

# The Cost of Cheating in High-Stakes Admission and Licensure Testing

ADEA Annual Session  
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# Overview

- Mission Statement – JCNDE
- Purpose of National Board Examinations
- Session Objectives
- Objective One – What Constitutes Fraud and Cheating
- Objective Two – Potential Long-Term Consequences
- Objective Three – Understanding the Appeals Process
- Final Thoughts From The Panel
- Q/A
- Wrap-Up

# Mission Statement of the JCNDE

“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 (NBEs) is to assist dental boards in determining the qualifications of dentists/dental hygienists who seek licensure to practice dentistry/dental hygiene.
  - The NBEs assess candidates' ability to understand and apply learned information in a problem-solving context.
  - State boards use the information provided by the NBEs to help protect the public health.

# DTS, Governing Bodies, and Examination Programs

DTS, a shared service of the ADA, implements high-stakes licensure and admission examination programs for the following governing bodies:

<b>Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE)</b>	<b>Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Board Dental Examinations (NBDE)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Part I</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Part II</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> INBDE (Under development; replaces NBDE Part I (2020) and NBDE Part II (2022))</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> NBDHE</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dental Admission Test (DAT)</li> <li>• Advanced Dental Admission Test (ADAT)</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Outside Clients</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>ADA Board of Trustees - DLOSCE Steering Committee</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optometry Admission Test (OAT)</li> <li>• Canadian Dental Admission Test (CDAT)</li> <li>• Additional clients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination (DLOSCE)</li> </ul>

# Session Objectives

- Identify what constitutes fraud and cheating on dental admission and licensure examinations.
- Understand the potential long-term consequences of cheating for an individual and an examination program.
- Understand the appeals process if a testing irregularity is identified for an administration of an examination under the purview of the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE).

# What Constitutes Fraud and Cheating on Dental Admission and Licensure Examinations?

# 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.
- Not all irregularities involve fraud or cheating.
- This presentation focuses on irregularities involving violations of JCNDE examination rules and regulations.



# 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 the most irregularities appear in green**

# Unscheduled Breaks During an Examination

- During an unscheduled break, a candidate may NOT access personal belongings or prohibited items, study or refer to notes or texts, use a telephone, eat food or beverages, or leave the test center.
  - Examination Regulations and Prohibited Conduct
    - 2019 NBDE Part I Guide – Page 23
    - 2019 NBDE Part II Guide – Page 25
    - 2019 NBDHE Guide – Page 24



**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

# Security Threats Experienced by DTS

Examples of security threats DTS 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 SS# and name
- Falsified score report; never tested
- Physical threat to staff from angry candidates whose results were voided (candidate flew across the country and showed up at JCNDE offices, demanding to speak to someone)

# Top Threats to Test Validity (Courtesy of Caveon, LLC)

- Capturing download files or mail booklets
- Photographing test content during the test
- Copying the test session electronically
- Memorizing the test content
- Recording questions verbally
- Receiving the test content from an insider
- Manipulation of testing rules

# Top Cheating Threats (Courtesy of Caveon, LLC)

- 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

# Proxy Testing

- 2011 – American College Testing (ACT)
  - 15 high school students arrested in New York
    - Paid proxy examinees between \$500 and \$3,600 to take the ACT and SAT in their place
  
- Anderson, J., & Applebome, P. (2011, December 1). *Exam cheating on Long Island hardly a secret*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/02/education/on-long-island-sat-cheating-was-hardly-a-secret.html>

# Pre-exposure to Test Content

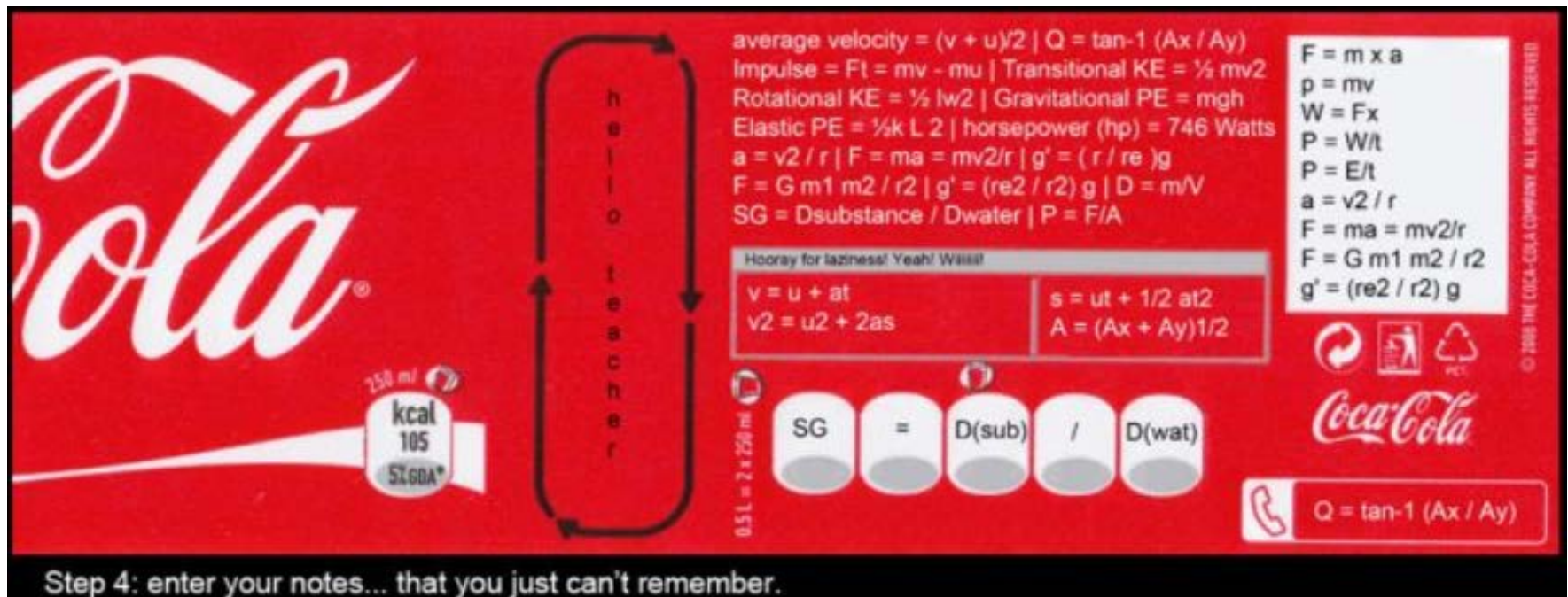
- 2010 – American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM)
  - 140 doctors accused of having acquired or assisted in the attainment of Board certified exams
- 2012 - CNN investigation revealed radiology residents were using “recalls” or large banks of memorized questions
  - Provided by the residency programs
    - Encouraged its soon-to-test residents to memorize items to contribute to the recall banks
- Zamost, S., Griffin, D., & Ansari, A. (2012, January 13). *Exclusive: Doctors cheated on exams*. Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/2012/01/13/health/prescription-for-cheating/index.html>

# Camera Devices are Strictly Prohibited





# Unauthorized Notes are Prohibited



TI Calculator How-To Series

INPUT NOTES  
 INTO TI-84/83  
 WITHOUT  
 NOTEFOLIO



# For the Panel

- From your perspectives, can you expand on what constitutes fraud or cheating?

# What are the Potential Long-Term Consequences of Cheating for an Individual and an Examination Program?

# Consequences to Candidates

- Results voided
- Retest penalty; typically one to two years
- Operating under the purview of examination program governing bodies, DTS has implemented a lifetime ban for some examination programs
- May impact ability to repay student loans
- May delay graduation
- May jeopardize acceptance into post-graduate programs
- May jeopardize licensure

# Impact of Cheating on DTS Testing Programs

- Cost to replace items (often estimated at \$2,000+ per item)
- Undermines validity and reliability of testing program
- Increased cost to candidates due to security expenses
- Reduces quality of healthcare provided to public
- Diminishes public perception of healthcare professions

# For the Panel

- From your perspectives:
  - What are the potential long-term consequences of cheating for an individual?
  - What are the potential long-term consequences of cheating on an examination program?

# Understand The Appeals Process if a Testing Irregularity is Identified

# 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.

# JCNDE Limited Right of Appeal for Examination Candidates

(Excerpt from the *Standing Rules* of the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations)

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 Member Packet

- If the candidate submits an appeal, an appeal packet is forwarded to the JCNDE Chair for review. The Chair grants, denies, or forwards the appeal to JCNDE Commissioners for a ballot vote.

# 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

# Retesting

## **90-day wait required between retests.**

Candidates who pass the National Boards may not retest unless required by a state board or relevant regulatory agency.

If either of the following two conditions are true: 1) a National Board examination candidate has made five examination attempts; or 2) five years have passed since a National Board examination candidate's first administration; then the candidate shall be limited to testing once every 12 months after their most recent attempt. The two conditions described apply to examination attempts occurring on or after January 1, 2012. Examination attempts occurring prior to this date are not considered under this regulation.

# For the Panel

- From your perspectives:
  - Do you have any additional thoughts on the appeals process that would be informative for the audience?
  - Would you like to share any final thoughts on the importance of test security, and/or do you have any additional information to share with the audience?

Questions?



# DTS Management Team

**David M. Waldschmidt, Ph.D.**  
 Director, DTS and Secretary, JCNDE  
[waldschmidtd@ada.org](mailto:waldschmidtd@ada.org)

## EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH AND PSYCHOMETRICS

**Michael Matyasik, MS**  
 Manager, Test Development  
[matyasikm@ada.org](mailto:matyasikm@ada.org)

**Chien-Lin Yang, Ph.D.**  
 Manager, Research & Development - Psychometrics  
[yangc@ada.org](mailto:yangc@ada.org)

**Matthew Grady, Ph.D.**  
 Manager, New Psychometric Development &  
 Innovations  
[gradym@ada.org](mailto:gradym@ada.org)

## OPERATIONS

**Kathleen J. Hinshaw, LDH, Ed.D.**  
 Senior Manager, Operations  
[hinshawk@ada.org](mailto:hinshawk@ada.org)

**Alexis Curtis, BA**  
 Manager, Volunteers &  
 Meetings  
[curtisa@ada.org](mailto:curtisa@ada.org)

**Nicholas B. Hussong, MA**  
 Manager, Test  
 Administration  
[hussongn@ada.org](mailto:hussongn@ada.org)

**Alix Katznelson, BA, BS**  
 Manager, DTS  
 Communications  
[katznelsona@ada.org](mailto:katznelsona@ada.org)

**Andrew McCampbell, BA,  
PMP**  
 Manager, DTS Projects and  
 Services  
[mccampbella@ada.org](mailto:mccampbella@ada.org)

**Bryan Svendby, MA, SSCP**  
 Manager, Test Security & Fraud Prevention  
[svendbyb@ada.org](mailto:svendbyb@ada.org)