

National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE) Frequently Asked Questions

Transition from Paper-Based to Computer-Based NBDHE

Why is the NBDHE transitioning to a computer-based examination?

The Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations determines the policy for the NBDHE. Several years ago, the Joint Commission directed its examinations transition from print-based to computer-based examinations.

Testing in a computer-based format allows candidates the opportunity to select their own testing date year round at the testing center of their choice. Additionally, the nationwide testing centers are standardized and designed exclusively for testing. The testing network ensures each center is appropriately staffed with trained testing administrators. This standardization of the testing environment produces a setting that is conducive to optimum success.

The NBDHE is only available as a computer-based examination. Pearson VUE computer testing centers administer the NBDHE, and are located throughout the United States, its territories (Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands) and Canada; you can search specific locations through www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe.

What skills do I need to take the examination as a computer-based examination?

Candidates who participate in the computer-based administration will need basic knowledge and skill for operating a computer. You will need to be familiar with the use of the computer mouse and basic keyboard functions for entering responses, viewing visuals and exhibits, scrolling, and reviewing items. To assist candidates, an optional tutorial is available at www.ada.org and on the computer before the actual examination launches. While brief, this tutorial provide a full overview of the computer functions a candidate must understand and use to complete the examination.

What do I need to do to take the computer-based NBDHE?

1. Submit an application to take the computer-based NBDHE through www.ada.org.
2. Your dental hygiene program director must approve your eligibility to test. (Non-accredited graduates, please see the NBDHE *Guide* for eligibility requirements.)
3. When the Joint Commission office receives your application, we confirm your eligibility and approve your application. The Joint Commission office will send you an eligibility letter to the e-mail address indicated on your application with instructions about how to schedule a testing appointment.

4. You can then schedule a testing appointment at a Pearson VUE testing center through the Web site www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe or by calling 888.456.2830. A list of available testing centers is available on this Web site.

Applying for the Examination

How do I apply for the computer-based examination?

Submit an electronic application through the <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp> Web site. If you require a paper application, please fax a written request to the Joint Commission office at 312.587.4105.

The dental hygiene program director will determine when a dental hygiene student is eligible to test, typically in the final semester of the program and when the student is prepared in all NBDHE disciplines. For graduates of an accredited dental hygiene program or graduates of a non-accredited dental hygiene program, please see the NBDHE *Guide* for eligibility requirements.

I completed an electronic application, but did not receive a confirmation e-mail, and I cannot schedule a testing appointment through Pearson VUE.

NBDHE applications are processed once daily on normal business days (Monday through Friday except Federal holidays). It can take up to two business days from the time your application is approved by the Joint Commission for Pearson VUE to upload your application into their system, thereby allowing you to schedule your testing appointment. If you are unable to register after two business days, call the Joint Commission office to verify that your application has processed.

What do I need to schedule a testing appointment?

The Joint Commission will send you an eligibility e-mail (or letter if no e-mail address on file) upon approval of your application. To schedule a testing appointment with Pearson VUE, you must create an account on the www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe Web site. You will create a user name and password when creating this account. Record your user name and password for future reference; the Joint Commission and/or Pearson VUE **does not** retain this information.

I was billed twice for my electronic application. How do I get a refund?

Fax a brief explanation and copy of your credit card statement to 312.587.4105. Please include your name (as it appears on your application) and daytime contact information. Address the fax to the attention of NBDHE Refund Request.

Corrections/Changes to My Application

I have not yet taken my examination, can I update my address?

Fax the request for an address change to 312.587.4105; address it to the attention of NBDHE Address Update Request.

I have already taken my examination, can you update my address?

Fax the request for an address change to 312.587.4105; address it to the attention of NBDHE Score Report Address Update. However, score reports will be mailed to the address on the initial application.

My name is reversed or my name has changed. Can you correct it?

Fax the request for a name correction to 312.587.4105 with any appropriate documentation (marriage certificate or court document); address it to the attention of NBDHE Name Change Request.

Examination Rules and Regulations

What is the purpose and intent of the National Board Examination Regulations?

Examination Regulations are established to ensure that examination results are valid. This means that a candidate's score is an accurate reflection of his or her knowledge and understanding. Candidates are expected to recall and interpret information and respond to examination questions without assistance or the advantage of having prior knowledge of questions or answers. The Examination Regulations are intended to prevent candidates from retaining or remembering questions and sharing them with other candidates and to prevent candidates from obtaining unreleased questions or answers from any source. Examination Regulations are also intended to provide all candidates with an equivalent opportunity to gain National Board certification; no candidate should have an unfair advantage over others.

All examination materials including released materials that are made available by the Joint Commission through various authorized channels, are copyrighted to protect the security and confidentiality of the examination content, as well as the investment of resources, primarily from candidate fees, that support the examination program.

How are candidates informed of the Examination Regulations?

The Examination Regulations are provided in writing in the *Guide* for each examination. The Guides are provided on the testing area of the ADA Web site, <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp>. Information contained in the Guides is updated annually; but the general nature and intent of the regulations remains the same

as described above. Each examination session begins with a confidentiality statement that candidates must agree to as a condition of testing.

What happens if a candidate violates Examination Regulations?

When the Joint Commission receives information that indicates possible inappropriate behavior or violation of Examination Regulations, the candidate's results may be withheld or invalidated. Established Joint Commission regulations identify prohibited activities and behavior and related penalties. In most cases, scores are voided and the candidate must wait up to two years to retest. When scores are withheld or invalidated, the candidate is notified of the regulation that has been breached and the related penalty. Joint Commission policies provide an appeal process and candidates who are notified that their scores have been withheld or invalidated receive information about the appeal process. If a candidate's scores have been reported prior to notification of an irregularity, submission of an appeal will stay the decision to withhold or void scores until such time as the appeal is decided.

Is it acceptable for candidates to remember and share unreleased questions or to solicit or use unreleased questions that have been recalled or obtained by others?

No. This violates the Confidentiality Agreement that all candidates sign before they begin the examination. In addition, Federal Copyright Law protects all examinations; sharing or soliciting recalled questions violates the law. These practices are also unethical in that they violate principles of veracity (truthfulness) and justice (fairness).

Why is it unethical to ask someone for unreleased, recalled questions or to otherwise obtain and use recalled questions?

First, all candidates are expected to pass the examination on their own merit without assistance. Members of the public who entrust dental hygienists with their well-being expect that they are trustworthy and competent individuals. The purpose of the examination is to ensure that you, as a candidate for licensure, have achieved entry-level competence. By asking previous test-takers to share unreleased questions, or by obtaining them, you undermine the very purpose of the examination.

What information can I share about the examination?

You can tell others whether you thought it was difficult or easy. You can tell them that you felt well prepared, or not. You can share any broad topic areas that are also listed in the National Board examination specifications that are published in the *Guide* or on ADA.org Web site (e.g., osteogenesis, premolar tooth morphology).

You *cannot* describe specific questions and answers or context of questions related to these topics. If another student or member of the faculty suggests that you should remember and/or share confidential examination information with other students or faculty, you should decline and explain that this is not permitted.

What if some one offers unreleased questions to me?

You should not agree to accept unreleased examination items or confidential examination information or participate in the exchange of this information. If you receive unsolicited confidential or unreleased examination materials, you should inform the program director at your school or contact the Joint Commission office. They may request that you forward the materials for evaluation to determine whether the materials are indeed unreleased or confidential. Failure to do so could inadvertently implicate you in activity that violates Examination Regulations and may jeopardize your ability to achieve National Board certification and licensure.

General Information

Can you send me a *Guide*?

The *Guide* is available as a PDF document at <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp>. Print copies are available by written request to the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations, 211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 600, Chicago, Illinois 60611-2637.

What is on the examination?

The National Board Dental Hygiene Examination has 350 test items in each of three topic areas: Basic Sciences, Clinical Dental Hygiene, and Community Health and Research Principles. Test items in these three areas are intermixed throughout the examination.

There are two testing sessions with a one-hour break (optional break for the computer-based exam) between the two sessions. There are 200 discipline-based multiple-choice items administered in first session. There are 150 case-based items administered in the second session. These items are associated with case materials: a patient history, dental chart, clinical radiographs, and optional intraoral photographs.

The candidate has 3.5 hours to complete the first session of discipline-based items and four hours to complete the second session of case-based items. All items on the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination are in the multiple-choice format.

The *Test Specifications, Sample Item Formats, and Sample Questions* are located at <http://www.ada.org>, which lists the topic areas in each discipline and the corresponding number of items.

Where can I find study materials?

Sample test items and test specifications are found at <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp>. Reference texts are cited at http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/construction/nbdhe_reference_texts.pdf.

The NBDHE released item set and pilot examination can be purchased. Visit <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp> to obtain a PDF order form.

International Dentist Applying for Examination

I am an international dentist. What is required to practice dental hygiene in the United States?

Please contact the dental board of the specific state in which you wish to obtain licensure to determine individual state requirements regarding the practice of dental hygiene. State dental board contact information is located at <http://www.aadexam.org>.

Am I eligible to take the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination?

All graduates of non-accredited programs must meet the NBDHE eligibility requirements. Please refer to the *Guide* for specific information.

Re-Test

How long do I have to wait to retest?

You must wait 90 days between examination attempts. Candidates who have failed the NBDHE three times must wait 12 months before retesting. Please refer to the *Guide* for specific details. Beginning January 2010, a candidate who has received a passing score may not retest unless he or she provides evidence that he or she must retest for purposes of licensure.

Refunds

Are refunds available?

Examination fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Scheduling a Testing Appointment with Pearson VUE

How do I schedule a testing appointment with Pearson VUE?

An e-mail that contains instructions for scheduling your test date will be sent to the e-mail address on your application after your application has been processed. If you do not receive an e-mail, you should contact the Joint Commission office to verify that your application has been approved.

Approved candidates can schedule testing appointments (any day and time (Monday through Friday; Saturdays depending on the testing center) the testing center is open, year-round) by contacting the Pearson VUE Call Center at 888.456.2830 or by visiting

www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe. You can search available testing centers and take a virtual tour of a professional Pearson VUE testing center at www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe.

I called the Pearson VUE phone number, but I cannot get through. What can I do?

The Call Center attempts to answer 80% of the calls within 90 seconds. You can schedule electronically at www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe, or call Pearson VUE when call volume is lower. Call volume is higher at the beginning of each week. The Call Center is open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Central Time, Monday through Friday (closed on all federal government holidays). To schedule through the Web site, you must first create an account with a user name and password.

Pearson VUE says I am not in their system, what can I do?

Confirm with the Joint Commission office that your application has been approved, and it has been at least two business days since the Joint Commission processed your application, then contact the Pearson VUE Call Center at 888.456.2830 or visit www.pearsonvue.com/nbdhe to schedule your testing appointment.

Scoring/Score Reports

How is the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination scored?

A candidate's total score is reported as a standard score, which has been converted from the total number of correct responses (raw score). The examination results are reported as a standard scores ranging from 49 to 99. The minimum passing score on the examination is 75. The raw score needed to achieve a particular standard score is based on the judgment of experts. The National Board Dental Hygiene Examination is criterion-referenced, i.e., candidates are not graded on a curve but against a pre-determined standard.

Please refer to the *Guide* and Technical Report at <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp> for further details on scoring the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination.

Are the scores from the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination based on a curve?

National Board Dental Hygiene Examination scores are criterion-referenced and **not** based on a curve. A candidate whose score is equal to or above a standard score of 75 understands important information from basic biomedical, dental and dental hygiene sciences and has the ability to apply such information in a problem-solving context.

Does a total score of the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination represent either number of correct answers or percentage correct on the examination?

No, the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination score is a standard score, not the number of correct answers, or the percentage correct. The raw score is converted to a scaled score and reported in a score ranging from 49-99.

Does a total score of 74 mean only one score point (one item) below the passing score of 75 on the examination?

Each standard score value represents a range of raw scores. A candidate whose standard score is 74 most likely missed the passing score of 75 by more than one answer. Additionally, all examination results are audited thoroughly before scores are reported to ensure accuracy.

I already checked the *Guide* and the Technical Reports; however, I still have questions regarding my score report. Would you answer my questions over the phone?

Please submit your questions or concerns in writing and forward them to the Joint Commission office by U.S. mail or fax.

Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations/Score Report Question
211 E. Chicago Avenue, Suite 600
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2637
Fax 312.587.4105

When will I receive my score report?

Official score reports for the computer-based examination are mailed approximately three to four weeks after the examination. Dental hygiene programs will receive a computer-based NBDHE school score report once a month for the previous month of testing at approximately the middle of the month (i.e. January 15, 2009 report for all December 2008 computer-based results).

Have you received my request for scores? Has it been processed?

Contact the Joint Commission office at 800.232.1694 and staff can provide the date that score reports were mailed.

To which State Board did I request my scores be sent?

To ensure that you have a record of which agencies you requested score reports be sent, please print and retain a copy of your application confirmation page or score report request for your records. The confirmation e-mail sent to you by the Joint Commission

after your application was approved and processed identifies (at the bottom of the letter) the state boards you requested.

Did I pass the examination?

To protect the confidentiality and privacy of our candidates, the Joint Commission does not report scores by telephone, fax, or e-mail.

I have not tested yet; can I change whom I requested a score report be sent to?

Once you submit your application, you cannot change your selection of state boards.

I made a mistake on my electronic score report request; can I change who I requested a score report be sent to?

Please refer to the agreement in the electronic score report request form. By checking the box, you confirmed that all the information on your request was accurate and understood that you cannot make changes, and refunds will not be issued, once you submit your request.

I tested more than once; can I choose which scores are sent out?

You cannot choose to send any one particular set of scores. The scoring system reports the most recent score, which is the official score.

How do I request my National Board Dental Hygiene Examination scores?

Visit <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/nbdhe/index.asp>. Please read and follow the directions.

How is my score reported to the State Board?

Official score reports for the paper-based examination are mailed approximately six to eight weeks after the examination. Official score reports for the computer-based examination are mailed approximately three to four weeks after the examination. The Joint Commission office reports the most recent score.

Test Center Procedures

What constitutes proper identification for the examination?

You are required to present two forms of ID.

The primary ID must be government issued with a signature and a photo. The secondary ID must have a signature.

All IDs must be valid. Expired IDs will not be accepted. **The name on your application must match the name on your IDs exactly, or you will be denied testing.** For specific information, please review the *Guide*.

What can I bring with me into the Pearson VUE test center?

No personal belongings are permitted in the secure testing area. Any personal belongings brought to the test center must be stored in a locker provided by the testing center. Items prohibited from the secure testing area **include, but are not limited to:**

- a. Books, notes, study materials, scratch paper, or tissues
- b. Dental instruments, models or materials
- c. Slide rules, paper, calculating devices, rulers or other measuring devices
- d. Electronic devices, such as cellular telephones, pagers, recording devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs), radios or stereos with headsets
- e. Tote bags; purses, wallets, backpacks, briefcases
- f. Highlighters, pens, erasers, mechanical pencils
- g. Dictionaries, and translators
- h. Food, candy, gum, water or other beverages
- i. Outerwear, such as coats, jackets, gloves, or head coverings (except for religious or cultural purposes)
- j. Good luck charms or statues, or religious or superstitious talismans
- k. Medicinal items (except those items approved under testing accommodations)

Violations may result in the voiding of your test scores and waiting up to two years to retest. For specific information, please review the *Guide*.

Testing Accommodations

I require accommodations for testing, what do I need to do to receive accommodations?

When completing your examination application, indicate that you are requesting testing accommodations. Once you submit the application, you must provide documentation, including a personal statement outlining what specific accommodations you are requesting (i.e. extra time, separate room, etc.), previous accommodations granted to you, and supporting diagnostic evaluations from the licensed healthcare professional who diagnosed your disability or condition. Please refer to the *Guide* for specific details.

If approved for testing accommodations by the Joint Commission, you will call the Pearson VUE Call Center at 888.456.2830 to schedule your testing appointment. You cannot schedule testing accommodation tests through the Pearson VUE Web site.