Test Security: Protecting the Integrity of Tests with Public Health Implications

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Overview

- Mission Statement – JCNDE
- Purpose of National Board Examinations
- Test Security Threats – Industry Perspective
- Test Security Threats – DTS Perspective
- Test Security – Testing Vendor Strategies
- Irregularity/Appeal Process
- How can you help?
- Future directions
- Q & A
“The JCNDE develops and conducts highly reliable, state of the art cognitive examinations that assist regulatory agencies in making valid decisions regarding licensure of oral health care professionals, develops and implements policy for the orderly, secure, and fair administration of its examinations, and is a leader and resource in assessment for the oral health care profession.”
Purpose of the National Board Examinations

- The purpose of the National Board Examinations is to assist state boards in determining the qualifications of individuals who seek licensure to practice dentistry or dental hygiene.

  - The NBDE and NBDHE assess the cognitive skills of candidates with respect to the tasks required for safe and effective practice.

  - State boards use the information provided by the NBDE and NBDHE to help protect the public health.
DTS is a shared service of the American Dental Association and is responsible for implementing the following admission and licensure testing programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Testing Programs</th>
<th>Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NBDE Part I</td>
<td>NBDE Part II</td>
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<tr>
<td>NBDHE</td>
<td>INBDE (in development)</td>
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**Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dental Admission Test (DAT)</th>
<th>Advanced Dental Admission Test (ADAT)</th>
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<td><strong>Outside clients</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Optometry Admission Test (OAT)</td>
<td>Miscellaneous clients</td>
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Test Security Threats – Industry Perspective
ETS Ad Council’s Cheating Facts Sheet

- Statistics show that cheating among high school students has risen dramatically during the past 50 years.
- In the past, struggling students were more likely to cheat just to get by. Today it is also the above-average college bound students.
- 73% of all test takers cheat at some point.
- Cheating no longer carries the stigma that it previously had.
- Grades, rather than education, have become the major focus of many students.
- Between 75 and 98 percent of college students surveyed each year report having cheated in high school.
David Callahan’s book: “The Cheating Culture”

• David Callahan argues that when the middle class sees wealthy cheaters get away with nothing more than a slap on the wrist, it inspires them to follow suit.

• What is helping to increase the perception that society accepts cheating? Some examples:
  – New England Patriots (Deflategate and Spygate)
  – Volkswagen (“Diesel Dupe” by using a device to cheat emission tests)
  – Wells Fargo (The creation of unauthorized bank and credit card accounts for financial gain)
  – Firefighters (New York Firefighters were reported to have accessed answer keys with their mobile phones in the restroom)
Rationalizations for Cheating

• Competitive edge or leveling the playing field
  – If there is a perception of an unfair advantage, there are some who will turn to cheating

• Financial gain

• “Nobody is looking” or “I won’t get caught”

• Policies and procedures are ill-defined or inconsistent
  – For example: If someone is allowed to use their phone or tablet in one class, why would they not be able to use it in another class?
Cheating is not a Victimless Crime

- Unearned internships, jobs, admission to universities in place of those who were more deserving (i.e., those who put in the necessary work)

- Must protect the public health by helping to ensure only competent and qualified professionals practice
  - Testing to the test versus testing for knowledge
Top Threats to Test Integrity  (Courtesy of Caveon, LLC)

- Capturing download files or mail booklets
- Photographing test content during the test
- Copying the test session electronically
- Memorizing test content
- Recording questions verbally
- Receiving test content from an insider
- Manipulation of testing rules
Top Cheating Threats (Courtesy of Caveon, LLC)

- Using pre-exposure to test content
- Using a proxy
- Receiving assistance during the test
- Using aids during the test
- Tampering with or changing answers or scores
- Copying from someone else during the test
- Manipulation of testing rules
Test Security Threats – DTS Perspective
Security Threats Experienced by DTS

The following are examples of previous threats the Department of Testing Services has experienced:

- Forged score report; altered reported results
- Hidden notes, phone, tablet in bathroom
- Unscheduled break violation (notes in car, friend in lobby)
- Falsified identity; tested under sister’s SSN and name
- Falsified score report; never tested
- Physical threat to staff from angry candidates whose results were voided; candidate flew across the country to DTS offices and demanded to speak to someone
Impact of Cheating on DTS Testing Programs

- Cost to replace items (industry estimate: $1500+ per item)
- Undermines validity and reliability of testing program
- Increased cost to candidates due to security expenses
- Threatens safety of healthcare provided to public
- Threatens public perception of the healthcare profession
Consequences for Candidates

• Results voided
• Retest penalty; typically one to two years; in extreme cases could even be lifetime ban
• Does not delay repayment of student loans
• Delays graduation
• Jeopardizes acceptance into post-graduate programs
• Jeopardizes licensure
Test Security  – Testing Vendor Strategies
Checking-in With a Testing Vendor

- Two (2) IDs
  - Primary ID must be non-expired, government-issued and bear a photo and signature.
  - Secondary ID must bear a signature
- Image Capture Required
- Biometrics Required
  - Fingerprint or Palm Vein
- Note boards and markers allowed but provided by vendor
  - Note taking is not allowed before test begins or during scheduled breaks
Enhanced Security Policies

- All candidates will be required to remove their eyeglasses for close visual inspection by a test administrator.
  - Inspections occur at check-in and upon returning from breaks
- Jewelry—except for wedding and engagement rings—is prohibited
- Hair and any accessories are subject to inspection
- Close visual inspection of pockets, arm sleeves, etc.
- A proctor will use a wand to search the candidate for any electronic devices
Unscheduled Breaks During an Examination

• During unscheduled breaks, candidates may NOT access personal belongings or prohibited items, refer to notes or texts, use a telephone, eat food or beverages, or leave the test center.
  – Examination Regulations and Prohibited Conduct
    • 2017 NBDE Part I Guide – Regulation #5, page 30
    • 2017 NBDE Part II Guide – Regulation #5, page 33
    • 2017 NBDHE Guide – Regulation #5, page 34

RED – Candidate has no access to lockers at all
YELLOW – Candidate may only access their locker for food, drink, or medicine
GREEN – Candidate has full access to all belongings in locker
BLUE – For clients with non-standard break policies, Client Practice must be consulted
Camera Devices are Prohibited
Unauthorized Notes are Prohibited

Step 4: enter your notes... that you just can’t remember.

TI Calculator How-To Series

INPUT NOTES INTO TI-84/83 WITHOUT NOTEFOLIO

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Irregularity and Appeal Process
Definition of Irregularity

- An irregularity is defined as a situation in which there could be a question about the validity of examination results in accurately reflecting the ability and skills of a candidate.
Examples of an Irregularity

• Reasons for withholding scores include, but are not limited to*:
  – Unusual answer patterns
  – Atypical score increases from one examination attempt to another
  – Inconsistent performance on different parts of a test
  – Improper access to secure test content
  – Test administration irregularity
  – Falsification of personal identification, application information, or supporting documents
  – Violation of rules and regulations
  – Falsification of score report
  – Information indicating the results might not be valid

* Areas with most irregularities appear in green
Irregularity Process Step One: Report of Irregularity or Request for Appeal

- Testing vendor irregularity report (rule or regulation violation)
- Policy Appeal (examples: 5 time/5 year and 90-day retest)
- Anonymous tips, routine audit procedures
- Supporting documentation gathered and assembled into packets
Irregularity Process Step Two: Violation confirmed; Notification Sent

• Candidate has 30 days to submit an appeal upon notification of a violation (Limited Right of Appeal for Examination Candidates)

• Protocol regarding when results are withheld, voided, or another appropriate penalty

• Reported results may be voided, unreleased results will be withheld pending resolution of appeal
Sample Violation Notification

This is concerning the administration of the [name of examination] on [date]. The test center reported that you [violation - accessed your locker during an unscheduled break]. This violates the Examination Regulations and Prohibited Conduct (regulation [#], page [#]) section of the enclosed [examination guide].

As a consequence of this violation, the JCNDE has voided your [date] [examination] results. You will have to wait [12 months] from the date of your examination, until [date], before you can retest.

If you wish to appeal this decision, you must submit the request in writing within 30 days of receiving this notice. An appeal request should include any supporting documentation and must also include a statement of the action you seek. The decision on a request for appeal will be communicated to you within 60 days after we receive the request. Additional information about appeals is included in the enclosed copy of the JCNDE’s Limited Right of Appeal for Examination Candidates.

All matters relative to the irregularity and appeal process must be conducted in writing.
The Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE) recognizes that strict application of the Examination Regulations for National Board Examinations may, because of unusual circumstances, impose an unusual burden on one or more candidates. In these situations, the JCNDE may consider an appeal.

Requests for an appeal pertaining to test results must be initiated within 30 days of receiving test results or, in the case of withheld results, within 30 days of receiving written notice that results are being withheld. In the event that the JCNDE has given notice that previously released results are to be invalidated or voided, the request for appeal must be submitted within 30 days of that notice. In this case, a request for appeal will stay the action to invalidate or void the results until such time as the appeal is decided or the time for submitting a request for appeal has expired. A request for an appeal must be submitted in writing and must include adequate supporting documentation. The request for an appeal must indicate the specific relief requested.

A request for an appeal will first be screened by the Chair, in consultation with the secretary. The Chair, at his/her sole discretion, may 1) grant the appeal, 2) deny the appeal, or 3) forward the appeal to the full Joint Commission for its consideration. If during the Joint Commission’s deliberations credible information becomes available indicating an error was made in the decision to withhold scores, the Chair in consultation with the secretary may end the deliberations and grant the appeal. At his or her discretion, the Chair may delegate the screening of appeals to another member of the Joint Commission.

In rendering a decision with respect to appeals—and particularly in situations where results have been withheld—the touchstone and foremost consideration is the validity of examination results, in alignment with the purpose of the examination. The Joint Commission strives to be fair and objective in its decision making process, as it remains true to its mission. When considering appeals, the JCNDE avoids favoritism and strives to ensure that all candidates are treated equally and fairly.

If the issue presented in an appeal is likely to recur, the JCNDE may consider a change in its Examination Regulations. The granting of an appeal will be considered a precedent only if a change in regulations is also adopted. The candidate will be notified of JCNDE action within 60 days after receipt of the written request for an appeal.
Irregularity Process Step Three: Committee Chair or Committee Member Packet

• If candidate submits an appeal, packet is forwarded to the appropriate Committee Chair for review. The Chair grants, denies, or forwards to the full Committee for ballot
Irregularity Process Step Four: Decision Letter

- Candidate is provided written notification of decision (response deadline is 60 days from receipt of appeal)

- If the appeal is denied or no appeal is filed, results will be voided, or other appropriate sanctions imposed. Alternatively, when a failing score has been obtained, the examination program may elect to report the failing score
How Can You Help?

• Emphasize to students the importance of keeping examination materials confidential.

• Remind students of the examination’s purpose, its importance for public health outcomes, and the importance of each candidate passing the test based on his/her own skills. Would students want their loved ones to receive healthcare from a provider who had passed only by breaking the rules?

• Remind students sharing or using unreleased examination materials is prohibited and can come with severe consequences.

• Report violators!
Future Direction

• Focus on identifying violations of shared unreleased content through: blogs, Facebook, Twitter, other social media sites, and webpages.

• Increased data forensics to identify cheating

• Templates for the appeal process to enhance submission procedures
  • JCNDE Policy for 5 time / 5 year policy (implemented 2012)
## Contact Information

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Questions?