TESTING SERVICES

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Recent and Forthcoming Updates to Examinations

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Recent and Forthcoming Updates to Examinations

Department of Testing Services

This document describes recent and forthcoming updates to examinations implemented by the Department of Testing Services (DTS). Please check back for additional updates as they become available. If you have any questions, please contact dtsonline@ada.org.

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Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination (DLOSCE)

Last Updated 9/23/2026

Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in 2021	Antibiotic Prophylaxis	In 2021, the American Heart Association (AHA) released a new scientific statement regarding the use of antibiotic prophylaxis. Examination questions reflect the updates provided in the 2021 scientific statement from AHA. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here.
Implemented in 2021	Anesthesia (Physical Status Classifications)	In December 2020, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) released an amendment to the Physical Status Classification System used to assess and communicate a patient's pre-anesthesia medical co-morbidities. Information about the amended classification system is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 amended classification system.
Implemented in 2021	Dental Traumatology	In 2020, the International Association of Dental Traumatology (IADT) released updated guidelines for the evaluation and management of traumatic dental injuries. Information about the updated guidelines is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 IADT guidelines.
Implemented in 2020	Periodontal Classifications	In 2017, the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) introduced new periodontal classifications. Examination questions reflect the new classification system introduced by AAP in 2017. Periodontal educators recommend that individuals refer to the 2017 World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases and Conditions — available on the American Academy of Periodontology website — for additional information.
Implemented in 2025	Smoking Terminology	Items referring to smoking cigarettes may appear in multiple formats. Moving forward, the preferred approach is to indicate the number of cigarettes per day, which aligns with current educational practices and the American Academy of Periodontology staging and grading guidelines. However, some existing items may continue to reference packs of cigarettes or pack-year history. When this occurs, one pack is defined as 20 cigarettes, and pack-year history reflects the number of packs smoked per day multiplied by the number of years the individual has smoked.

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Implemented in 2020	Blood Pressure	In 2017, the American Heart Association (AHA) released new information regarding hypertension guidelines. Examination questions reflect the information provided in the 2017 update. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here.
Implemented in 2026	Licensed to ADEX	The American Dental Association (ADA) and the American Board of Dental Examiners (ADEX) finalized an agreement to license the ADA's Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination (DLOSCE) for incorporation into the ADEX Dental Examination. All future administrations will be conducted through ADEX. For more information, please visit the ADEX website.

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Integrated National Board Dental Examination (INBDE)

Last updated 9/23/2026

Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in 2023	Antibiotic Prophylaxis	In 2021, the American Heart Association (AHA) released a new scientific statement regarding the use of antibiotic prophylaxis. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here. Examination questions reflect the updates provided in the 2021 scientific statement from AHA.
Implemented in 2023	Anesthesia (Physical Status Classifications)	In December 2020, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) released an amendment to the Physical Status Classification System used to assess and communicate a patient's pre-anesthesia medical co-morbidities. Information about the amended classification system is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 amended classification system.
Implemented in 2023	Dental Traumatology	In 2020, the International Association of Dental Traumatology (IADT) released updated guidelines for the evaluation and management of traumatic dental injuries. Information about the updated guidelines is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 IADT guidelines.
Implemented in 2023	Radiography	The term "film" is no longer used on the examination to refer to radiographs. Therefore, no questions related to dark room and chemical processing will be asked.
Implemented in 2020	Periodontal Classifications	In 2017, the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) introduced new periodontal classifications. Examination questions reflect the new classification system introduced by AAP in 2017. Periodontal educators recommend that individuals refer to the 2017 World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases and Conditions — available on the American Academy of Periodontology website — for additional information.

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Implemented in 2020	Blood Pressure	In 2017, the American Heart Association (AHA) released new information regarding hypertension guidelines. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here. Examination questions reflect the information provided in the 2017 update.
Implemented in 2025	Smoking Terminology	Items referring to smoking cigarettes may appear in multiple formats. Moving forward, the preferred approach is to indicate the number of cigarettes per day, which aligns with current educational practices and the American Academy of Periodontology staging and grading guidelines. However, some existing items may continue to reference packs of cigarettes or pack-year history. When this occurs, one pack is defined as 20 cigarettes, and pack-year history reflects the number of packs smoked per day multiplied by the number of years the individual has smoked.

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National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE)

Last updated 9/23/2026

Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in 2022	Antibiotic Prophylaxis	In 2021, the American Heart Association (AHA) released a new scientific statement regarding the use of antibiotic prophylaxis. Examination questions reflect the updates provided in the 2021 scientific statement from AHA. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here.
Implemented in 2022	Anesthesia (Physical Status Classifications)	In December 2020, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) released an amendment to the Physical Status Classification System used to assess and communicate a patient's pre-anesthesia medical co-morbidities. Information about the amended classification system is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 amended classification system.
Implemented in 2022	Dental Traumatology	In 2020, the International Association of Dental Traumatology (IADT) released updated guidelines for the evaluation and management of traumatic dental injuries. Information about the updated guidelines is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 IADT guidelines.
Implemented in 2022	Radiography	The term "film" is no longer used on the examination to refer to radiographs. Therefore, no questions related to dark room and chemical processing will be asked.
Implemented in 2021	Periodontal Classifications	In 2017, the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) introduced new periodontal classifications. Examination questions reflect the new classification system introduced by AAP in 2017. Periodontal educators recommend that individuals refer to the 2017 World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases and Conditions — available on the American Academy of Periodontology website — for additional information.
Implemented in 2021	Blood Pressure	In 2017, the American Heart Association (AHA) released new information regarding hypertension guidelines. Examination questions reflect the information provided in the 2017 update. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here. Please note that examination questions also reflect the General Patient Considerations listed under Implications of Hypertension in Dental Care on this website, which differ from those posted in the 13th edition of Esther M. Wilkins' Clinical Practice of the Dental Hygienist (Table 12-2 in Chapter 12).

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Implemented in 2025	Smoking Terminology	Items referring to smoking cigarettes may appear in multiple formats. Moving forward, the preferred approach is to indicate the number of cigarettes per day, which aligns with current educational practices and the American Academy of Periodontology staging and grading guidelines. However, some existing items may continue to reference packs of cigarettes or pack-year history. When this occurs, one pack is defined as 20 cigarettes, and pack-year history reflects the number of packs smoked per day multiplied by the number of years the individual has smoked.
Anticipated for November 1, 2026	Examination Specifications	Updated NBDHE Test Specifications are scheduled for implementation on November 1, 2026. These changes are not expected to substantially alter examination preparation but provide additional clarity and refinements to several content areas. Candidates should refer to the NBDHE Candidate Guide associated with their testing date for complete information regarding the applicable test specifications.

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Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH)

Last updated 9/23/2026

Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in 2023	Year-round Testing	Effective September 1, 2023, the ADA's Department of Testing Services (DTS) implemented year-round testing for the ATDH Program. This change provides candidates and dental hygiene programs with additional flexibility. Under year-round testing, a candidate is permitted to attempt the ATDH on any day of the year for which they can secure a testing appointment, provided they meet established ATDH eligibility criteria. The transition to year-round testing is also accompanied by an improvement in the speed with which ATDH results are reported to candidates and dental hygiene programs. Under year-round testing, results are reported within three to four weeks of the candidate's test date. In comparison, under the previous window-based system, results reporting sometimes required as much as 12 weeks. Additional information is available at the ATDH website, at ADA.org/ATDH.

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Advanced Dental Admission Test (ADAT)

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Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in 2022	Antibiotic Prophylaxis	In 2021, the American Heart Association (AHA) released a new scientific statement regarding the use of antibiotic prophylaxis. Examination questions reflect the updates provided in the 2021 scientific statement from AHA. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here.
Implemented in 2022	Anesthesia (Physical Status Classifications)	In December 2020, the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) released an amendment to the Physical Status Classification System used to assess and communicate a patient's pre-anesthesia medical co-morbidities. Information about the amended classification system is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 amended classification system.
Implemented in 2022	Dental Traumatology	In 2020, the International Association of Dental Traumatology (IADT) released updated guidelines for the evaluation and management of traumatic dental injuries. Information about the updated guidelines is available here. Examination questions reflect the 2020 IADT guidelines.
Implemented in 2020	Periodontal Classifications	In 2017, the American Academy of Periodontology (AAP) introduced new periodontal classifications. Examination questions reflect the new classification system introduced by AAP in 2017. Periodontal educators recommend that individuals refer to the 2017 World Workshop on the Classification of Periodontal and Peri-implant Diseases and Conditions — available on the American Academy of Periodontology website — for additional information.
Implemented in 2020	Blood Pressure	In 2017, the American Heart Association (AHA) released new information regarding hypertension guidelines. Examination questions reflect the information provided in the 2017 update. Relevant information concerning the AHA guidelines is available here.
Implemented in 2025	Smoking Terminology	Items referring to smoking cigarettes may appear in multiple formats. Moving forward, the preferred approach is to indicate the number of cigarettes per day, which aligns with current educational practices and the American Academy of Periodontology staging and grading guidelines. However, some existing items may continue to reference packs of cigarettes or pack-year history. When this occurs, one pack is defined as 20 cigarettes, and pack-year history reflects the number of packs smoked per day multiplied by the number of years the individual has smoked.

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Dental Admission Test (DAT)

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Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in January 2022	Biology	Changes to the DAT Biology Test Specifications were implemented on January 21, 2022. Students who plan to take the DAT are encouraged to review the updated specifications, which include several new topics that were not previously covered on the examination.
Implemented in March 2025	Scoring and Reporting	Starting with administrations occurring on March 1, 2025, the 2-digit score reporting scale (1 to 30) was replaced by a 3-digit score reporting scale (200 to 600), and unofficial score reports are no longer be available at the testing site. Please click here for more information.
Implemented in April 2026	Organic Chemistry	Updates to the DAT Organic Chemistry Test Specifications were implemented in April 2026. Additional information is available on the DAT webpage.

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Optometry Admission Test (OAT)

Last updated 09/23/2026

Date	Topic	Notes
Implemented in April 2022	Biology	Changes to the OAT Biology Test Specifications were implemented on April 13, 2022. Students who plan to take the OAT are encouraged to review the updated specifications, which include several new topics that were not previously covered on the examination. Additional information about the changes is available in the OAT Candidate Guide, under "Scope of the Examination."
Implemented in June 2026	Organic Chemistry	Updates to the OAT Organic Chemistry Test Specifications were implemented in June 2026. Additional information is available on the OAT webpage.

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