

COVID-19 UPDATES
ADA Department of Testing Services (DTS)
December 1, 2021

This document presents the latest available information concerning the impact of COVID-19 on examination programs implemented by the ADA's Department of Testing Services (DTS), on behalf of governing bodies such as the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE), the ADA Board of Trustees, the ADA Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL), and the Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO). This document is updated regularly. Changes to this document are also noted on the final page of this document, for ease of review.

DTS staff are operating at full capacity and are available to assist with any testing questions or issues. Please contact staff via phone, email or by clicking the **GET HELP** button on the right side of most DTS web pages.

ADAT	adatexam@ada.org
DAT	datexam@ada.org
OAT	oatexam@ada.org
NBDE Part II INBDE NBDHE	nbexams@ada.org
DLOSCE	dlosce@ada.org

Read this document in full for the most up-to-date information regarding your testing program, or click on a subject below for more information.

[Breaking News](#)

New information not shared in previous versions of this document that may significantly affect candidates and examination programs.

[Safety Considerations](#)

General information, updates, and recommendations based on current CDC guidelines.

[General Information on Examination Administrations](#)

Details pertaining to all examination programs regarding appointments, cancellations, and other information.

[Program Modifications](#)

Specific updates for each individual examination program.

[Prometric Testing Center Policies and Procedures](#)

Prometric administers the DAT, OAT, NBDE Part II, INBDE, and DLOSCE.

[Pearson VUE Testing Center Policies and Procedures](#)

Pearson VUE administers the ADAT and NBDHE.

Please follow all [CDC recommendations](#) regarding personal healthy and community safety. Visit the [American Dental Association's COVID-19 web page](#), which serves as a Coronavirus Resource Center for oral health care professionals.

Breaking News

[December 1, 2021:] As a federal contractor, Pearson VUE must comply with the requirements of Executive Order 14042. As such, Pearson VUE is required to follow CDC guidance as it relates to masking and distancing in their company-owned facilities (PPCs, PTCs, and TTCs) in the United States and U.S. territories, even where there are no local requirements to wear masks or practice social distancing.

[September 21, 2021:] **Prometric advises all candidates to bring the Proof of Vaccination documentation provided to them by their medical provider at the time of vaccination.** Prometric will continue to comply with regional and local/government guidance and mandates, so anywhere proof of vaccination is required, they will make every effort to inform and educate candidates in advance.

[August 17, 2021:] Most Pearson VUE locations are now operating at 100% capacity, with the following exceptions, which remain at 50% capacity:

- United States: Maryland
- Canada: Alberta; Newfoundland & Labrador; Nova Scotia; Ontario

[August 11, 2021:] In looking to launch the second phase of evolving test center policies, Prometric originally announced it would no longer require fully vaccinated individuals to wear masks in their global test centers, starting September 1, 2021. **However, with recent updated guidance and data from the WHO and CDC, Prometric is pausing their mask rollback efforts and will continue to mandate everyone wear masks at their global test centers for the foreseeable future.** See the [Prometric Testing Center Policies and Procedures](#) section below for more details.

[July 28, 2021:] Prometric has continued to review changing government restrictions globally, as well as maximize capacity and program delivery. **As a result of lifting restrictions, Prometric announces it is able to deliver all programs in all jurisdictions in which they currently operate.** As of late July 2021, more than 95 percent of its test center network is open and more than 90 percent are at full occupancy.

Safety Considerations

DTS strongly recommends all candidates schedule and take their examinations as soon as possible to avoid possible test center restrictions as the pandemic continues to create restrictions.

General Information on Examination Administrations

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, DTS has worked closely with our testing vendors – Pearson VUE and Prometric – to ensure candidates are able to take admissions and licensure examinations on time in safe testing environments.

All DTS examinations are considered essential programs by Prometric and Pearson VUE. This designation allows candidates to sit for their examinations as long as the testing center is open and appointments are available to candidates.

Candidates may find it helpful to keep checking the testing vendor's website for earlier appointments, as availability is changing regularly as states reopen and expand services. Candidates should also not forget to check for available appointments for openings that are quite soon; late cancellations by candidates testing in other programs can result in open seats. Candidates who are unable to travel for an examination due to illness, increased travel restrictions, or concerns regarding personal health must email testingproblems@ada.org, providing the candidate's DENTPIN and an explanation of the situation.

There are no current delays to scoring or reporting of candidate results.

Program Modifications

ADAT: No specific changes at this time. Please see the [ADAT web pages](#) for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

DAT: No specific changes at this time. Please see the [DAT web pages](#) for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

OAT: No specific changes at this time. Please see the [OAT web pages](#) for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

NBDE PART II: The requirement that the NBDE Part II be administered on consecutive days has been suspended. Candidates taking the NBDE Part II can now schedule the second day of testing within 14 days of their first day of testing.

Please see the [NBDE web pages](#) for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

NBDHE: Short-form administrations of the NBDHE can now be scheduled and completed. These forms require less than four hours to complete, and are available at thousands of Pearson VUE Authorized Test Centers located throughout the US. This is in addition to the 280+ Pearson Professional Centers that are owned and operated by Pearson VUE that currently administer the NBDHE. More information can be found on the [NBDHE Quick Facts](#) and [Short-Form FAQs](#).

Pearson VUE Test Center Site Capacity at 100% with Exceptions: As a direct result of state and county social distancing guidelines driven by COVID-19, testing appointment availability had been substantially reduced at sites across the US, with most Pearson VUE sites operating at 50% capacity or less. However, as of August 17, 2021, all sites are operating at 100% with the following exceptions, which remain at 50% capacity:

- United States: Maryland
- Canada: Alberta; Newfoundland & Labrador; Nova Scotia; Ontario

Test center site capacity continues to fluctuate as guidelines are further modified at the state and county level, and as Pearson VUE extends testing hours where this is possible. In light of the situation, the Department of Testing Services (DTS) recommends the following:

- Candidates should schedule their testing appointments as soon as possible to avoid delays in testing.
- Candidates who have already scheduled appointments may wish to revisit their scheduling periodically to see if an earlier appointment may be available, as Pearson VUE adjusts to meet the demand.
- Candidates whose six-month eligibility window is about to expire are invited to contact DTS at testingproblems@ada.org if they are experiencing scheduling issues.
- Candidates experiencing general difficulties obtaining an NBDHE testing appointment are welcome to contact DTS at nbexams@ada.org.
- When reaching out to DTS, candidates should make sure to include their DENTPIN, preferred testing location (including city and state), and the date range in which they are trying to take the exam.

A NOTE ON THE NBDHE FAILURE RATE: Some candidates who have recently taken the NBDHE have reached out to DTS expressing concern that the short-form-NBDHE might be yielding higher failure rates than expected. DTS has conducted psychometric investigations correspondingly, permitting DTS to meaningfully compare the performance of the standard and

short forms. These investigations have found no meaningful differences between these sets of forms; to clarify, DTS' analyses show that candidates who attempted the NBDHE later in 2020 have been more likely to fail, regardless of whether they attempted the full-length examination or the shortened form.

DTS suspects the elevated failure rates observed toward the end of 2020 occurred because candidates were further removed from their academic studies and corresponding clinical experiences, and performed less well on the examination as a result. Candidates are encouraged to bear this in mind as they prepare for the NBDHE, making sure to devote the time that is needed so they can demonstrate the performance level that subject matter experts have determined is necessary for safe practice.

Please see the [NBDHE web pages](#) for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

INBDE: The INBDE launched on August 1, 2020. Testing appointments are available. Please see the INBDE web pages for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

DLOSCE: Candidates may schedule an appointment for the next DLOSCE testing window:

- April 1 – May 4, 2021

The number of test centers capable of administering the DLOSCE has expanded substantially, and continues to grow. A list of Prometric testing centers available for the DLOSCE is available on the DLOSCE website. Candidates are invited to continue to review this list to locate a convenient test center.

The following states have adopted regulations which permit the acceptance of the DLOSCE: Alaska, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Oregon, and Washington. In some states, passage of the DLOSCE only partially fulfills the clinical examination requirement for licensure. Please refer to each dental board's website for specific details, clarifications, and updated policies, and any additional testing that may be required in each state.

The JCNDE would like to assist those in the military services who are interested in challenging the DLOSCE, but are finding it difficult to do so given scheduling conflicts involving the DLOSCE testing windows and officer training requirements (e.g., ODS). Individuals in this situation are encouraged to contact the Department of Testing Services (DTS) at testingproblems@ada.org. DTS will work with these individuals to coordinate DLOSCE administrations outside of the standard testing windows indicated above.

Please see the [DLOSCE web pages](#) for additional details and to register for a testing appointment.

Prometric Testing Center Policies and Procedures

The information below concerns candidates who are taking the following examinations:

- Dental Admission Test (DAT)
- Optometry Admission Test (OAT)
- National Board Dental Examination (NBDE) Part II
- Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination (DLOSCE)
- The Integrated National Board Dental Examination (INBDE)

[September 21, 2021:] A number of government guidelines and regional mandates are beginning to require candidates to present Proof of Vaccination at check-in in order to test. As of today, this only affects a small number of sites and candidates. However, Prometric understands that additional regions may take this step and there might be variations on what proof is required.

Thus, Prometric is advising all candidates to bring the documentation provided to them by their medical provider at the time of vaccination. Prometric will continue to comply with regional and local/government guidance and mandates, so anywhere proof of vaccination is required, they will make every effort to inform and educate candidates in advance.

By Monday, September 27th, they will update their current Site Status page at [Prometric.com](https://www.prometric.com). The page moving forward will be titled “**Sites Requiring Proof of Vaccination**” in the header and the drop down menu on the home page. That page will maintain a list of test sites globally that require proof of vaccination in order to test. In addition to updating their website, they will update the candidate email confirmation advising all candidates that are affected or testing in a center with this new guideline in place.

[August 11, 2021:] Per the information below, on Monday, August 2, 2021, Prometric went live with Phase I of its return to post-Pandemic, standard operating procedures, which included re-enacting processes such as metal detector wanding candidates prior to entering the test room, frequent physical walkthroughs of the test room, and the use of erasable note boards and markers. The resumption of these various touchpoint processes was based on their engagements with JHU and data from the CDC and WHO, which demonstrates COVID-19 transmission via touch is exceptionally rare.

In looking to launch the second phase of evolving test center policies, Prometric originally announced they would no longer require fully vaccinated individuals to wear masks in their global test centers, starting September 1, 2021. **However, with recent updated guidance and data from the WHO and CDC, Prometric is pausing their mask rollback efforts and will continue to mandate everyone wear masks at their global test centers for the foreseeable future.**

The only exception to their mask mandate rule at this time will be at sites on state universities in states where executive orders prohibit government agencies and institutions of higher education from mandating face coverings or restricting activities on their respective properties in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Candidates will still be allowed to wear masks according to their comfort level at these sites, but masks will not be mandatory. If a country prohibits private businesses from enforcing mask mandates on government property, Prometric will adhere to such orders and masks will be encouraged but not mandatory. At this time, Prometric is not aware of any orders prohibiting masks other than those state-specific orders regarding state property identified above. All candidate resources on [Prometric.com](https://www.prometric.com) will be updated the week of August 9, 2021 to ensure candidates know what to expect.

Please note that Prometric will still move forward with the other portion of Phase II starting September 1, 2021, which states they will no longer accept IDs that are more than 90 days expired. They will continue to accept ID that have expired within 90 days of the exam date for the interim.

[July 2021:] Prometric has continued to review changing government restrictions globally, as well as maximize capacity and program delivery. As a result of lifting restrictions, Prometric is able to deliver all programs in all jurisdictions in which they currently operate. As of late July 2021, more than 95 percent of its test center network is open and more than 90 percent are at full occupancy.

Prometric recognizes that local and state jurisdictions have varying policies, and Prometric continues to monitor some global locations considered global hot spots for any and all changes in COVID government and local restrictions that may require re-implementation of essential only testing. As such, candidate-facing information regarding essential testing on both the [Essential Client Programs](#) and [Site Status](#) pages will remain available on the Prometric website, should rollbacks occur, until determined to be no longer necessary. The [COVID Test Taker FAQs](#) have been updated to reflect their current policy regarding essential services.

Prometric.com updates will be reflected on their [COVID-19 Updates page](#), [Test Center Policies page](#), [What to Expect page](#), and [Help Center Portal](#).

The next evolution of operations will follow a phased approach, in which Prometric will return to or amend standard operating procedures that were in practice prior to the pandemic or were created as a result of the pandemic. Should government guidance regress and become more restrictive, Prometric will align with the restrictions to ensure the health of candidates and test center staff.

Phase I

Phase 1 has an expected implementation date of **August 2, 2021**, and will include Prometric adding the following procedures to their permanent standard operating procedures:

- **Providing hand sanitizer for test takers and staff.**
- **Retaining virtual walkthroughs.** Physical walkthroughs will return, with the virtual walkthroughs continuing to be cycled with this process.
- **Posting test center regulations (TCR) on the wall in high traffic areas of test centers.** This will replace handing them out individually to candidates.
- **No longer recording the last 4-digits of ID#s presented on candidate sign-in logs.** Prometric will continue to record the type of ID presented and the expiration date.
- **Empowering Prometric staff to enter check-in and check-out time for candidates exiting the testing lab.** This will replace capturing candidate signatures during breaks.

Additionally, Prometric will re-implement various standard procedures (where allowed) during Phase 1, resulting in the following updates to test center operations:

- Cleaning test centers at close of business, rather than after every exam administered.
- Not requiring candidates to raise their hands to leave the testing room.
- Removing social-distancing markers throughout the test center.
- Reducing distance for candidate photos (for clients that require facial photos).
- Returning all chairs and/or benches in the test center waiting rooms.
- Scanning test takers with a handheld metal detection device prior to entering the testing room (with exception of exempt individuals).
- Reverting to having candidates sign-in at reception and eyeglass check at the security checkpoint.
- Returning to a three-color locker key tag policy to enforce client-specific locker access policies during an exam.
- Enabling use of water fountains and water dispensers, where applicable.
- Removing the requirement for candidate IDs in zip lock bags.
- Using a single roster for sign-in and sign-out.
- Returning to the use of note boards and markers, rather than paper and pencils.

Phase II

Phase 2 of Prometric's return to modified test center operations is expected to be implemented **September 1, 2021** and will include the following:

- A mask will no longer be required at Prometric Test Centers for vaccinated individuals, unless required by local government restrictions. Individuals who have not been vaccinated will still be required to wear masks at test centers. Please note that this will be observed using the honor system, as TCAs will not be responsible for checking a candidate's vaccination status. Vaccinated test takers and staff that wish to continue to wear a mask may do so.
- Evolving test center signage to reflect new mask policies and to be more encompassing of best practices for all airborne illnesses, including cold, flu, etc.
- No longer accepting IDs that are more than 90 days expired. Prometric will continue to

accept IDs which have expired within 90 days of the exam date for the interim.

For specific information related to Prometric testing appointments, test centers or policies, please visit the [Prometric website](#). Candidates should visit the Prometric website for the status of [test center closures](#); this list is updated regularly but may not be comprehensive. DTS staff does not have information regarding the open or closed status of specific test centers. Candidates are also invited to view a video on [What to Expect on Test Day](#).

Pearson VUE Testing Center Policies and Procedures

The information below concerns candidates who are taking the following examinations:

- Advanced Dental Admission Test (ADAT)
- National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE)

Effective December 1, 2021: As a federal contractor, Pearson VUE must comply with the requirements of Executive Order 14042. As such, Pearson VUE is required to follow CDC guidance as it relates to masking and distancing in their company-owned facilities (PPCs, PTCs, and TTCs) in the United States and U.S. territories, even where there are no local requirements to wear masks or practice social distancing.

Here is how this Executive Order affects candidates at Pearson VUE facilities:

- Pearson VUE is required to follow CDC guidance as it relates to masking and distancing in their company-owned facilities (PPCs, PTCs, and TTCs) in the United States and U.S. territories, even where there are no local requirements to wear masks or distance.
 - In areas of high or substantial community spread, all individuals are required to wear a face mask in their facilities.
 - Unvaccinated individuals are always required to wear masks in their facilities, even if the area is no longer considered to have high or substantial community spread.
 - Unvaccinated individuals will need to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from all other individuals.
 - Currently, all of their PPCs in the United States and United States Territories are in areas of high or substantial spread. The [search functionality](#) on their COVID-19 Update Page remains the preferred way for candidates to verify specific test center requirements.
 - **On December 1, 2021, the face mask mandate goes into effect across their U.S. facilities.**
- Third-party test centers in their network that deliver federal exams on behalf of Pearson VUE and in connection with such services must also comply with the requirements in the Executive Order.
 - Third-party test centers must opt in to deliver federal exams under these updated terms.
 - Pearson VUE will require a signed amendment back from the test centers indicating their compliance.
 - If test centers cannot agree to comply, they will no longer be able to deliver federal exams at their facility.

Pearson VUE recommends candidates visit the [COVID-19 Update Page](#) to review the most up-to-date health and safety requirements. Candidates who do not comply with the mask requirement will be refused testing. In such cases, Pearson VUE does not intend to issue refunds.

Effective August 1st, 2021: as a global policy, Pearson VUE will recommend – but no longer require - testing candidates wear face masks while at a Pearson VUE testing center, unless

local laws require face masks be worn.

Candidate messaging on the Pearson VUE COVID Update Page will reflect this change in policy and candidate confirmation letters will provide a reference for candidates to self-check if their test center location requires a face mask be worn. In locations where face masks are required per local government mandates, testing candidates must comply accordingly.

There is one exception to the August 1st start date: Per a newly-released government policy, Pearson VUE will not require face masks be worn in their England PPCs starting July 19th.

Testing centers are open in all states. Due to the ongoing pandemic, governments may at any time reinstate measures limiting operations in testing centers. Pearson VUE continues to monitor the situation and available recommendations, and will adjust testing capacity and/or operations accordingly. These adjustments may require additional cancellations of candidate appointments. **Candidates should refer to the [Pearson Vue Coronavirus Update](#) webpage for the most updated information regarding test centers in specific states.**

Pearson VUE has outfitted all test centers with health and safety necessities, such as hand sanitizer, disinfectant, etc., so that operations can continue. Additionally, all candidates are required to wear a face mask and respect social distancing requirements. Pearson VUE monitors restrictions and makes adjustments as necessary.

For specific information related to Pearson VUE testing appointments, test centers or policies, please visit the [Pearson VUE website](#). DTS staff does not have information regarding the open or closed status of specific test centers.

Change Log

- 12/1/2021: Updates made to Breaking News and to the Pearson VUE Testing Center Policies and Procedures section, reflecting their requirement to follow CDC guidance as it relates to masking and social distancing.
- 9/21/2021: Updates made to Breaking News and to the Prometric Testing Center Policies and Procedures section.
- 8/11/2021: Updates made to Breaking News and to the Prometric Testing Center Policies and Procedures section.
- 7/28/2021 Data added regarding capacity and program delivery at Prometric test centers.
- 7/20/2021 Updates made to the Pearson VUE Testing Center Policies and Procedures section, with new information regarding face mask policy.
- 7/8/2021 Updates made to the Prometric Testing Center Policies and Procedures section, with new information on standard operating procedures and test center operations.
- 2/10/2021 Update to the NBHDE section: Pearson VUE Test Center Site Capacity Limited Due to COVID-19 Restrictions.
- 1/19/2021 The NBDE Part I has been discontinued; all mention of the examination has been removed from this document. Information has been added to the *Program Modification* regarding NBDHE failure rates.
- 12/4/2020 Updates were made to the layout of this document.
- 10/9/2020 Updates were made to the DLSCOCE fee for 2021 and DLOSCE testing dates; candidates are now able to schedule appointments during two testing windows.
- 9/4/2020 Updates were made to the layout of this document.
- 7/30/2020 Updates were made to all sections of this document. Updates were made to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding availability at Pearson VUE testing centers. Previous versions of this report stated that Prometric would reinstate its cancellation and rescheduling fees on August 1, 2020; that date has been changed to August 3, 2020, and the new date is now reflected in this document. The first DLOSCE testing window has closed. The short-form-NBDHE is now available for administration.
- 7/16/2020 Updates were made to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding the Prometric policy on rescheduling fees. Updates were also made to this section regarding appointment availability at Pearson VUE testing centers. The INBDE has been added to various areas within this document.
- 6/25/2020 Updates were made to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding appointment availability at Prometric and Pearson VUE testing centers. Updates were made to the *DLOSCE* section regarding 1) states that currently accept the DLOSCE for licensure purposes, and 2) testing for those in the military.
- 6/18/2020 Updates were made to every section of this document. Key changes include the release of the DLOSCE and news concerning the release of the short-form-NBDHE.
- 5/28/2020 Update to the *DLOSCE* section regarding the application for 2020 testing appointments.

5/26/2020 Update to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding Prometric testingcenters.
Additional links to DLOSCE webinar recordings were provided.

- 5/21/2020 Update to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding Prometric and Pearson VUE testing centers. Specific updates to the NBDHE program were shared. Links to DLOSCE webinar recordings were provided.
- 5/7/2020 Update to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding Prometric and Pearson VUE testing centers. Two DLOSCE webinars were announced.
- 4/30/2020 Update to the *Test Administration Vendors* section regarding Pearson VUE reopening schedules and personal protection requirements for candidates.
- 4/27/2020 Update to the *Examination Eligibility* section regarding an extended administration window for ADAT, DAT, and OAT candidates. Relabeled this section "*Examination Eligibility and Program Modifications*" and provided additional program modification information within this section. Update to the *Test Administration Vendors* section concerning test center openings.
- 4/10/2020 Update to *Test Administration Vendors* section (Prometric). Significant updates to the *Examination Eligibility* section regarding the extension of the NBDE Part I for all candidates.
- 4/7/2020 Update to *Test Administration Vendors* section (Pearson VUE).
- 4/2/2020 Updates to the *Breaking News* and *Examination Eligibility* sections; notification of release of the DLOSCE; notification of suspension of operations of Educational Credential Evaluators (ECE); extension of NBDE Part I discontinuation date to 10/31/2020 for candidates trained by CODA accredited dental programs.
- 3/20/2020 Significant updates to the *Examination Eligibility* section; inclusion of excerpt from Prometric communication; minor changes to the sequence of presented information in the *Test Administration Vendors* section, for ease of reading; creation of a *Change Log* to facilitate review of changes to this document.
- 3/17/2020 Initial release of the DTS "COVID-19 Updates" document.