

INBDE Information for Dental Education Programs

The Integrated National Board Dental Examination (INBDE) is a new written cognitive examination for dental licensure scheduled to replace the current National Board Dental Examination (NBDE) Part I and Part II examinations on August 1, 2020. The purpose of the INBDE is the same as that of the NBDE Part I and Part II: to assist state boards of dentistry in making decisions about candidates for dental licensure. By integrating content covering the basic, behavioral, and clinical sciences, the INBDE simulates decision-making processes is expected to be more relevant than the current NBDE Part I and Part II examinations.

INBDE Implementation

The JCNDE has issued a [formal notification](#) that the INBDE will be available for administration beginning on August 1, 2020. The NBDE Part I will be discontinued on July 31, 2020, and the NBDE Part II will be discontinued on August 1, 2022.

About the INBDE

The JCNDE is developing the INBDE because of changes in educational curricula and new accreditation standards that took effect in 2013, requiring the integration of basic sciences with behavioral and clinical science instruction. In reviewing content, the Joint Commission considered the state boards' perspective.

For a detailed chronological overview of activities since the inception of the new examination in 2009, please see [INBDE Timeline](#).

JCNDE Recommendations for Dental Education Programs

To help dental education programs prepare for the INBDE's implementation, the Joint Commission recommended the following for dental schools:

- Review and monitor INBDE information on the Joint Commission's website (www.ada.org/JCNDE/INBDE), including the INBDE Implementation Plan.
- Attend the INBDE information sessions at the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) Annual Session.
- Consider whether any modifications to curriculum will be required for the integrated examination. Note that the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) implemented new Accreditation Standards for Dental Education Programs, as of July 1, 2013, that emphasize the importance of integration throughout dental school curriculum.
- Adjust academic policy, if needed, to reflect the INBDE's scheduled replacement of NBDE Part I and Part II.
- Prepare to advise students on changes to the National Board Examinations, including the INBDE implementation schedule, retest policies, and individual state dental board requirements where students intend to apply for licensure.

The INBDE's purpose

The purpose of an examination is foundational, and drives all aspects of its development. The INBDE is a cognitive examination intended to help state boards determine whether an individual has the entry-level knowledge and cognitive skills necessary to safely practice dentistry. The INBDE does not include a demonstration of clinical skills.

How INBDE differs from NBDE Part I and Part II

The new test relies less on rote knowledge and information recall than the current NBDE examinations do, and instead it emphasizes the decision-making process relevant to the safe practice of dentistry through the integration of the basic sciences and dental and clinical science.

The JCNDE expects the INBDE will include 500 items, compared with a total of 900 questions on the NBDE Part I and Part II.

INBDE Practice Questions

The JCNDE has provided [practice questions](#) to help students prepare for the INBDE, and to help faculty members understand the types of questions on the exam. All practice items are the copyrighted property of the JCNDE. The practice items are intended for the use of educators and students within the educational environment or for individual study and may not be reproduced in any format, whether paper or electronic, without expressed written permission of the JCNDE.

Eligibility and retest policy

The Joint Commission expects each dental school program to assist students in determining the appropriate time to test on the National Board Examinations. Each student must qualify to take the National Board Examinations. Most often eligibility is provided through verification from the dean of an accredited dental program. The timing of students' eligibility will help determine what examinations they should plan to take.

Students who expect to enroll in dental school in 2019 or later could be eligible to take the INBDE instead of the NBDE Part I; depending on their enrollment year, they might be required to take the INBDE for certification as the NBDE Part II will not be available after July 31, 2022. After students take the INBDE, they will no longer be allowed to take the NBDE Part I or Part II.

Students who have had five unsuccessful attempts on the NBDE Part II will still be permitted five attempts on the INBDE. After students have successfully completed the NBDE Part I and Part II or the INBDE with passing scores, they are no longer eligible to take any of the National Board Dental Examinations.

Candidates must wait a minimum of 90 days between unsuccessful test attempts. After their third failed attempt, candidates must wait one year before they can retest on the INBDE. The JCNDE will review this policy again in 2021. Additional information on the INBDE retest policy, and the retest policy during the transition to the INBDE, is available on the INBDE website.

INBDE validation

The CIE has accumulated evidence supporting the use of INBDE results for dental licensure through validity arguments confirming the examination uses appropriate content based on an accepted domain of dentistry. The INBDE integrates content from basic science areas with the clinical competencies considered important for safe entry-level dental practice.

Construction of the test began with a review of the basic science areas and clinical competencies considered important to the safe practice of entry-level dentistry. In determining appropriate content, the CIE drew from the clinical competency areas the American Dental Education Association regards as necessary for new dentists to master to perform successfully, and added two areas the Commission on Dental Accreditation considers important. Two science review panels confirmed the relevance of the content areas, and the CIE relied on results from a 2011 practice analysis and additional feedback from stakeholders and communities of interest to determine what proportion of questions to devote to each area. The practice analysis involved a survey that asked practicing dentists to rate how critical they considered certain competencies.

Subsequent to the research and consideration of it, the Joint Commission has approved test specifications for the INBDE based on a Model of the Domain of Dentistry, which includes 10 areas of Foundation Knowledge for the General Dentist based on science, and 56 clinical competencies determined through the practice analysis to be at least “moderately important to patient care.” The clinical competencies are grouped into three sections: diagnosis and treatment planning, oral health management, and practice and profession.

Plans for INBDE pass/fail scoring

The INBDE is designed to be scored as pass/fail. Numeric scores are not expected to be provided to students who pass the examination. The Joint Commission is still determining how results for remediation purposes will be provided to candidates who receive failing scores.

INBDE and state board licensure

As the replacement for the NBDE Part I and Part II, the Joint Commission intends the INBDE to be adopted as the written component for state board licensure in all U.S. licensing jurisdictions that recognize NBDE results, including the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands of the United States. Each jurisdiction determines licensing requirements. Like the NBDE Part I and Part II examinations, the INBDE’s purpose as an assessment is to assist state boards in making valid decisions in dental licensure.

INBDE updates

The [JCNDE website](#) is regularly updated as new information becomes available. In addition, the Joint Commission communicates annual updates to the academic deans of all accredited U.S. dental schools.