

National Dental Specialty Examination - What to Expect on the Day of the Examination

May 6, 2025 – 7-8 PM ET – Webinar - Question and Answers

1. Links in the source materials do not forward to the source material, can you check and correct them?

If you could please submit an email to NDSE@rcdc.ca indicating which reference list has links that are not working, we can look into it from there.

2. When choosing the location of the examination; the GTA has multiple sites, can we choose a preferred site?

No, each candidate will be assigned to the site within their preferred city of choice as per our processes with our examination test site partners.

3. There is an international dentist currently on enrolled in Prosthodontics at NYU in the US, are they eligible for the NDSE?

I will reference back to our eligibility criteria which are: A candidate must be engaged in an accredited program within Canada by CDAC or a program within the US that CDAC has a reciprocal agreement with CODA. If you would like, please feel free to send your question to ndse@rcdc.ca and we can have an opportunity to go through that question in detail.

4. Are we allowed to take unscheduled breaks, even if it means we will lose examination time?

Candidates will have the opportunity to take an unscheduled break; however, if they do engage in an unscheduled break they will still be monitored by a Proctor and not be allowed to leave the examination test center throughout the duration of their examination.

5. After the results are released, how long will it take to get the certificate to they can be sent to their licensing body i.e. RCDSO?

That piece is actually completely dependent if a candidate has completed their program because for the NDSE certification to be added to the certification registry and receive an NDSE certificate, a candidate must provide proof of completion of program and if the candidate has applied at a point where they have completed their program, we should be able to turn that around within two weeks. If a candidate has required to submit additional documentation because they have not completed the program, and we need to verify that completion of the program as well, that may take another couple of weeks just to work

through the different processes with both the candidate and the university in order to get the appropriate verification of the documents.

6. There is a request that a mouse be provided for the OMR examination.

Yes.

7. How many questions are there for Orthodontics and how does the format of this examination differ from the exam three years prior to the change in format?

Given that the NDSE was brought to the RCDC last year, I can only speak to the format this year and the previous format for the 2024 cycle. The format for the 2025 cycle is very similar to the format in the 2024 cycle, with no changes that would have a material impact in terms of breaking it up into three sections or having an oral component to the examination, for example, the format is very similar to the 2024 format.

8. Is the OMFS or the oral surgery examination all multiple choice this year?

For any questions related to the format and question types of the examinations, in order for the candidate to get the most accurate information, I would encourage each candidate to go back to the NDSE protocol as it includes details on the question types as well. We want to ensure that the candidates are reviewing the blueprints of the examination to ensure they are aware of what is going to be on the examination in terms of the domains and areas of focus as well as the question types that will be on each of the examinations.

9. What is the date for the Orthodontics specialty examination?

That would be June 10th.

10. It was mentioned that depending on the specialty, the examination format may vary, can we get a breakdown of the Orthodontics examination?

Like was previously mentioned, we strongly encourage you to review the NDSE protocol document for Orthodontics.

11. From the reference list for each specialty, is there a list of references that we would only need to be successful, what about book references?

The reference lists that are provided by each specialty as it says in the preamble of that reference list, this is a list of references that have been used in the past to help support the development of the examination but it is by no means an exhaustive list of every reference that could possibly be on the examination.

12. How can they prepare for their respective examination if they study in the US and do not have an idea or any example questions on how to prepare for the Canadian exam?

Refer back to the NDSE protocol document. Within the protocol document, it is going to give you an idea of the domains, the areas of focus, and the percentages of questions that will be allocated to each of the domains within a range to give you an idea how to support your preparation as well. If you marry that with the reference list, although, as mentioned before, it is not an exhaustive list of all possible reference that could be used to be support the development of the examination, those two pieces will give you a solid foundation as well as reviewing the question types that will be utilized within your specific specialty examination.

13. How many questions will be on the examination?

Unfortunately, we do not provide the number of questions in advance of the examination.

14. When can they schedule the examination, is it through Prometrics, can it be taken only in Canada or anywhere a Prometrics Centre is located?

What we have found in the past is when the scheduling responsibility has been given to the candidates to then work with the test centers, that's when candidates have run into challenges with the test centers, where a number of issues have arisen. We have asked during the examination registration process for each candidate to identify both their preferred city to engage in the examination and their preferred language that they would like to engage in the examination. Then we work with our Measure Test Center partners to identify spaces, then we register on behalf of the candidate to ensure that we know there is a spot and address any issues that arise. As part of the confirmation notice that each candidate will receive, hopefully within one week of that May 14th date, it will have all of the information regarding the test center location and further instructions around the examination day.

15. How many questions are on the Endodontics examination?

Unfortunately, we do not provide the number of questions for any specialty in advance of the examination.

16. Does a total time of three hours include the breaktime?

No, it is three hours for component 1, then a 30-minute optional break, and then another three hours for component 2.

17. Will we be releasing previous examinations?

No, we will not be releasing previous examinations.

18. Regarding the examination site, can we choose one in the United States?

As mentioned before, during the examination registration process, each candidate had the opportunity to select their preferred examination test site. There were sites both in Canada and the US. We did indicate in our communications previously distributed that if the candidate preferred an alternate test site city that was not listed, for the candidate to reach out directly to ndse@rcdc.ca with their request.

19. For the Radiology exam, will a mouse be provided for the laptop?

Yes, they will be.

20. Some candidates are under the impression that the examination will be all multiple choice, will there be short-answer questions?

I would encourage all candidates who are present on the call this evening to go on the NDSE website, under the Specialities page, your specialty will be listed, you can access the entire protocol, but your specific blueprint will be included within that specialties page section. That will include the question format for each of the examinations, which do vary, as well as a breakdown of the domains and areas of focus within each examination.

21. Are the exams going to be in the Parametric Centers?

No, we use Measure Learning examination test centres.

22. What is the NDSE eligibility criteria?

Once again, we refer you to the eligibility page on the NDSE website, which provides details on the eligibility requirements as well as directions on how to apply for the examination.

23. Some of the listed resources for source material not available or have been removed from the internet, for the resources that no longer exists anymore, can you update the list?

I would want to take that question offline, please submit your question to ndse@rcdc.ca along with flagging the specific resources that you are referring to, we can then work through what could potentially be next steps from there.

24. Someone who lives in the US but have selected a Canadian site, is that okay as long as they bring sufficient identification?

There is no problem with US residents writing at a Canadian-based test centers or vice-versa. Although, we do not have any influence over border services in terms of provision of letters to indicate that you will be engaging in the NDSE and that supports crossing the border one way or the other. But there is no issue that has been flagged for us in terms of Canadian residents selecting US sites or US residents selecting Canadian sites.

25. How do we know if the specialty examination has a written portion?

The NDSE protocol document for your specific specialty would provide information on that.

26. Is there any way to take a longer break or is 30-minutes the maximum?

30-minutes is the maximum break without requesting additional break time as part of an accommodation.

27. Is there a chance the results will be released earlier than August 19th?

Unfortunately, no. There are a number of key activities that need to occur during those 10 weeks in terms of key validation and approval of the marks themselves by several different levels of governance within the organization. Unfortunately, at this time, it is not possible to release the results any earlier.

28. Will Francophone candidates have access to the English examination because there have been issues with translation?

At this time, candidates will only have access to the examination in the language they have selected.

29. How many times can you sit the examination if you fail?

At this point in time, we do not have an attempt's limit on the NDSE at RCDC.

30. On August 19th when results are released and we have submitted proof of specialty training program completion, can we receive a PDF of our pass results in order to submit to the licensing body?

There have been a couple of questions on the timing and this process. I think what might answer the question more fully is if the group allows me to take this one away and speak with the team as we have sent out a number of communications on a number of different topics, but this one is the second or third question we received this webinar. It might be good for us to give a clear expectation of the timeline of the things that will happen post-release of results.

31. Are passing score based on a curve or is there an actual passing score?

The examinations undergo a rigorous psychometric process. For those who are interested in the psychometrics aspects of the examination, I would encourage you to go on to the NDSE website under the Resource Page, and the technical report from the 2024 NDSE is available, that will provide all the answers about how all of the psychometric aspects of the NDSE process.

32. Will the examination provide a mouse with a scroller for the OMOP examination?

Yes.

33. Is there a one examination center for OMR since it will be only held in Canada?

Yes, the examination center for OMR will be in Toronto.

34. Who should be contacted if I want to ensure that I am able to write the examination in the State I am currently living in?

During the registration process the candidates had an opportunity to select a preferred city for the examination test site, including sites in Canada and the US.

35. Are we able to change the province in which they chose previously to take the examination?

As everyone is aware, we are getting quite close to the examination date so I would encourage the candidates who would like to submit test site change requests to ndse@rcdc.ca. We cannot guarantee that we can accommodate the test site change request.

36. Can we clarify the start time by time zone and how many time zones the examination will be taken in?

There are seven time zones in Canada at some points in the year and there are six time zones in Canada other points in the year. The start time of the examination is 9:00AM in

the time zone that your test center is located in. The examinations do not start at the same time, simultaneously across Canada.

37. The protocols do not show the number of questions for the exam, where can we find this?

The number of questions for this year's examination will not be released in advance of the administration.

38. If we finish our program after the examination but before results are back on June 30th, can we submit our proof of completion of that program at that point so we can get our certificate more promptly once the exam results are back?

This is one of those things that we are going to include in the additional communication surrounding post-examination expectations.

39. In the Perio examination, what is the percentage of clinical versus theoretical questions on the Perio exam?

I do not think we are able to provide that information beyond what is already presented in the NDSE protocol and blueprint.

40. When should we expect to receive examination location details?

As I responded to an earlier question, as indicated in the presentation as well, you will receive confirmation of your preferred city and preferred language to engage in the examination as of May 14th. Within a one week of receiving that letter, we are committed to providing you your confirmation notice.

41. For those that need extra material laptops for Pathology, will we ensure that the test centers receive the laptops prior to the examination?

We send the laptops in advance of the examination.

42. Will you ensure there is a mouse for the examination?

Yes, we will ensure there is a mouse for that examination.

43. How many questions are there in each session of the Radiology examination?

I can't confirm the number of questions within each of the two components. But if you refer to the blueprint, it will give you a percentage of number question range based on the domain category and that goes not just for radiology, that goes for all the examinations.

44. In America, they provide every specialty with questions that help us; how come Canada does not give us practice questions?

I cannot speak to the practice questions or practice examinations that are offered in preparation for other examinations. We encourage candidates to review the NDSE protocol and the demo examination prior to NDSE administration.

45. Can we choose examination site in the United States instead of Canada?

The selection of the preferred city for your examination test site was available at the time of registration. If you have registered for the examination and similar to the other potential candidate or applicant that you are looking to switch exam sites, if you could please submit that question to ndse@rcdc.ca sooner rather than later with an idea of the test center that you have previously registered for and where you would prefer to write and we can evaluation the feasibility with our test center partners, whether a seat will be available.

46. The Pediatric Dentistry exam protocols does not mention the number of questions, where can I find that information?

We do not release the number of specific questions that are on each examination. All of the information that is available on each of the examination to the candidates to support their preparation is available in the NDSE protocol.

47. Once we get assigned a location for the exam, can we change the location if the location is not suitable?

I think similar to this question from the previous candidate, that as we get closer to the examination date, it becomes more challenging to move candidates from assigned test centers because we are dealing with a limited number of seats at each location. So, the sooner that we could have that information to work with, the better.

48. It seems to be getting really close to the examination date and it is a bit challenging to prepare accordingly, why are we receiving the examination test site locations so close to the examination dates?

We appreciate that feedback and similar to the reference list, which last year was released much later, that we took the feedback from the candidates. As we go through iterations of the NDSE, if next year, we can move up the confirmation notices for the candidates that is something that we will certainly strive for.

49. Once the NDSE is passed, does this ever expire if we do not work in Canada right away?

I would refer any questions about licensure to the Dental Regulatory Authorities in the province in which you wish to practice in.

50. Is the examinations being done at Prometric Centre or Meazure Centre?

Our test centre partner is Meazure Learning.

51. Is there any chance the results would take less than 10 weeks, specifically before August 19th?

Unfortunately, due to the psychometrics processes that occur following the completion of the examination, we are quite close up to the 10 weeks in terms of our internal process. Unfortunately, for this cycle, we are not able to shorten that release window.

52. Are we able to request a different examination site than the one we chose initially? Are we able to request an additional site?

Similar to my guidance to the other candidates that have asked a similar type of question; if you are requesting a site that is not part of the rostered cities at this point, I would say it would be very challenging for us. We are always going to look into it, but it will be very challenging to add sites at this point. It will also be a bit challenging for us to move candidates, but I think it is something that we can see if we can work through. If you are looking to switch sites between different preferred cities, please email us at ndse@rcdc.ca and we will see if we can work through it in short order with you.

53. How do we request an accommodation for a longer break?

I would encourage you to go to the NDSE website as all of the information about requesting an accommodation is there. If there is a last-minute accommodation request, please email us at ndse@rcdc.ca as soon as you can to see how we can work to support you to engage in the examination.

54. From my understanding, you can apply to the NDSE prior to graduating from your specialty but to be given your certificate, you will have to submit the documentation that you have been successfully graduated from your school.

Yes, those are the two components, to successfully pass the NDSE and successfully pass your specialty program and provide proof of completion.

55. For the Orthodontics Examination, what is the pass score?

As available in the technical report, the rescaled pass score for all examinations is 70. If anybody is interested in the psychometrics that sit behind any of the examinations, I would encourage you to go on to the resource page and read the 2024 Technical Report.

56. Did you say you posted a video (on the website) on how the examination will be?

Yes, we posted a demo video on the website. The link was available in the slides, but it is available within the resource section of the website. It should be listed under “Demo Examination.” There will be two components to it; one will give the candidates a bit of an interactive feel, it will not necessarily have specialty-specific questions, but there are 5 – 10 questions within the demo examination for the candidates to interact with so they can see the flow of how the buttons go, where things are located, where the timer is etc. Then there is also a second part of that, which is an instructional video providing an overview of the platform itself that is also available in English and French.

57. Is there negative marking for wrong answers?

All the information regarding what will be provided to the candidates in advance, regarding the structure of the exam, question type, etc. is available in the NDSE Protocol.

58. Is examination only administered once a year?

At this point, yes.

59. The timeline for credentialing would be very helpful, so we can tell prospective employers when we may be eligible to start working.

Yes, this is something that we have noted down and we will certainly provide additional information.

60. As a Canadian student in the Orthodontics Program in the US, are we at a disadvantage of Canadian students have access to additional resources and guidelines to be successful with their specialty examination?

No. We provide all candidates with the exact same information, whether you are eligible for the examination or not. All the information that we provide to anybody interested in the NDSE is available through the NDSE website.

61. Once the examination is passed, does it ever expire if we do not practice in Canada right away?

Again, I will direct you to the Dental Regulatory Authorities for any licensure questions.

62. Will the results be a pass/fail or will actual scores be given?

There will not be an actual score provided as part of the release of results. We will be communicating only if the candidate passed or failed the examination.

63. If the specialty examination has an operational failure, do we need to wait another full year until we can retake it? Otherwise, we will be unable to be a licensed specialist for another year.

Yes, the NDSE is only administered at one time during the course of a calendar year. Unfortunately, if a candidate is unsuccessful, they will have to wait a full calendar year before engaging the exam again.

64. Is there any benefit of submitting completion of residency ahead of time to expedite the certification process?

That is definitely one question we will add to our list of processes to see if there is any way that we can support expediting that particular piece from behind.

65. Another question about changing the exam center from the center they chose initially due to border-crossing concerns.

Since this question was answered previously, for anyone who has questions around changing test centers; I would strongly encourage you to email ndse@rcdc.ca as soon as possible so we can evaluate the feasibility.

66. The blueprint does not mention how many questions is in part two for Radiology, it just mentions the number of questions for part one for Radiology.

All of the information that can be provided to the candidates in advance, and this has been signed off and vetted by each of the examination teams and the specialty examination team leads, is available in the protocol document.

67. Are we allowed to bring snacks to the testing centers, and will they be judged if they are cariogenic?

You can bring any snacks to the testing center. The only thing is that you cannot bring food into the examination testing room itself. There will be a space for you to bring lunch or snacks to have during the break.

68. At the time of registration for OMFS, there is no option for US test sites. They have sent an email to switch from Toronto to the US site, what is the feasibility of making this switch?

Similar to the response to the other candidates who have identified that they have interest to move sites; if you could send us an email to ndse@rcdc.ca, as soon as possible, that would be greatly appreciated.

69. Similar question regarding the blueprint.

Unfortunately, all the information that is available to be provided to the candidates in advance is available in the protocol and the blueprint.

70. Where do we see the list of examination sites? As someone who lives in upstate New York, who would rather go to Toronto than New York City, because that is the only option available for New York.

As part of the examination registration process, the cities were listed and not the States or Provinces - specific cities were listed. Again, if you would like to change your examination test site, we need to have an opportunity to evaluate the feasibility whether we will have a seat at the different test centers. Please send us an email to ndse@rcdc.ca as soon as possible.

71. When candidates are assigned a test site based on their preference on registration, are their location (home address) taken into consideration?

No. What we are taking into consideration is the selection by the candidates of the preferred examination test site sitting.

72. Are all questions multiple choice with multiple correct answers or just some? Will it notify us when it is multiple correct answers?

I would refer you back to your specialty blueprint because it will identify whether your examination has multiple choice-single best answer, multiple choice-multiple best answer, or constructive response questions.

73. Can they challenge the examination while being in a second year of a three-year program?

Specifically, as part of the eligibility requirements, it does require that you are in the final year of your program.