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ADA Department of Testing Services
Examination Program Updates for the
Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL)

ADEA Section on Dental Hygiene Education
March 13, 2023

Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH)

The ATDH is a nationally administered standardized admission test that is used to assist dental hygiene programs with admissions decisions, providing helpful information on the readiness of applicants to benefit from educational training in dental hygiene. The ATDH is professionally developed, serving as a valid, reliable, and fair measure of candidate skills. The examination consists of six sections: Reading Comprehension, Language Usage, Quantitative Reasoning, Perceptual Ability, Biology, and General Chemistry.

The ATDH first launched in late 2021. In that year, a total of 522 ATDH administrations occurred. In the following year, 1,106 ATDH administrations occurred, more than doubling the number of administrations from the prior year. The ATDH is anticipated to continue its growth in 2023, as the program looks to provide an additional benefit to programs by transitioning from window-based testing (i.e., administering only in fixed time windows) to continuous testing sometime in the latter half of the year. Under a continuous testing model, the ATDH will be administered year-round, with candidates receiving their results 3 to 4 weeks after their test date.

DTS invites your dental hygiene program to consider utilization of the ATDH, to help strengthen your admission process.

For additional information and updates please visit the ATDH website: Admission Test for Dental Hygiene | American Dental Association (ada.org).

Test Construction Teams (TCTs)

Test Construction Teams (TCTs) are responsible for the development of items and examination forms, using established guidelines for writing high-quality multiple-choice items. Criteria for selecting Test Constructors are considered annually. TCT members are selected by CDEL based on the recommendations of its Dental Admission Testing Committee (DATC), and factors such as the match between examination content needs and each individual's areas of expertise and experience.

DTS invites faculty in your dental hygiene program to consider serving as test constructors, to help further strengthen the ATDH program.

For additional information and updates please see: Become a Volunteer Test Constructor | American Dental Association (ada.org).