

## National Dental Specialty Examination

### Key Information and Resources

November 26, 2025 – 7-8 PM ET – Webinar - Questions and Answers

**1. Where can the candidates find this webinar deck and recording should they need to review it once more?**

We're planning on posting the recording of the webinar on the website by the end of the week [*Note: The webinar has now been posted*]. And as well, we will be posting the deck on the website with the link to the webinar.

**2. After successfully challenging the specialty examination, is there a best before date or need to rewrite or is it good for life of the candidate.**

In terms of achieving the NDSE certification, this is one component of licensure that feeds into the licensure process of the respective province within Canada. At this point, there is no expiration date of the NDSE certification once it's been awarded.

You would strongly encourage, if you have questions about licensure to direct them to the dental regulatory authority of the province in which you wish to practice as well.

**3. Will the reference list for each specialty be released soon?**

The target release date for the reference lists is the end of January 2026.

**4. When is it going to be announced the location of exam administration centers in the USA?**

The examination test center city list will be available at the time of the opening of NDSE application window.

**5. Will there be an updated curriculum for the 2026 examination cycle for prosthodontics and will the examination format remain the same for 2026?**

The NDSE is an examination that is a component for certification and licensure. There is not a curriculum that sits behind that. The educational curriculum is the responsibilities of the academic programs. For the format of the examination in terms of the type of questions, I would refer all candidates or all potential candidates back to the NDSE Protocol to get a

clear understanding of both the blueprint, the format and the question types that will be involved within the specific specialty examination.

**6. If we have extenuating circumstances that prevent us from attending the examination on the scheduled date, what options, if any, are available to us?**

At the present time, the NDSE is only administered for each specialty at one time per calendar year.

**7. Are there negative marking at the examination and would some questions have multiple correct answers like select 5 right answers out of 10 options?**

The format of the questions for the NDSE is multiple choice single best answer, multiple choice multiple best answer and constructive response questions. I would again encourage all candidates to refer to the NDSE Protocol which will have a breakdown for each of the specialties in terms of the question format that will be implemented to support the delivery of their specialty examination.

**8. Can I bring food and water to the examination test center?**

Please refer to the NDSE protocol. The examinations are all 6 hours total testing time. The number of sections within each does vary based on the specialty. If there is a requirement of medication to be taken during the examination administration I would encourage you to reach out to the [NDSE@rcdc.ca](mailto:NDSE@rcdc.ca) and submit that question so we can ensure the candidate requirements are appropriately communicated to the examination test centre.

**9. When do they get notified about successful registration?**

There are two parts to the NDSE application process, there is a credentialing and examination registration component. Once these two aspects are fulfilled and the requisite fees are paid in full, it will indicate that you have successfully completed the NDSE application process in the system.

**10. Are you planning on moving forward with offering NDSE twice a year?**

We have it on our roadmap, but it is part of a longer term strategy. At this point, we will there is not a plan to be offering the NDSE multiple administrations a year in either this 2026 cycle or the 2027 cycle.

**11. If they submit their application on February 8, 2026, and there are documents missing, will they still remain eligible to sit the exam once they provide the required materials, or would an incomplete submission prevent them from being able to sit the exam given that the deadline is February 9th?**

We are encouraging, given the length of the examination window, for all candidates to engage in the process early rather than later once the examination window opens.

Based on the variables in the scenario that is being described in this example, this candidate would potentially still be eligible to sit the examination given that they complete all aspects of the credentialing, payment and registration process, however they may be subject to late fees based on the late fee schedule in the NDSE Policies and Procedures.

**12. Their dental training program in pediatric dentistry in the US is two and a half years from July 2024 to December 2026. Can you confirm that on June 2, 2026; after having completed two years and with six months left, they are not eligible for the examination?**

Based on the set of variables that are presented in that question, the candidate would be eligible to sit the examination. However, they would not be eligible to achieve NDSE certified until that program was completed and the proof of completion of program was submitted and verified with the specialty program. There are a number of other variables that go into the credentialing process which we would need to look into further for the candidate in this example. I would encourage that candidate to submit their question to the [ndse@rcdc.ca](mailto:ndse@rcdc.ca) inbox to ensure that we are accurately assessing their individual candidacy.

**13. Are there limited seats at each examination location? If so, would you recommend registering as early as possible to secure a spot in our preferred city?**

We would recommend ensuring that you engage in the NDSE application process earlier rather than later in the application window. We do not have limited numbers of seats within preferred cities. There might be a case that if we do have a higher number of candidates within a larger city there is more than one examination test center within that city.

**14. You mentioned the reference list will be released at the end of 2026, I assume you meant 2025?**

The target release timeframe of the reference list will the end of January 2026.

**15. When can we take a break in between the sections? Is it at halftime or as per us?**

Please refer to the NDSE Protocol as all specialties don't have the same number of sections of the examination and so the breaks would occur at different times depending on your individual specialty examination. We would strongly encourage all candidates to review the entire protocol as well as this their specific specialty blueprint section.

**16. When do the results come out?**

As per the policies and procedures, the results are required to be published and released to the candidates 10 weeks after the NDSE administration date.

**17. Are previous pass rates available to candidates?**

The NDSE technical report is a report that is produced and provides details on all aspects of the NDSE including the psychometrics results and processes. This is published on the externally facing NDSE website. It does include pass rates for certain specialties that have achieved that have met the threshold of candidate volumes to maintain candidate confidentiality.

**18. This individual would like to know what needs to be included on the form signed by their school to ensure that they're eligible so that they can gather this form now before registration because they would like the form to be filled out properly the first time to ensure no setbacks in accepting their application.**

Please refer to section '1.0 Candidate Application' of the NDSE Policies and Procedures.

**19. What time does the application window open on December 8<sup>th</sup>?**

The NDSE application window is scheduled to be open at 9 AM ET.

**20. What is the payment method for registration? Credit card only or any payment modalities available?**

The preferred payment method is by credit card. If a candidate wishes to submit payment through another method, please reach out to [ndse@rcdc.ca](mailto:ndse@rcdc.ca) and we can look into the feasibility of other methods.

**21. Is exam online on a computer and will they have paper or whiteboard to think with?**

The NDSE is a computer-based examination, and it is delivered on an electronic examination platform. The examination test centers will provide scrap paper or white boards for candidates to work through their answers. However, those documents and scrap paper will be collected at the end of the examination by the proctors on site.

**22. Is it possible to do the amount in two times due to large amount? What would be the protocol for that for?**

If there are requests of this nature regarding the payment of the NDSE fees, please reach out to [ndse@rcdc.ca](mailto:ndse@rcdc.ca) and we'll can investigate how we can support the candidates.

**23. And what about a calculator? Do they have to carry one?**

There is a calculator embedded within the electronic examination platform.

**24. Is there an option to flag difficult questions to come back to?**

Yes, there is an option to flag all questions in the electronic examination platform to go back to.

**25. Do they have to pay for both the application and the examination or apply first than the examination?**

Yes.

**26. Can you comment on accommodations, what we need to submit and when should it be dated and submitted?**

Please refer to section '2.0 Test Accommodations' of the NDSE Policies and Procedures. Information for the test accommodations are included within the NDSE policies and procedures, including all of their respective dates. In addition, the test accommodation request forms are embedded with the the NDSE application process online form. Once you engage in that process, if you have questions, please feel free to reach out to [ndse@rcdc.ca](mailto:ndse@rcdc.ca) and someone will be there to assist you through the process.

**27. If someone fails, do you repeat the following year and is there a maximum number of retakes?**

There is not an attempt limit for the NDSE at this time.

**28. Is there recourse for specialty examinations that have extremely low pass rate relative to the average? Certain specialties have had near 50% pass rate which does not necessarily reflect on the training program or the applicant.**

I would refer all candidates back to the NDSE Protocol and the NDSE Technical Report to review the psychometric principles that underlay the NDSE. We are working diligently with our psychometrician to ensure that NDSE continue to be a valid, reliable and high-quality examination.

**29. Will the test center provide a pencil and pen for the scrap paper?**

The examination test centre may provide a writing utensil for the scrap paper.

**30. Are passing grades set per specialty?**

The pass marks are set as part of a rigorous psychometric process that each examination undertakes and is approved by the NDSE Committee.

**31. Will a computer mouse be provided for any laptop-based exams?**

Yes.

**32. Why is the NDSE \$6,000 for an online examination?**

The examination fees are approved by the NDSE Committee, which is made up of key stakeholder groups and regulators.

**33. Is a technical report for 2025 released?**

The technical report for 2025 is in the process of being translated and our aim is to have that report on the website in December 2025.

**34. How much is the fee for a rescore or a regrade?**

Please refer to section 3.0 for fees associated with the formal review processes.

**35. Will the documents sent for the Fellowship Examination be used for registration for the NDSE?**

As part of the registration process there is a section on if the candidate has submitted documentation as part of the Fellowship examination process and to provide consent to share documentation within the organization. If the candidate has submitted documentation related to the credentialing process for the Fellowship examination, they can integrate that and provide consent, and those documents can be used. Although the verification process for documentations related to your academic program is different than the process for credentialing for then between the Fellowship examination and the NDSE.

**36. Can we add more documentation to our application even after we registered? Like for test accommodations?**

We recognize the circumstances could arise that could require a candidate to require an accommodation after they have completed the registration process. If there is a need for

an accommodation and that you did not indicate during the registration process, please reach out to [ndse@rcdc.ca](mailto:ndse@rcdc.ca) and we will support the candidate through that process and work through the feasibility of implementation.

**37. If you're sitting the examination for a second time, do you have to go through credentialing again?**

If you're a candidate who is returning, you do not have to go through the full credentialing process again and we will retain your documents. We will go through a process of confirming that the documents are still valid and then you are exempt from the application fee if you are a returning candidate that you've already been approved and gone through the credentialing process for an NDSE that was previously administered by RCDC.

**38. Why is US board exam \$1,000? Why is charging \$6,000 for Canadians?**

These are two different organizations, and we cannot speak to their operational models.

**39. Why is the reference list sent in late January instead of earlier?**

The reference list is comprised of resources that are routinely utilized in the NDSE development process, however this is not an exhaustive list of resources. In past cycles, the reference lists have been provided to the candidates much later in the process.

**40. Can you clarify what you mean by accommodation? Does this refer to the possibility of being assigned an alternate examination date if a candidate is unable to attend the scheduled one?**

No, the test accommodation process is pertains to the requirement of a potential accommodation needed for the examination administration dates of either on June 2nd or June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026.

**41. If the test location was moved, when will the candidates be informed?**

We would communicate this to the impacted candidates as soon as possible after we were made aware. In two years of administering the NDSE, we have never moved an examination test center.

**42. Someone would like to know if they can pay through debit card?**

The options within the payment portal allow for debit and credit.

**43. A candidate would like to know if they can start studying from previous years reading list.**

The reference lists a general guide of references that are typically used to support development of the NDSE. We review the lists annually in conjunction with our Examiner-in-Chief and the Team Leads of the individual specialty.

**44. Last year the examination location could not be chosen until closer to the exam. Are they able to pick their location at the time of registration this year?**

There'll be a series of examination test center location cities that will be available at the time of registration. Some of the feedback that we received last year was that we were identifying exact locations within the cities too close to the individual administration date. We are working with our examination test center delivery partner to move up that date in the calendar. But at the time of the registration window opening, there will be a series of cities that will be available for selection where we plan to have examination test centers in.

**45. What about the International Dental Specialist Fellowship IDSF eligibility?**

If the candidate is enrolled in a Canadian program that is accredited by CDAC the candidate is eligible. Please check the accreditation status with your academic institution.