

State Dental Licensure Requirements for U.S. Dentists

Though requirements vary from state to state, all applicants for dental licensure must meet three basic requirements; an education requirement, a written examination requirement and a clinical examination requirement.

Education Requirement: The educational requirement in nearly all states is a DDS or DMD degree from a university-based dental education program accredited by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA CODA). References to accreditation in states' licensure provisions relate to the CODA and no other agency. The CODA directly accredits programs in the United States, and indirectly accredits dental education programs in Canada through a reciprocal agreement with the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC). Graduates of accredited U.S. and Canadian dental education programs are eligible for licensure in the United States.

Written Examination Requirement: All U.S. licensing jurisdictions require evidence that a candidate for licensure has passed Parts I and II of the written National Board Dental Examinations. Each examination is composed exclusively of multiple-choice test items. Part I is a comprehensive examination covering the basic biomedical sciences, dental anatomy and ethics testlets. Part II is a comprehensive examination covering clinical dental subjects, including patient management.

The agency responsible for the administration of National Board Dental Examinations is:
The Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations
American Dental Association
211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 600
Chicago, Illinois 60611-2637
1-800-232-1694

Clinical Examination Requirement: Candidates for dental licenses in most U.S. licensing jurisdictions are subject to the clinical examination requirement¹. Clinical examinations are conducted by individual state boards of dentistry or by regional dental testing agencies. A regional agency, also called a regional board, is formed when a group of state boards jointly develop and administer a clinical examination. Five such regional agencies currently conduct examinations used by all but four licensing jurisdictions. Go to the individual testing agency's Web site for information about the exam and which states participate.

Regional Testing Agencies

Council of Interstate Testing Agencies (CITA)	www.citaexam.com
North East Regional Examining Board (NERB)	www.nerb.org
Central Regional Dental Testing Services (CRDTS)	www.crdts.org
Southern Regional Testing Agency (SRTA)	www.sрта.org
Western Regional Examining Board (WREB)	www.wreb.org

¹ New York does not require a clinical examination, but requires applicants to complete an accredited postgraduate dental education program of at least one year in length (PGY-1). California, Connecticut, Minnesota and Washington offer licensure applicants the **option** of completing an accredited postgraduate education program, at least one year in length, in lieu of a clinical examination.

Independent States

Delaware	http://dpr.delaware.gov/boards/dental/index.shtml
Florida	http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/dentistry
Nevada	http://www.nvdentalboard.nv.gov
Virgin Islands - 340-774-0117	Lydia.scott@usvi-doh.gov

Clinical examinations involve performing dental procedures on patients, and there may also be a laboratory or manikin component. A clinical examination may include a written (computer-based) component. The specific procedures required are identified in the examination's Candidate's Guide, and the candidate is responsible for furnishing patients in need of these procedures.

Applying for a License: Candidates are eligible to apply for a dental license once the educational, written examination and clinical examination requirements are met. In addition, state boards may have additional requirements, such as:

- a minimum age of 18 or 21 years old;
- good moral character;
- examination on the state practice act (jurisprudence);
- proof of malpractice insurance;
- current Basic Life Support (BLS) or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification;
- specialty degree from an ADA accredited program;
- specialty examination results or certificate;
- background check;
- fingerprint verification;
- interview;
- documentation of hepatitis B vaccination; or
- courses in infection control, radiation safety or other specified topics.