

National Board Dental Examination Part I

Frequently Asked Questions

Applying for the Examination

I completed an electronic application, but did not receive a confirmation e-mail or my credit card was charged, and I cannot register through Prometric.

NBDE Part I applications are processed once daily on normal business days. It can take up to 48 hours from the time your application is approved by the Joint Commission for Prometric 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 is my eligibility number?

Your eligibility number is your Social Security number or Social Insurance number. If you do not have one, the Joint Commission will assign you a reference number.

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 NBDE I 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 NBDE I 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 NBDEI Score Report Address Update. Score reports will be mailed to the address indicated 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 such as a marriage certificate or court documents); address it to the attention of NBDE I 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.

The National Board examinations are criterion-referenced, i.e., candidates are not graded on a curve but against a pre-determined standard. *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 *Candidate Guide* for each examination. The guides are provided on the testing area of the ADA website, www.ada.org. Information in the guides is updated annually; but the general nature and intent of the regulations remains the same as described above. Information about Prometric Test Center rules is available on the Prometric website, www.prometric.com. 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, all examinations are protected by Federal Copyright Law and 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 dentists 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 Candidate Guide or on the Joint Commission website, 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 someone 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 dean or associate dean 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 information about the test?

The National Board Dental Examination Part I *Candidate Guide* is available as a PDF document at <http://www.ada.org>. Print copies are available by written request to the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations, 211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 600, Chicago, Illinois 60611-2678.

What is on the examination?

The Part I examination consists of 400 multiple-choice items distributed across four discipline areas: anatomic sciences, biochemistry-physiology, microbiology-pathology, and dental anatomy and occlusion. Test items in these four areas are randomly distributed throughout the examination.

The examination is administered in two sessions. Each session has 200 test items and the candidate is given 3.5 hours to complete each session of the examination. The examination has both independent discipline-based items (80%) and testlet based items (20%). A testlet is a group of items associated with a patient scenario. The *Test Specifications* with sample questions, located in the *Candidate Guide*, list the topic areas in each discipline and the corresponding number of items. All items on the Part I examination are in the multiple-choice format.

Where can I find study materials?

The *Candidate Guide* includes sample test items and test specifications. Tutorials, located on the website at <http://www.ada.org> are designed to familiarize candidates with the format of the questions on the computerized examinations. Reference texts are cited at <http://www.ada.org> > Education/Testing> National Board Exams>NBDE I>Additional Resources>Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations>NBDE I Reference Texts.

Candidates are cautioned that obtaining or sharing confidential, unreleased examination content violates *Examination Regulations* and carries significant penalties. Further, material obtained from sources such as Internet chat rooms, blogs or information-sharing sites may be inaccurate and/or out-dated and could mislead or disadvantage test-takers.

Released item sets may be purchased for the NBDE Part I through the American Student Dental Association (ASDA) at www.asdanet.org or 800-621-8099, extension 2795.

International Dentist Applying for Examination

I am an international dentist. What is required to practice dentistry 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 dentistry. State board contact information is located at <http://www.aadexam.org>. Additional information can be found in the *Candidate Guide* at <http://www.ada.org> >Dental Professionals> National Board Exams > NBDE Part I > *Candidate Guide*, and on the ADA website at <http://www.ada.org> > Licensure > U.S. Licensure for International Dentists.

Am I eligible to take the National Board Dental Examination Part I? I graduated from a dental school abroad.

All graduates of non-accredited programs (dental schools located outside the U.S. or Canada) must have their credentials evaluated by the Educational Credential Evaluators (www.ece.org), and must meet all other eligibility requirements to take the NBDE I. Please refer to the *Candidate Guide* for specific details.

Have you received my ECE report?

Call the Joint Commission office to determine the status of your application. If the Joint Commission office has approved your application, your ECE report has been received. If your application has not been approved, a representative will be able to verify whether or not it has been received. If it has been received, your application will be approved during the next application processing day.

I previously applied for the examination; do I need to submit a new ECE report?

If you have previously taken the examination, you do not need to submit another ECE report; however, you must indicate on your application that you have taken the examination before. It is advisable to call the Joint Commission office to confirm that your application has been processed.

If I passed NBDE Part I and NBDE Part II and I retake NBDE Part I and fail, are my Part II scores still valid?

Your NBDE Part II scores remain intact, but only your *most recent* NBDE Part I scores are valid. If you are licensed and you retake NBDE Part I and fail, you must contact your State Board to determine whether your licensure status has changed.

Re-examination

How long do I have to wait to retest?

You must wait 90 days between examination attempts. National Board candidates who have failed NBDE Part I three times must wait 12 months before retesting. Please refer to the *Candidate 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 Prometric

How do I schedule a testing appointment with Prometric?

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 a letter, you should contact the Joint Commission office to verify that your application has been approved. Approved candidates can schedule testing appointments by contacting the Prometric Call Center at 800.688.5804 or visit www.prometric.com.

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

You can schedule electronically at www.prometric.com. Otherwise, please call Prometric when call volume is lower. Call volume is higher on Monday and Tuesday of each week and hold times are considerably less after Tuesday of each week. The Call Center is open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday.

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

If your application has been approved, your name and Social Security number or Social Insurance number are correct, and it has been more than 48 hours since your application has been processed, please contact Prometric's Candidate Care hotline at 800.853.6769.

Scoring/Score Reports

How is the Part I examination scored?

The examination is criterion referenced and not scored based on a curve or comparison to others. A candidate's score is reported in terms of a standard score (ranging from 49 to 99), which has been converted from the total number of correct answers. The minimum

passing standard score on the examination is 75. The raw score needed to achieve a particular standard score is based on the judgment of experts.

Please refer to the *Candidate Guide* and Technical Report at www.ada.org for specific details on scoring.

Are the scores on Part I and the pass/fail status based on a curve?

Part I examination scores are criterion-referenced and not scored on a curve. A candidate whose score is equal to or above a standard score of 75 is deemed to understand important information from basic biomedical, dental, and dental sciences and have the ability to apply such information in a problem-solving context.

Does a total score on Part I represent either the number of correct answers or the percentage correct on the examination?

Neither, the Part I examination score is a standard score, not the number of correct answers or the percentage correct. The raw score is converted to a standard score and reported using a score ranging from 49-99. The conversion of raw scores to standard scores allows comparison of results from different versions of the exam along a single measurement scale.

Does a total score of 74 mean that I had only one wrong item or answer short of the passing score of 75 on the examination?

The standard scores range from 49 and 99. The score is based upon the number of correct answers (raw score). Each standard score value represents a range of raw scores. A candidate whose total 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.

I already checked the *Candidate 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. Your request will be processed as quickly as possible.

Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations/Score Report Question
211 E. Chicago Avenue, Suite 600
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2678
fax 312.587.4105

When will I receive my score report?

Official score reports are mailed approximately three to four weeks after the examination.

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

Requests are mailed approximately 10 business days from the date the request was received. For further questions, contact the Joint Commission office at 800.232.1694.

Did I pass the examination? Can I get my results over the phone?

Joint Commission regulations prohibit reporting scores to candidates by telephone, fax or e-mail.

I have not tested yet; can I change the score report recipient?

Once your application has been submitted, changes will not be made. You may however, request additional score reports for an additional fee. Please visit www.ada.org to obtain an electronic or paper score report request.

I made a mistake on my electronic score report request; can I change the recipient?

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 changes will not be made nor refunds issued, once your request has been submitted.

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 set of scores.

How do I request my National Board scores?

Visit www.ada.org > Dental Professionals > National Board Exams > NBDE I > Request Score Reports. Please read and follow the directions.

How is my score reported to the State Board?

Official score reports are mailed approximately three to four weeks after the examination and the most recent score is always reported. Raw score information is not sent to State Boards. The Joint Commission plans to offer electronic reporting of results to State Boards in the near future.

Test Center Procedures

What constitutes proper identification for the examination?

You are required to present two forms of ID. One must be a government issued ID. Both IDs must have a signature and photo or you must have one photo with signature ID and two signature IDs. 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 *Candidate Guide*.

What can I bring with me into the 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, dental instruments, models or materials
- b. slide rules, calculating devices, rulers or other measuring devices
- c. electronic devices such as telephones, pagers, recording devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs), radios or stereos with headsets
- d. Tote bags, purses, wallets, backpack, briefcases
- e. highlighters, pens, erasers, mechanical pencils, dictionaries, and translators
- f. food, candy, gum, water or other beverages
- g. outerwear such as coats, jacket, gloves, hats

Violations may result in the voiding of your test scores and waiting up to two years to retest. For specific information, please review the *Candidate 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 will require 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 a letter with supporting diagnostic evaluations from the licensed healthcare professional who diagnosed your disability or condition. Please refer to the *Candidate Guide* for specific details.