolation, retraction, fulcrum positions, and overall patient experience.

Cement Removal – All cement must be adequately removed, such that no cement remains visibly or upon detection with an explorer. The assistant will not be failed for cement remaining below the gumline.

Tooth Integrity – Any damage or alteration of the enamel surface will be deemed a failure.