

**NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE
CERTIFICATION BOARD**



CANDIDATE GUIDE
TO THE

**NATIONAL DENTAL HYGIENE
CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to all the candidates who will be writing the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE). This Guide aims to provide you with the information necessary to familiarize yourself with the policies and procedures related to several different areas of examination administration. These include:

- ▶ Eligibility Criteria
- ▶ Administrative Procedures
- ▶ Examination Content
- ▶ Security measures
- ▶ Scoring and Review

Standard examination procedures are used to provide security of the examinations and to ensure, as much as possible, that all certification candidates write examinations under the same conditions.

1.1 Jurisdictional Variances

In Canada, the level of government responsible for the registration or licensure for dental hygiene practice is the provincial or territorial dental hygiene regulatory authority. Requirements for registration or licensure as a dental hygienist vary among Canadian dental hygiene regulatory authorities. Those variations may include differences in educational requirements, clinical competencies, continuing education requirements, language competencies, and written and/or clinical practice examinations.

The NDHCE is intended to fulfill a regulatory authority's written examination requirement; however, acceptance/requirement of the National Dental Hygiene Certificate is completely at the discretion of the individual provincial or territorial dental hygiene regulatory authority. The NDHCB is the agency responsible for the development, administration, scoring and reporting of the written NDHCE.

1.2 Purpose

Certification examinations have a well defined purpose: to protect the public by ensuring that those who are certified possess sufficient knowledge and skills to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively (AERA, 1999¹). The purpose of the NDHCE is to assist the provincial and territorial dental hygiene regulatory authorities in determining whether or not an applicant for registration or licensure possesses adequate theoretical knowledge and/or skills related to entry-level dental hygiene practice standards.

1.3 Dental Hygiene Practice

Dental hygiene is a regulated health service profession encompassing the theory and practice of oral therapeutics interventions, preventive interventions and health promotion. It has a unique body of knowledge, distinct expertise, recognized standards of practice and a Code of Ethics. Dental Hygiene practice is a collaborative relationship in which the dental hygienist works with the client, other health care professionals, and society in general to achieve and maintain optimal oral health as an integral part of well being. The Dental Hygiene process (DHP) utilizes a systems approach to services which include DHP: Assessment and Diagnosis, DHP: Planning, DHP: Implementation and DHP: Evaluation. Throughout Dental Hygiene practice there are six primary responsibilities: administration, clinical therapy, change agent, health promotion, education and research. Regulation of dental hygiene services ensures protection of the public and a high quality of care through appropriate education and certification/registration/licensure processes.

¹ AERA: American Educational Research Association

1.4 Recognition of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination

Dental hygiene regulatory authorities in all provinces except Québec require the National Dental Hygiene Certificate as one essential requirement for registration and/or licensure.

2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

2.1 Student in a Dental Hygiene Program

2.1.1 Student in an Accredited² Dental Hygiene Program

A student in a dental hygiene program that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA/CODA), may apply to write the NDHCE upon confirmation by the dental hygiene program director or designate, that the student, **at the application deadline date, is within four months of completion** of the dental hygiene program.

2.1.2 Student in the cohort of a Dental Hygiene Program that has been reviewed by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) and to whom CDAC has granted “Program Status Under Review”.

Such student may apply to write the NDHCE upon confirmation by the dental hygiene program director or designate, that the student, at the application deadline date, is **within four months of completion** of the dental hygiene program **AND following verification of eligibility by the NDHCB.**

Students in subsequent cohorts of the program will be given the same consideration until such time as the CDAC notifies the NDHCB that “status under review” has been revoked or that accreditation has been granted.

2.2 Graduate of an Accredited Dental Hygiene Program

An applicant who is a graduate of a dental hygiene program that was accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA/CODA) on the date of the applicant’s graduation may apply to write the NDHCE.

2.3 Graduate of a Non-Accredited Dental Hygiene Program

An applicant who is a graduate of a dental hygiene program that was not accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC), or the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA/CODA) on the date of the applicant’s graduation, may apply to write the NDHCE following verification of eligibility and written confirmation of such by the NDHCB.

2.4 Conditions

2.4.1 The NDHCB will confirm in writing, eligibility to write the NDHCE. A successful evaluation result establishes eligibility for application to the NDHCE for three years.

2.4.2 If the applicant is deemed eligible to write the NDHCE, lack of language proficiency in either English or French shall not be grounds for review of examination results.

² Accredited shall mean accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC) or the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (ADA/CODA).

3. EXAMINATION APPLICATION PROCEDURES

3.1 Completion and Submission of an Examination Application

- 3.1.1 An online application form for the NDHCE and a printable version are available on the NDHCB website at www.ndhcb.ca/en/forms.php. A new application form must be submitted each time a candidate wishes to be tested or re-tested. It must be received on or before the application deadline date (see www.ndhcb.ca/en/exam_application.php) unless an extension is granted by the Executive Director under exceptional circumstances.
- 3.1.2 For a list of Dental Hygiene Institutions see www.ndhcb.ca/files/DHInstitutionCodes.pdf. For Writing Centre locations, see www.ndhcb.ca/files/WritingCentresCities.pdf
- 3.1.3 For those applying online, a completed application form must be submitted along with valid credit card information for the appropriate examination fee (see 3.2) and a digital (JPeg) photograph (taken within the last 6 months). For those applying by mail, they also need to submit 2 passport-size photographs and all documentation/signatures required to confirm eligibility.
- 3.1.4 The NDHCB will promptly confirm, by email, the receipt of the application payment and the candidate's eligibility to write the NDHCE will be later confirmed by the DH Program Director. After your eligibility is confirmed you will receive an email asking you to click and select a specific writing centre and time period from the list of available sites/times.
- 3.1.5 Any request by a candidate to change Writing Centres must be made **online**, a **minimum of three (3) weeks** prior to the examination.
- 3.1.6 An Identification Card including: candidate photo, ID number, mailing address, email address, examination date, and the name of the Writing Centre will be issued at the exam site to each candidate. Candidates will be asked to verify the information printed on the Identification Card. If necessary, they should indicate any corrections on the Correction Stub (right hand portion of ID card), and return the Correction Stub only, to the exam proctor so that the necessary changes can be made by NDHCB. Unless otherwise indicated, examination results will be sent to the address on the Candidate ID card. The Examination ID card is valid for one writing only.
- 3.1.7 Candidates will also be asked to present a separate proof of identification (e.g., photo ID, driver's license) before entering the exam site.

3.2 Examination Fees

- 3.2.1 For the first attempt of the NDHCE, the candidate shall pay an examination fee of \$575.00 + tax (includes a \$100 + tax non-refundable application fee) as determined by the NDHCB.
- 3.2.2 A \$475.00 + tax fee will be assessed for each rewrite attempt.
- 3.2.3 Only valid credit cards (VISA or Mastercard), money orders or certified cheques payable in Canadian currency are accepted. Cash and personal cheques will be returned with the application.

3.3 Documentation Required from Each Category of Candidate at Application Time

3.3.1 Students in an Accredited Dental Hygiene Program

- a) Completed NDHCE application form;
- b) \$575 + tax;
- c) Digital photo (online application) or 2 identical passport-size photos (application by mail) taken within the last 6 months;

Please note: the Statement of Reference (on page 2 of the mail-in form) must be completed and signed by the dental hygiene program director or designate stating that the candidate will complete his/her program within four (4) months for those applying by mail only.

3.3.2 Student in a cohort of Dental Hygiene Program that has been granted "Program Status Under Review" by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada (CDAC)

- a) Completed NDHCE application form;
- b) \$575 + tax;
- c) Digital photo (online application) or 2 identical passport-size photos (application by mail) taken within the last 6 months;
- d) Having successfully obtained the NDHCB verification of eligibility;

Please note: the Statement of Reference (on page 2 of the mail-in form) must be completed and signed by the dental hygiene program director or designate stating that the candidate will complete his/her program within four (4) months for those applying by mail only.

3.3.3 Graduates of an Accredited Dental Hygiene Program:

- a) Completed NDHCE application form (*Graduates of US accredited schools can only apply by mail*);
- b) \$575 + tax (\$475 + tax for retakes);
- c) Digital photo (online application) or 2 identical passport-size photos (application by mail) taken within the last 6 months;

Please note: A notarized photocopy of their diploma/certificate in dental hygiene and an official transcript of grades submitted directly to our office by the dental hygiene educational institution of graduation are also required for those applying by mail only.

3.3.4 Graduates of Non-Accredited Dental Hygiene Programs:

- a) Completed NDHCE application form;
- b) \$575 + tax (\$475 + tax for retakes);
- c) Digital photo (online application) or 2 identical passport-size photos (application by mail) taken within the last 6 months;
- d) Having successfully obtained the NDHCB verification of eligibility.

3.4 Self-withdrawal from the Examination

3.4.1 Candidates wishing to withdraw from the examination must notify the NDHCB in writing (by mail, email or fax) three (3) weeks or more prior to the examination date. They will be refunded the examination fee less the non-refundable application fee (\$100 + tax).

3.4.2 Candidates who withdraw less than two (3) weeks prior to the examination date will be refunded the examination fee less the non-refundable application fee (\$100 + tax) and the withdrawal fee (\$100 + tax).

- 3.4.3** Candidates who withdraw from an examination, for which they have transferred fees from a previous application, will be refunded the examination fee less the non-refundable application fee and withdrawal fee (\$200 + tax).
- 3.4.4** Candidates who request a withdrawal from the examination, less than three (3) weeks prior to the examination date due to illness (doctor's certificate required) or death in the immediate family (death certificate required), must notify the NDHCB in writing (by mail, email or fax). These Candidates will be refunded the examination fee less the non-refundable application fee (\$100 + tax).

3.5 Revocation of Eligibility by the Dental Hygiene Program Director or Designate

- 3.5.1** Dental hygiene program directors or designate of student candidates who are registered for an examination under the eligibility criteria detailed in section 2.1 must inform the NDHCB in writing (by mail, email or fax) no later than two (2) weeks prior to the examination date, should the students' status no longer be to complete their dental hygiene program requirements within four (4) months of the application deadline date.
- 3.5.2** Student candidates who find themselves in the situation described at section 3.5.1 will be allowed to transfer their examination fees to a future examination administration one time only, at no cost providing they send a written request (by mail, email or fax) to that effect to the NDHCB.
- 3.5.3** Candidates who find themselves in the situation described at section 3.5.1 who choose not to transfer their examination fees to a future examination administration, but instead elect to completely withdraw from the examination, will be refunded the examination fee less the non-refundable application fee (\$100 + tax).
- 3.5.4** A candidate who has withdrawn from an examination date and who wishes to apply to write the examination at a future date must submit a new application form including payment of full fees (application and examination) prior to that examination application deadline date.

3.6 Transfer of Examination Fees

- 3.6.1** A candidate who requests transfer of examination fees to a future date must notify the NDHCB in writing (by mail, email or fax) no later than two (2) weeks prior to the original examination date.
- 3.6.2** A candidate may have his/her examination fees transferred to a future examination administration one time only.
- 3.6.3** The refund of fees for withdrawal following transfer of examination fees to a new examination administration date is outlined in section 3.4.
- 3.6.4** A candidate who has transferred from an examination date and who wishes to apply to write the examination at a future date must submit a new application form including two new pictures (or upload a new digital picture if applying online) prior to that examination application deadline date (no payment required).

4. EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The objective of the Examination Development process is to ensure that the examination is developed to achieve its stated purpose; to protect the public by ensuring that those who are certified possess sufficient competencies (e.g. knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes and judgment) to perform important occupational activities safely and effectively. A rigorous test development process is implemented that meets or exceeds all professional standards as specified in the most recent edition of *American Psychological Association Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* including the requirements of periodic evaluation.

4.1 Competency Study

As the foundation for a criterion-referenced examination³, the competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and judgments) required for the safe and effective practice of an entry-level dental hygienist were identified by NDHCB SMEs (subject matter experts). The dental hygiene competencies undergo an extensive review by focus groups of other SMEs from across Canada (i.e., educators, regulators, administrators, researchers) to establish their validity and to ensure that the competency profile for entry-level dental hygiene practice remains current.

4.2 Blueprint Development

An [examination Blueprint](#) outlining the content to be tested in the Examination was developed and is reviewed periodically by the NDHCB. The Blueprint includes the competencies - that is, the content domain that forms the basis for test development. It also specifies variables that provide structure for the examination, as well as guidelines and specifications for weighting the competencies to ensure that the Examination accurately reflects the domain of entry-level dental hygiene.

4.3 Item Development

Examination items are developed by SMEs who are trained in item writing. The examination items measure the specified competencies in accordance with the guidelines identified in the examination Blueprint. After an item is developed, it is reviewed by the NDHCB Dental Hygiene Advisor and then further evaluated and refined by the group. After this group review, it is then sent to a different group of SMEs for Regional appraisal.

4.4 Item Review

Item Appraisers, from different regions across Canada review each new item to ensure that they measure content that is consistent with current Canadian entry-to-practice standards as well as regional standards of practice for entry-level dental hygiene practitioners. They also ensure that stereotypes are not found in the items and that examinees are not disadvantaged by the examination content.

4.5 Professional Editing

All items are reviewed by the NDHCB testing agency to ensure clarity, consistency and appropriateness of the language used. The items are then entered into the official item bank for future retrieval.

³ A criterion-referenced approach, as opposed to a normative-referenced approach was selected a-priori given that the criterion-referenced approach to testing is more appropriate for licensure/certification examinations (Crocker & Algina, 1986).

4.6 Examination Monitoring & Approval

Each version of the examination is compiled by the NDHCB Testing Agency from items in the test bank in accordance with the Blueprint specifications. Final approval of the examination is given after the Examination Approval SMEs have reviewed the entire examination to ensure that each item measures content that is consistent with current standards of practice for the entry-level dental hygiene practitioner.

4.7 Standard Setting

The standard for the examination is established by using the professionally accepted and widely used modified Angoff⁴ method and/or Statistical Equating. The Examination Approval SMEs will set the specific passing (cut off) score for each version of the NDHCE using that method. This passing score represents the performance minimally expected of entry-level practice dental hygienists. Over the last 5 years, it should be noted that the passing score has always been between 65% and 70% for any specific exam version and that the NDHCB does not normalize scores (no bell curve).

4.8 Translation

Examinations are translated by an official translator, and further reviewed and validated by a group of bilingual dental hygiene SMEs from provinces with Francophone candidates.

5. EXAMINATION FORMAT, CONTENT & ATTENDANCE

5.1 Scope of the Examination

The NDHCE is presented in both official Canadian languages and currently consists of a sufficient number of multiple choice test items to ensure validity and reliability. Experimental questions (i.e. newly developed items) are included in the examination but are not counted towards the candidate's score.

The test items are developed from a comprehensive description of the content domain or competencies of the entry-level to practice dental hygiene. These competencies form the basis of the NDHCE. The classification of the competencies is based on the following:

Dental Hygiene Process of Care Model:

Assessment and Diagnosis:	Collects, critically analyses data and interprets data.
Planning:	Formulates goals and objectives, selects dental hygiene interventions/services, and validates the dental hygiene care plan.
Implementation:	Activates the dental hygiene interventions/services defined in the dental hygiene care plan.
Evaluation:	Appraises the effectiveness of the dental hygiene interventions/services and professional competence.

⁴ The modified Angoff method is based on the concept of the borderline or minimally competent candidate. The minimally competent candidate is one who possesses the minimum level of knowledge and skills necessary to perform at a certified level.

5.2 Test Item Format

- 5.2.1** Multiple choice test items consist of a stem which poses a problem in question format, followed by a list of four possible answers. Only one of the possible answers is correct. The other possible answers are called distractors which may divert the inadequately prepared candidate.
- 5.2.2** Case study test items consist of a description of a client in a clinical or community health situation followed by a series of three to six multiple choice test items.
- 5.2.3** The examination questions are delivered by computer over 2 two-hour sessions with a 15 min break (including re-login) in between. All candidates are required to attend both sessions. Partial credit is not given.

5.3 Attendance

- 5.3.1** Candidates are responsible for being present at the computerized Writing Centre **well in advance of their scheduled examination time (at least 30 min)**. Candidates who report late may not be allowed to participate in the test, depending on the time of arrival. The proctor will determine if there is sufficient time left to complete the test. All candidates (except those who have requested special accommodations) are expected to complete the examination by the expiration time of the regular time period.
- 5.3.2** In cases of inclement weather, natural disaster or other local conditions that may cause unavoidable interruptions to testing, the NDHCB will make reasonable efforts to notify candidates and determine the best course of action.
- 5.3.3** If, before the start of the exam, a candidate feels too ill to get to the exam site or to start the exam, he/she must contact the NDHCB **immediately** (613-260-8156) to determine the next course of action.
- 5.3.4** As some participants may be sensitive to perfume or aftershave, we ask that all candidates refrain from wearing scents

5.4 Examination Day Schedule

- 5.4.1** The busier computerized writing centres may run up to three separate exams per day (morning, afternoon and evening) over 2 or 3 days. Candidates will find out the exam schedule when they select their writing location and time **online**.
- 5.4.2** A “typical” session may run as follows
- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| T minus 30 min | — | Candidates check in and sit at their assigned seat – <i>Candidates are <u>not permitted to choose their own seat location or to switch seats</u>. They are to keep their ID Card. They only return the stub to the proctor if they have changes.</i> |
| T minus 15 min | — | <i>Proctor verbal instructions</i>
Candidates start the login procedure
<i>Candidates must read the electronic Candidate Statement of Understanding and “accept” it (see copy at Annex A).</i> |
| T (start time) | — | Start of 1 st part of examination session |
| T + 2 hours | — | End of 1 st part |

- T + 2h10 — End of compulsory break - Candidates log back in - *Everyone must return to their assigned seat*
- T + 2h15 — Start of 2nd part of examination session
- T + 4h15 — End of examination session
Candidates complete Candidate Feedback Questionnaire

5.5 Recommendations for Candidate Preparation

- 5.5.1** It is recommended that candidates use their own textbooks and lecture notes as the primary source of studying. A list of some reference textbooks, the blueprint, several sample questions and online preparatory tests are also available at www.ndhcb.ca/en/forms.php.
- 5.5.2** Doing at least one of the [online Prep Tests](#) is highly recommended to become more familiar with the computerized platform as its format is basically identical to the “real” NDHCE.
- 5.5.3** When reading exam questions, candidates should pay special attention to key words, i.e., the most important, the first, etc. Re-reading the questions and making notes for themselves using the electronic notepad may help to clarify the situation.

5.6 Testing Accommodations

Guidelines regarding candidate testing accommodations have been developed and are available on the NDHCB website at www.ndhcb.ca/en/forms.php.

5.7 Examination parameters

The FDI two-digit tooth numbering system is used in all examinations – see www.ndhcb.ca/en/preparing_exam.php

5.8 Examination Centres

The NDHCB, through Yardstick – our test publisher/administrator, offers a number of locations across Canada as computerized Writing Centres within a maximum of 100 km (1 hour) of all Canadian accredited DH schools with students registered for the exam. A complete list of computerized Writing Centre sites is available at www.ndhcb.ca/files/WritingCentresCities.pdf.

6. SECURITY MEASURES AROUND THE EXAMINATION

6.1 Examination Regulations

- 6.1.1** The National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination is highly confidential. The examination questions **are the property of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board**. Unauthorized disclosure of the examination questions is **prohibited under copyright laws**. By submitting your application form and the Statement of Understanding (at the exam site), **you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination questions**. You must therefore:
- Refrain from any cheating or any attempt to subvert the test;
 - Keep the exam content confidential, **even after the exam**. This also includes teachers or classmates who wrote the exam before you, with you or who have not

written the exam yet;

- Not use or be in possession of any electronic device (such as cell phones, cameras, pagers, I-Pods, etc) in the exam room;
- Realize that any recording or memorization of exam questions is strictly forbidden whether you intend to recreate parts of the exam for financial gain or not.

6.1.2 In applying for the NDHCE, a candidate agrees to abide all regulations, as well as oral and written instructions controlling the conduct of the examination. These regulations are intended to preserve the integrity of the test process by providing standard test administration conditions that yield valid and reliable results.

6.1.3 Candidates must indicate that they agree with the terms and regulations outlined in the “Statement of Understanding” before the start of the exam (see Annex A).

6.1.4 Candidates may be observed/recorded at all times while they are taking the NDHCE. This observation will also include direct or indirect observation by proctors. Proctors may not necessarily inform you of their observations, but they are required to report behaviour that may violate the terms and regulations of the NDHCE or other forms of irregular behaviour.

6.1.5 Any cheating and/or breach of confidentiality/security or any attempt to subvert the test process violates the purpose and principles of the test. Any candidate witnessing any such behaviour must report it to the Proctor and/or the NDHCB as soon as possible.

6.1.6 Conduct occurring before, during or after testing that violates these principles may result in **invalidation of test results** and/or other penalties such as the **revocation of the National Dental Hygiene Certificate** and may be reported to all Canadian Dental Hygiene Regulating Authorities.

6.2 Material Handling

6.2.1 The names of all the candidates writing the certification examination are alphabetically listed on the Writing Centre roster.

6.2.2 Candidates will receive an ID card with their coordinates including their email address and their candidate ID number. **You must use them to log in to access the exam.**

6.2.3 No unauthorized person(s) enter(s) the examination room without permission from the Proctor. Anyone who has to leave the exam room anytime except during the scheduled break or when they are finished will be accompanied.

6.3 During the Exam

6.3.1 Candidates are not to begin the exam until directed to do so.

6.3.2 No books, papers, calculators or any electronic equipment are permitted on or around the examination tables/desks. All cell phones, I-pods, pagers or PDAs **MUST** be left **OUTSIDE** the examination room. Only **transparent water bottles** are accepted, with **all labels removed** (unless the writing centre’s internal policy forbids them).

6.3.3 There is no note-taking by the candidates during the examination but candidates will be able to use a notepad function on the computer for rough work. Please note, candidates are not to

remove materials in any form (written, printed, recorded, or other) from the Writing Centre.

- 6.3.4 All irregularities occurring during the administration of an examination are to be reported to the Proctor or directly to the NDHCB.
- 6.3.5 If a candidate is behaving in a manner that could be interpreted as giving or receiving assistance with the examination, the proctor may warn him/her to immediately cease this behaviour and will report it to the NDHCB. If the situation persists, the proctor may also direct a candidate to leave the Writing Centre before he/she has completed the test.

6.4 After the Exam

- 6.4.1 Once candidates have finished answering all the questions of each session they may leave the examination room before the allotted time is up. They will also be invited to fill a Feedback Questionnaire before they do. Candidates should not talk OUTSIDE the examination room, so as not to disturb those who are still writing the exam.
- 6.4.2 Candidates are reminded to keep any exam content confidential, even after the exam. Participation in the electronic posting/online discussion of information regarding test content or answers is strictly prohibited.
- 6.4.3 The NDHCE is a secure test, protected by Canadian copyright laws. Any unauthorized disclosure of the test's contents could result in civil liability, criminal penalties, and/or cancellation of test scores. Examinees are encouraged to report any Internet or other activities that disclose information about test questions, so that the NDHCB may investigate and take any necessary action.
- 6.4.4 Candidates are strongly encouraged to complete the electronic Candidate Feedback Questionnaire after the exam and to report any concerns or irregularities they may have observed.

7. SCORING OF THE EXAMINATION

The examination is computer scored by the testing agency contracted by the NDHCB. To confirm that the Examination meets or exceeds professional standards, a comprehensive statistical analysis is conducted on the Examination. Items that do not meet established criteria are not used in calculating candidates' scores.

7.1 Score Reports

- 7.1.1 The score of the NDHCE will be reported as a **pass or fail**. The NDHCB also reserves the right to cancel or withhold any examination results when, in the sole opinion of the NDHCB, a testing irregularity occurs; cheating has occurred; there is an apparent discrepancy in, or falsification of, a candidate's identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or plagiarism; when aberrancies in performance are detected for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation; or the results are believed to be invalid for any other reason. Specific individual scores **will not** be reported.
- 7.1.2 All scores/results will be closely examined by an external and specialized exam security company who will identify candidates who have exam results that can be deemed to be unreliable, invalid or where any form of irregular behaviour may be suspected. Those scores/results will be labelled "**Under Review**" until a further investigation determines their

reliability or validity.

- 7.1.3** A list of the ID number of all the candidates that have written the most recent examination (with the caption “pass”, “fail” or “Under Review”) will be posted on the NDHCB website as soon as it is available. The NDHCB will not respond to requests from candidates who have forgotten or lost their ID number; they will have to wait until the results are mailed out. In any case, all candidates are warned that they must avoid taking action (e.g. career, move, etc.) before receiving their official results in the mail.
- 7.1.4** **Official** results, for successful candidates, will be mailed **within 6 weeks** after the testing date. Successful candidates will also get a copy of their certificate through regular mail while the unsuccessful candidates will get their results through email along with a copy of their performance report.
- 7.1.5** A listing of successful candidates will be forwarded to all participating dental hygiene regulatory authorities as soon as available.
- 7.1.6** With the exception of conducting data forensics/security verifications, specific candidates’ individual results will not be provided to any other agency or person.
- 7.1.7** Information accumulated by the NDHCB through the certification process may be used for statistical purposes and for evaluating the certification program. All individual information will be kept confidential and shall not be used for any other purposes without permission.
- 7.1.8** A school specific aggregate school performance report will be sent to the candidate’s dental hygiene program director unless there are less than 5 (five) candidates who wrote a specific administration in order to preserve candidates’ anonymity. This report will also indicate the number (but not the names) of candidates from that dental hygiene program who failed for the first time.
- 7.1.9** A summarized report of all aggregate school performances will also be posted on the NDHCB website.
- 7.1.10** A listing of successful candidates may be published by the NDHCB, at its sole discretion, in one or more publications throughout Canada.

7.2 Rewrite Attempts

- 7.2.1** A candidate will be allowed a maximum of four (4) opportunities to write the NDHCE.
- 7.2.2** A candidate who fails his/her third attempt of the NDHCE, will be required to wait a minimum of 12 months before writing his/her fourth and final attempt of the NDHCE.
- 7.2.3** A candidate who is applying for his/her fourth attempt of the NDHCE will be requested to return to the NDHCB office a signed written statement verifying his/her understanding that this fourth attempt is his/her final attempt of the NDHCE.
- 7.2.4** A candidate who has failed four attempts of the NDHCE is no longer a candidate for the NDHCE unless he/she successfully completes again all of the dental hygiene course requirements of a recognized dental hygiene program and meets the eligibility criteria in effect at the time of his/her new application to write the NDHCE.

8. EXAMINATION REVIEW

8.1 Purpose

These procedures allow a candidate who has failed the NDHCE, an opportunity to request that the NDHCB verify their examination results.

8.2 Grounds for Review

A candidate's examination results may be reviewed only on the basis of suspected irregularities in the examination process, and not because of alleged errors in content of the examination. The content of an examination is not subject for review at the request of the candidate either singly or as a group. A request to review the examination results on the basis of process, must present evidence that the alleged irregularity materially affected the candidate's performance. The existence of irregularities, in itself, is not sufficient to reverse the results of the examination.

8.3 Types of Review

8.3.1 Rescoring of Answers:

A candidate may request rescoring of his/her answers by the NDHCB testing agency to verify that the examination was accurately scored. The rescoring of the answers is done by hand rather than through the normal electronic process. The rescoring process can be used to determine: a) if there was improper recording of the answers to one or more examination items; b) if one or more examination items were improperly scored against the answer key.

An application for rescoring (see www.ndhcb.ca/en/forms.php under "other") must be made to the NDHCB **within forty-five (45) calendar days** from the date of receipt of the examination results. There is a \$85.00 (+ tax) administrative fee for this service.

8.3.2 Formal Review:

If an unsuccessful candidate believes that he/she was treated unfairly or if there were any other significant irregularity in the examination process, he/she can request a formal review.

A written request for a formal review must be sent to the Executive Director of the NDHCB and received within forty-five (45) days of the candidate's **receipt of the official examination result**. The request for formal review must explain in detail the circumstances surrounding the alleged irregularity(ies) in the examination process and must include supporting or related evidence.

The Executive Director will acknowledge receipt of the request for formal review and conduct an investigation to determine if the alleged irregularity(ies) are sufficiently supported and if they significantly affected the outcome of the exam result.

The Executive Director will then render a decision in writing, within thirty (30) days of receiving the official request for formal review.

8.3.3 Appeal of Formal Review Decision:

Following receipt of the Executive Director's decision, if the candidate still feels that his/her request for a formal review was not accorded due consideration, the candidate can choose to submit an appeal to the NDHCB Board of Governors. This appeal must be sent by registered mail, accompanied by a fee of

\$100.00 (+ tax) - certified cheque or money order in Canadian funds payable to the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board or by a valid Credit card number (VISA or MasterCard). This appeal of the formal review decision must be received by the NDHCB within thirty (30) days of the candidate's receipt of the Executive Director's formal review decision.

The NDHCB will forward the appeal request and the supporting documents to the NDHCB Board of Governors for its consideration and the Board of Governors will respond in writing to the candidate's appeal, with its decision, within forty-five (45) days of receipt by the NDHCB of the appeal letter. The NDHCB Board of Governors will render one of the following decisions:

- 8.3.3.1 Confirm that the policies and procedures pertinent to the situation were followed and uphold the decision of the Executive Director;
- 8.3.3.2 Determine that the policies and procedures pertinent to the situation were either inadequate or not followed completely and refer the matter back to the Executive Director for a decision based on reviewing or following the policies and procedures completely.
- 8.3.3.3 Take whatever action the Board of Governors considers appropriate that is not inconsistent with the generally accepted principles of the NDHCB.



Candidate Statement of Understanding

Annex A

1. The National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination is highly confidential. The examination questions **are the property of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board**. Unauthorized disclosure of the examination questions is **prohibited under copyright laws**. By signing this statement of understanding, **you agree to maintain the confidentiality of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination questions**.

You must therefore:

- Keep the exam content confidential, **even after the exam**. This also includes not discussing the content with anyone who wrote the exam before you, with you or who has not written the exam yet.
 - Not use or be in possession of any electronic device (such as cell phones, cameras, pagers, I-Pods, etc) **in the exam room**;
 - Realize that any recording or memorization of exam questions is strictly **forbidden** whether you intend to recreate parts of the exam for financial gain or not.
2. In applying for the NDHCE, a candidate agrees to abide by all regulations, as well as oral and written instructions controlling the conduct of the examination. These regulations are intended to preserve the integrity of the examination process by providing standard test administration conditions that yield valid and reliable results.
 3. Candidates may be observed at all times while they are taking the NDHCE. This observation will include direct observation by proctors. Proctors may not necessarily inform you of their observations, but they are required to report behaviour that may violate the terms and regulations of the NDHCE or other forms of irregular behaviour.
 4. Any cheating and/or breach of confidentiality/security or any attempt to subvert the examination process by any candidate violates the purpose and principles of the examination. Any candidate who carries out, takes part in or who witnesses such behaviour must report it to the Proctor and/or the NDHCB as soon as possible.
 5. The NDHCB strives to report results that accurately reflect the skill and performance of each candidate and represent a valid measure of their knowledge or competence as sampled by the examination. Accordingly, our standards and procedures for administering examinations have two related goals: giving candidates comparable opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, and preventing any of them from gaining an unfair advantage over others. To promote these objectives, the NDHCB reserves the right to cancel or withhold any examination results when, in the sole opinion of the NDHCB, a testing irregularity occurs; cheating has occurred; there is an apparent discrepancy in, or falsification of, a candidate's identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or plagiarism; when aberrancies in performance are detected for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation; or the results are believed to be invalid for any other reason.

Conduct occurring before, during or after testing that violates these principles may result in invalidation of examination results and/or other penalties such as the revocation of the National Dental Hygiene Certificate and may be reported to all Canadian Dental Hygiene Regulating Authorities.

I have read, understand and agree to abide by the above statement. (I accept)