

INBDE Information for Test Takers

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 the [INBDE Timeline](#).

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.

Opportunities for Current and Future Dental Students

Current college students who enrolled in dental school in 2017 or later could be eligible to take the INBDE instead of the NBDE Part II in 2020. 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. The NBDE Part II will not be available after July 31, 2022, so these students might be required to take the INBDE for certification. After students take the INBDE, they will no longer be allowed to take the NBDE Part I or Part II.

To help future candidates understand their options during the transition period, please consider the following paths:

I prefer to take the NBDE Part I and Part II. How should I proceed?

You must receive eligibility from your dental program to take the NBDE, and you must pass the NBDE Part I before administration of the exam ceases, which is expected to occur around August 1, 2020. After you pass the NBDE Part I, you must successfully complete the NBDE Part II before administration ceases on August 1, 2022. To take the NBDE Part II, you must receive eligibility from your dental school. However, if time runs out for either NBDE administration and you are eligible for the INBDE, you would be eligible for five attempts on the INBDE.

I prefer to take the INBDE. How should I plan ahead?

INBDE administration is expected to begin in 2020, and candidates will have five attempts in five years to complete the exam successfully. You must receive eligibility from your dental school to take the INBDE. After you take the INBDE, you will not be permitted to take the NBDE Part I and Part II exams.

I'm not sure if I should take the NBDE Part II or the INBDE. What should I consider?

If you have passed the NBDE Part I, and you have received eligibility from your dental school to take the NBDE Part II, you may take the Part II until administration ceases in 2022 or until you take the INBDE. If you forgo the NBDE Part II and test on the INBDE, you will have five test attempts on the INBDE. If you are unsuccessful on the INBDE, you will not be permitted to test on the NBDE Part II.

Information for future dental students

The Joint Commission expects each dental school program to assist students in determining the appropriate time to test on the National Board Examinations. The timing will help determine what examinations students should plan to take. *Each school determines when students are sufficiently prepared for the National Board Examinations.*

Plans for INBDE 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.

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 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 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.

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.