

Virginia Board of Dentistry
Guidance on
DENTAL HYGIENE CLINICAL COMPETENCY EXAMINATION
REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSURE

Acceptable Clinical Examinations Effective January 1, 2023

Effective January 1, 2023, the Board only accepts the **ADEX** Exam from dental hygiene applicants who apply for licensure by examination. This applies to all examinations completed in calendar year 2023 and thereafter, regardless of the dates portions of the examination were taken. *See* Va. Code § 54.1-2722(B)(iv).

Effective January 1, 2023, the Board will only accept a clinical competency exam that is substantially equivalent to the clinical exam components listed below from dental hygiene applicants who apply for licensure by credentials. This applies to all examinations completed regardless of the date or dates an examination was taken. The Board will only accept clinical exam components taken from one testing agency; the Board will not accept combined exam components from more than one testing agency.

Definitions

- **“Clinical competency exam”** means a formal test of knowledge and competence in the evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment of dental conditions and the prevention of dental diseases which includes live patient and mannequin-based testing methods to demonstrate the skills needed to safely provide care and treatment of patients.
- **“Compensatory scoring”** is a scoring methodology which allows for strong performance in one content area to compensate for poor performance in another content area as long as the overall score meets the performance standard.
- **“Conjunctive scoring”** is a scoring methodology which requires that performance standards be met for each specified content area.
- **“Substantially equivalent”** means any examination taken for another jurisdiction which is equivalent in content and degree of difficulty, respectively, to those requirements for licensure by examination.

Dental Hygiene Applications by Examination

Pursuant to Virginia Code § 54.1-2722(B)(iv), the Board will accept passage of the ADEX exam with each individual component listed below scored using conjunctive scoring (not compensatory scoring) and with a minimum passing score of 75% for each of the following components:

- **Treatment clinical examination**, including calculus detection and removal, periodontal pocket depth measurements, and tissue management.
- **Computer simulated clinical examination**, including assessment of various levels of diagnosis and treatment planning knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Dental Hygiene Applications by Credentials/Endorsement

For dental hygiene applicants who apply for licensure by credentials, the Board will accept a passing score of the clinical competency exam required in the state in which the dental hygienist was originally licensed. The Board will accept clinical exam components from one testing agency. The Board will not accept combined clinical exam components from more than one agency. The Board will not accept certificates or Canadian exams.

Additionally, pursuant to 18VAC60-25-150(2), an applicant must be currently licensed to practice dental hygiene in another jurisdiction of the United States and have maintained clinical, ethical, and active practice for 24 of the past 48 months immediately preceding application for licensure.

Acceptable Score Cards and Reports for Dental Hygiene Licensure

- To satisfy the requirements of 18VAC60-25-130(A)(2), an applicant should mail one original and detailed score card or report from the testing agency which documents passage of a clinical competency examination, including passage of all components listed above using conjunctive scoring. Candidate score cards are not acceptable. In the alternative, the applicant may contact the testing agency to request that the test results be made available to the Virginia Board of Dentistry via online access portal. The Board will not accept certificates or Canadian exams.
- Applicants will submit score cards for each attempt of a clinical competency exam, including failure of any clinical competency exam.
- The Board can only accept score cards from a single testing agency which shows passage (equivalent to a score of at least 75% using conjunctive scoring) or failure of an exam. To satisfy the requirements of 18VAC60-25-140, the Board receives notification and documentation of each attempt at clinical competency examination, including failure, from applicants for licensure.
- 18VAC60-25-140(C) states that applicants who successfully completed a clinical competency examination five or more years prior to the date of receipt of their applications for licensure by this board may be required to retake an examination or take clinical continuing education (please see guidance document 60-12) as evidence of continuing competence that meets the requirements of 18VAC60-25-190 unless the applicant demonstrates maintenance of clinical, ethical, and legal practice in another jurisdiction of the United States or in federal civil or military service for 48 of the past 60 months immediately prior to submission of an application for licensure.

References

[Va. Code § 54.1-2722](#)

[18VAC60-25-130](#)

[18VAC60-25-140](#)

[18VAC60-25-150](#)