

## National Dental Specialty Examination - Key Information and Resources

### November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Webinar – Questions and Answers

Below is the English version of the transcript from the ‘Question and Answer’ portion of the NDSE webinar held on November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The French version will be posted on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

1. I'm a pediatric dentist in Ohio and a Canadian citizen. I have a DMD from the University of Pittsburgh, but I haven't done the written or OSCE with the NDEB. Would I still be able to practice pediatric dentistry if I pass the NDSE? Also, what is the difference between this exam and the Fellowship Examination? I've already registered and been approved for the examination May 2nd and 3rd.

If the program that you were a part of, as per the eligibility criteria, has a reciprocity agreement with CDAC, then you would be eligible to sit the NDSE. We would have to confirm the credentialing requirements for the program you were part of.

The NDSE is the examination for licensure in Canada. The Fellowship Examination is the examination that is a requirement to become a fellow of the Royal College of Dentists of Canada (RCDC).

2. What happens if you have to rewrite the examination? Do we have to pay in full? You would have to undertake the both the candidate management and examination registration processes, including all respective fees.
3. For a candidate who completed an international DMD degree, and the specialty postgraduate residency program accredited by CODA in the U.S., are they eligible for pathway one or two?

The candidate would be eligible to apply for the examination provided that the program was accredited by CODA in their final year of study.

4. Specifically speaking about the Orthodontic specialty, if I study in the USA for dental school and have not completed the Dental Boards in Canada, do I have to complete the Canadian Dental Boards and the Ortho specialty examination to work as an Orthodontist or is there a limited specialty license?

If by dental board you mean the fellowship examination, no, there's not a requirement for you to sit the Fellowship Examination to become licensed as a specialist in Canada. The NDSE is that requirement. But I would strongly encourage all individuals who would like to know more about the licensure process in Canada to reach out to the dental regulatory authority in the province in which they would

like to practice as they would be the ones that would have all the exhaustive information as it relates to the licensure process.

**5. We would have to take the NDSE regardless of practice in Ontario even if we pass a Fellowship Examination?**

We would encourage you to reach out to the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario (RCDSO) in order to get the list of requirements for licensure as a dental specialist in Ontario.

**6. If we pass the NDSE but not the RCDC or vice versa, can we still practice our specialty specifically for OMS?**

We would encourage you to contact the regulatory authority in the province in which you want to practice. The contact information for all of the regulatory authorities is on the RCDC website.

**7. I graduated from a CODA approved dental school and pediatric residency program and I have already practiced over five years in the USA and I'm already board certified. What pathway do I do? Pathway one or two?**

When you're applying for the examination, although we do have those two pathways, this individual sounds like they would align with pathway number one because there could be the potential for the reciprocity agreement between CDAC and CODA. So based on the information provided in this question, as it's written, the candidate would be qualified to be eligible to register for the examination.

**8. I am a US citizen that completed their DES in the US and their Endodontic residency in the US in Minnesota. Both are CODA accredited. How do I know if the University of Minnesota is CDAC accredited and that I am able to apply for the NDSE?**

If your school is accredited by CODA, given that there is a reciprocity agreement with CDAC, you would be eligible to sit the NDSE.

**9. Do the NDSE and RCDC need to be passed in the same year? And how many times can we attempt each exam?**

This is an NDSE webinar, we'll focus solely on the NDSE. Should you have any questions about the Fellowship Examination, I would encourage you to contact [membership@rcdc.ca](mailto:membership@rcdc.ca) with those questions.

At the present time there is not an attempt limit on the NDSE. And there is one administration per year at this present time.

10. Do you get confirmation of your registration that all documentation has been received prior to the application window closing?

Yes

11. In the most recent 2024 examination results, the success rate across most specialty was above 80%. But Prosthodontics was notably lower. Had a notably lower success rate of 33%. Are there any plans to review or modify the examination format or question structure to ensure it aligns with the intended goals and evaluates candidates fairly?

As is outlined in the NDSE Technical Report (<https://ndse-ensd.ca/en/technical-report/>) indicates, the pass rates vary between specialties and the reliability is estimated for the specialty examinations with sufficient sample size for the estimator (20 candidates or greater). Orthodontics had the reliability of .88. Pediatric Dentistry had the reliability of .88. Prosthodontics had the reliability of .89. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery had the reliability of .90. As a general guideline, the reliability of 0.80 or higher is desirable for a high-stakes assessment, which the above specialty examinations met.

12. When can we receive the examination references and resources? Could you share them in December? Last year was too late. Only three or four weeks before the examination. There's another question about the reference list provided is not the latest edition of the textbooks. Should we study the older version even if we have access to the new one? This happened last year and caused a lot of confusion. And if I graduate from the program 2024, will I still need proof of my school university to register for the examination?

Last year the reference lists were provided at the same timing as was provided for the 2023 cohort. We do recognize that the utility of the reference list provided at that point could pose some challenges and that was well communicated to us. We want to ensure that the reference lists that are provided are related to material that is actually on the examination. And so we're targeting to have the reference list sometime in the end of February to the beginning of March period rather than the April/May period last year. In terms of the references that are provided, we rely on the specialists who are the content creators to identify which reference is associated with which question. We will be continuing to follow that practice so that if a specialist content developer identifies a particular reference, that's the one that will be included in the reference list.

The final question, if I graduate from a program in 2024, will I need proof from my school in order to register for the examination? Yes, at this point you need to be able to provide proof that you are in your final year of specialty program training. In order to achieve NDSE certification you will need to pass both the examination and as well as provide proof of completion of program at some point after you have written the examination.

13. **Pathway one. What is the definition of final year of study? Is it by calendar year for example 2025? Or is it defined within 365 days of the expected graduation date?**

It's the calendar year from the date of the administration of the examination.

14. **Are there any plans this year to make more frequent administrations of the NDSE?**

It is part of the planning process to look into ways to have more frequent sittings per year by 2027 or 2028. But for 2025 there will only be one administration of the NDSE.

15. **I graduated from Rutgers, New Jersey in 1996 in Prosthodontics. Can I still apply?**

Provided the university was accredited by CODA in your last year studies.

We no longer have a special consideration application process.

16. **Where can we find the examination pass rate?**

We will be posting very shortly, the NDSE technical report for the 2024 examination which includes the pass rate for certain examinations that had candidates over 10 candidates. There is a very rigorous standard setting and key validation process in terms of setting the mark. So we can't necessarily say this will be the pass mark for the examination in each subsequent cycle. That's set based on the rigorous psychometric processes that the examination goes through as part of the development.

17. **Is the fee of \$5,500 for the examination, all inclusive. Does this include taxes?**

There are no taxes associated with the NDSE candidate management or examination fees.

18. **Outside of the reference list, is there any study material available?**

The only preparation material that we provide in advance of the examination is the reference list.

19. **Clarity on the reference list provided on the website right now. Will it change?**

The reference lists that were posted on the website were related to the 2024 NDSE and have been removed.

20. **Do I need to resubmit documents to re-sit the examination?**

Yes, as per the policies and procedures, the credentialing documents are only valid for 12 months. If you are an individual who will be retaking the examination, you will need to resubmit the credentialing documents.

21. **Is there a limit to how many attempts you can sit the NDSE?**

At this point, there is no attempt limit for the NDSE.

**22. Just for clarification: If they take the examination in June 2025, do they need to complete the graduation requirement of June 2026?**

You'll need to complete your graduation requirements by June 2026. So if they were to sit the examination in June 2025, they would need to have to graduate by or before June 2026.

**23. Any questions that remain unanswered during this webinar, would you prefer to follow up with us via email or should we reach out to you directly for clarification?**

We are going to be posting all of the questions that were provided tonight along with our answers in both official languages following the webinar. If you have anything after the webinar that you would like to ask, then I would encourage you to email [NDSE@rcdc.ca](mailto:NDSE@rcdc.ca).

**24. Some references are outdated. Do we stick to the references mentioned in the reference list or look for the update books and annual reviews that are more recent?**

The reference lists are created based on the references that are provided by the specialist content developers related to that particular question.

**25. Do the exam results follow a passing curve?**

No.

**26. Is there a plan to reduce the fees for this examination compared to the US Licensing examination fee? It is quite high, and I've heard from many, you graduated that the cost associated with the exam is a deterrent to have more candidates challenge the exam and potentially obtain licensure and practice in Canada.**

At this point there is no plan to reduce the NDSE fees. They are set based on the expenses operational requirements and recommended by the NDSE Committee for approval by the RCDC Board of Directors.

**27. When do we get the results?**

As per the policies and procedures, we've committed to communicating the results to the candidates 10 weeks following the NDSE administration date.

**28. Can you please confirm that the format is still multiple choice?**

I would refer you back to the NDSE protocol which has all of the specialty NDSE blueprints and within each of those individual blueprints it gives an overview of the format in terms and including the question type associated with each specialty examination.

**29. Can we get the recording of this webinar in case we missed part of it?**

Yes, this webinar, the entire recording will be available on the NDSE website.

**30. Will we get an email about references being available?**

Yes, there will be a NDSE newsletter indicating that the references are available.

**31. How do we get on the email list for communications?**

There's a pathway on the NDSE website about signing up to be on the distribution or the newsletter list. If you head to there, you'll be able to find it.

**32. Is there a deadline for submission of special accommodation requests?**

I would redirect you to the NDSE policies and procedure manual on the website as it outlines a target range of when we would refer the special accommodation request to be submitted. I will admit that we do have some flexibility in that in the sense that we do want to support all candidates to engage in the examination regardless. However, if it does get within a 60 day window prior to the administration date, it does make it more challenging because we are working with a third party vendor at the sites and we do need to set up whatever is that required infrastructure to support that accommodation.

**33. Is there a plan to maintain the separation between Fellowship Examination and licensure examination in the long run.**

For the foreseeable future, the Fellowship Examination will continue to be a prerequisite for the Fellow to gain fellowship within the College and the NDSE will remain the examination that is required by the regulatory authorities for licensure.

**34. What happens if you fall sick around your exam?**

I think that would be one that if you were in a circumstance where you were sick or you incurred an injury of some kind, and you've gone through the entire examination registration process, you would need to reach out to our admissions unit to see if we could work through if we can support you through an accommodation. There is only one administration of the NDSE on an annual basis.

**35. When should we apply?**

We do have a set application window. The application window will open on January 7, 2025, and the window is open until March 17, 2025.

**36. How do we find out the locations of the examination? Is it at Prometric?**

Our partner for examination administration in terms of the test centers throughout Canada and the United States is Measure Learning. As part of the examination registration process, we will have identified cities where we are planning to host test centers listed for you to select which is going to be your preferred city. But the actual location within that city will not be available until a later point in the process. Measure Learning has tested multiple test sites in some of these larger centers. We want to ensure that the candidate is sitting their exam in their preferred city.

**37. The website mentioned late payment fees for individuals who want to register late for the examination. However, it wasn't clear how late we can register for the exam.**

If you are outside of that application window, you will incur a late examination fee, please refer to the policies and procedures.

**38. How late can they register for the examination?**

60 days prior to the administration of the examination would make it challenging to ensure that we can work with our partners to find a candidate a spot in their preferred test center city.

**39. Will a mouse be provided for CBCT navigation for the radiology exam or will only the trackpad of the notebook be provided?**

We will be providing a mouse and enhanced technology related to supporting that examination, working with the specialty examination team lead to identify those particular requirements.

**40. Is the examination via zoom or in person?**

The examination is held at test center locations across Canada and the United States. You will be engaging in that examination on a computerized examination platform.

**41. When do we find out the cities at the examination will be held?**

At the time of registration. We will be maintaining a very similar roster of cities as last year, but as part of that, you will go through a process of seeing which of the locations would be your preferred test center. Last year we had 24 sites across Canada and the United States. And I will also say that we did add three or four additional cities based on requests from candidates. So if you are engaging in the registration process and your city that you would prefer to be sitting the exam in isn't there, we'd like you to reach out to the [NDSE@rcdc.ca](mailto:NDSE@rcdc.ca) email and just put forward that request. I'm not saying 100% of the time we are going to be able to comply with it and implement that, but I think that would be the best strategy in that case.

**42. During the webinar it was mentioned that there's currently no exact limit on the number of trial attempts. If this policy were to change in the future, would previous attempts be taken into account or would the new limit apply only moving forward?**

Having seen attempt limits be implemented within other organizations, there is usually a candidate grandfathering process. You want to make sure that at the time that they're engaging in the examination, whether they're successful or unsuccessful, that they're fully aware of all the rules that will impact them in the long term.

43. For candidates that graduated from CODA approved residencies or programs, what documents are required to provide in the application?

All of the credentialing document requirements are outlined in our policies and procedures on the NDSE website.

44. For the pathology exam, will there be a mouse available?

Yes.

45. If there are technical challenges at your test center during the NDSE, how is that reported?

If there are technical challenges with the NDSE, candidates typically report to the proctors on site, and that information is then sent back to us and made available for us.