

FEATURES OF THE NBDHE AND THE DHLOSCE

The National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (**NBDHE**) and the Dental Hygiene Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination (**DHLOSCE**) serve important roles in evaluating the competencies of dental hygiene candidates. Understanding the differences between the two examinations can help state dental boards understand the importance of each examination and help candidates prepare effectively.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Criteria	NBDHE	DHLOSCE
Purpose	To assist jurisdictional boards in determining the qualifications of those who seek licensure to practice dentistry or dental hygiene.	To inform licensure decisions. Does the candidate have the level of clinical judgement and skills necessary to safely practice dental hygiene? Readiness for practice.
Focus	Assesses cognitive skills (broader focus) • Biomedical and behavioral underpinnings of clinical decisions. • Professional responsibility considerations, evidence-based practice, being good consumers of research, patient oral health care education, etc.	Assesses clinical skills (a narrower focus).
State acceptance	All U.S. Licensing jurisdictions	Kentucky, Arizona, Oregon
Number of questions	350 questions administered in two sessions within one day.	150 questions administered in a single session within one day.
Results Interpretation	Pass/Fail against criterion-referenced NBDHE standard.	Pass/Fail against criterion-referenced DHLOSCE standard.
Administration modality	Administered by Pearson VUE in the United States and Canada.	Administered by Prometric in the United States. Available for administration throughout the year in fixed testing windows.
Method of Measurement	Candidates are presented with 350 multiple-choice items (200 discipline-based items and 150 case-based items) covering functions that a dental hygienist is expected to be able to perform. Only functions that can be delegated to a dental hygienist in a majority of states are included in the examination. For case-based items, the patient information is presented by means of patient histories, dental charts, radiographs, and clinical photographs.	Hybrid OSCE. Candidates are presented with clinical situations and patient stimulus materials—including lifelike 3D models of teeth, radiographs, dental charts, and/or clinical photographs—that candidates can use to diagnose a patient and respond to extended multiple-choice clinical questions. Uses the Patient Box.

Criteria	NBDHE	DHLOSCE
Examples of concepts that could be tested	Knowledge of which bacteria is associated with periodontitis. Knowledge of the scientific principles behind radiography. Assesses understanding of infection control principles and scientific rationale.	Focus on clinical management of a patient with periodontal disease. Recognizes when to make radiographs, what errors were made, how to improve clinical radiography techniques. Assesses ability to apply infection control in patient care scenarios.
Resources	Visit JCNDE.ADA.ORG/NBDHE for resources to help you prepare for the NBDHE exam.	Visit JCNDE.ADA.ORG/DHLOSCE for resources to help you prepare for the DHLOSCE exam.