

Dental Therapy Examination

2025 CANDIDATE MANUAL

Pediatric Manikin & Periodontal Scaling Clinical Examinations



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ADDENDUM

Additions or modifications after initial publication.

CDCA-WREB-CITA is now the American Board of Dental Examiners. CDCA-WREB-CITA, the nation’s leading dental exam administrator, and the American Board of Dental Examiners (ADEX), developer of the national ADEX licensure exams, are now combined under a single entity: the American Board of Dental Examiners. This is also reflected in a new organizational logo and updated branding. (09/16/2025)



EXAMINATION OVERVIEW

The American Board of Dental Examiners administers the Dental Therapy Examination, which consists of computer-based and clinical exam components. All examinations are based on specific performance criteria developed by the American Board of Dental Examiners and other content experts used to measure the clinical competency of candidates.

All components of the **Dental Therapy Examination series** must be successfully completed (passing scores) within 18 months of the initial attempt of any component in the series. In conjunction with this manual, refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) (policies) available on the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website for more information regarding the **18-Month Rule, 3-Time Fail Policy**, exam eligibility, registration, and other administrative policies.

- The **Dental Therapy Simulation Examination (DT OSCE)** assesses various levels of diagnosis and treatment planning knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- The **Dental Therapy Clinical Examinations** are simulated patient exams specific to the skill sets of Dental Therapists. Examinations are performed on proprietary typodont models and teeth in a patient treatment clinic or simulation laboratory setting.

Clinical examinations are administered over several days and consist of multiple procedures, which are evaluated and reported as singular exam parts or components. Successful completion of all procedures of the respective clinical examination are required to achieve an overall passing score. Candidates are evaluated based on the performance criteria for each respective procedure (see [Criteria Sheets](#)).

A. Pediatric Manikin Examination. Candidates have up to seven (7) hours to complete the following procedures, including the **Periodontal Scaling Exam**:

1. **Endodontic Procedure (1.5 hours):**
 - Pulpotomy Tooth #A
2. **Restoration Procedure (1.5 hours):**
 - Class II MOD Amalgam Restoration Tooth #T
3. **Stainless Steel Crown (SSC) Procedures (3 hours):**
 - Stainless Steel Crown Preparation Tooth #L
 - Stainless Steel Crown Placement and Cementation Tooth #J

B. Periodontal Scaling Examination (1 hour):

- Calculus removal on 12 assigned surfaces in a mandibular quadrant

C. Restorative Examinations. Candidates have up to seven (7) hours to complete the following:

- **Posterior Restorative Examination:** Class II preparation and restoration of carious lesion on a mandibular molar or premolar
- **Anterior Restorative Examination:** Class III preparation and restoration of carious lesion on a maxillary incisor

Refer to the respective [Candidate Manual](#) for clinical examination procedures, performance expectations, guidelines, and restrictions.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Photography

Photography or recording of any aspect of the clinical or computer-based examination is strictly prohibited and grounds for immediate dismissal.



PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

Candidate performance is evaluated according to the criteria defined in the [Criteria Sheet](#) for the respective procedure. Examiners evaluate each presentation of candidate performance independently and enter their evaluations electronically. Each examiner is unable to see the evaluations of the other two examiners for any procedure, and examiners are prohibited from discussing their evaluations during the examination.

Skills Assessment	Pediatric Exam Content	Criteria
Endodontic Procedure	○ Pulpotomy Tooth #A	7
Restoration Procedure	○ Class II MOD Amalgam Restoration Tooth #T	8
Stainless Steel Crowns Procedures	○ Preparation Tooth #L	13
	○ Placement and Cementation Tooth #J	8

Skills Assessment	Periodontal Exam Content	Criteria
Calculus Removal	○ Calculus removal on 12 assigned surfaces in a mandibular quadrant	3
	○ Tissue management (hard and/or soft)	

Exam content is based on the “Universal Numbering System” of dental notation.

SCORING OVERVIEW

The criteria gradations of competence are described across a 3-level rating scale. Those criteria appear on the respective [Criteria Sheet](#) and are the basis for the evaluation. Each component or skill set is evaluated and graded separately. A candidate must demonstrate competence in each skill set evaluated. The three rating levels are as follows:

- **ACC (Clinically Acceptable):** The treatment is of acceptable quality, demonstrating competence in clinical judgment, knowledge, and skill.
- **SUB (Marginally Substandard):** The treatment is of marginal quality, demonstrating less than expected clinical judgment.
- **DEF (Critically Deficient):** The treatment is of unacceptable quality, demonstrating critical areas of incompetence in clinical judgment, knowledge, and/or skill.

Result Details. A score of 75 or greater is required to pass each component of the examination; however, results are reported as Pass/Fail to candidates and licensing jurisdictions for each component. Applicable criteria are provided to candidates of failed clinical attempts. The American Board of Dental Examiners does not provide post-exam images, details or explanation beyond the stated criteria.

Unsuccessful Procedure & Retake Attempt. An unsuccessful attempt of any exam component will require a re-attempt of that same component. Meaning a candidate who was unsuccessful (failing score) in a procedure or exam component will only be required to re-attempt that same component. Candidates are permitted up to three unsuccessful consecutive attempts of a component before additional requirements must be met. Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) regarding the **3-Time Fail policy**, retake eligibility, registration and remediation requirements, and other administrative policies.

Retake Exception. Both **stainless steel crown procedures** must be successfully completed (passing score) to achieve an overall passing score of that exam component. Failure of one procedure of this exam component requires a re-attempt of both procedures of the exam component.



STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Integrity of the examination depends on fairness, accuracy and consistency. Established standards of conduct ensure that these principles are adhered to by examiners, candidates, and all individuals and entities involved in examination administration.

Dismissal, failure of the examination or a reduction in an examination score may result from improper performance or unethical conduct (misconduct). Candidates are required to adhere to these standards of conduct while participating in any American Board of Dental Examiners administered clinical or computer-based examination.

Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) for conduct and examination guidelines resulting in penalties or automatic failure of the examination and/or examination series (e.g. use of prohibited electronic devices **including smartphones**, etc.).

Examples of misconduct or improper performance that may result in a point deduction from the procedure score or dismissal from the examination.

EXAMINATION PENALTIES
Failure to complete an assigned examination procedure
Violation of examination standards, rules or guidelines, or time schedule
Treatment of teeth other than those approved or assigned by examiners
Gross damage to adjacent tooth structure—teeth or tissue
Critical lack of clinical judgment
Failure to complete treatment within the stated guidelines of the examination
Critical lack of clinical judgment/skills
Unprofessional attitude, rude, inconsiderate/uncooperative with examiners or other personnel
Removal of the mounted typodont, arches, teeth or simulated patient during the examination without examiner authorization
Poor simulated patient management
Appearance: unprofessional, unkempt, unclean
Violation of universal precautions
Improper operator and/or simulated patient position

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Photography

Photography or recording of any aspect of the clinical or computer-based examination is strictly prohibited and grounds for immediate dismissal.



OFFICIAL RESOURCES. Candidates are responsible for reading and understanding the **Candidate Manual** in conjunction with the [Candidate Guide](#) and noted materials published by the American Board of Dental Examiners and ADEX Testing Media. Candidates bear all risk of any misunderstanding resulting from the use of or reliance on unofficial information or materials.

- **Candidate Guide.** Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) for information regarding exam eligibility, education requirements, identification requirements, candidate conduct/misconduct policies, computer-based testing accommodations, and more.
- **Candidate Manuals** (criteria, performance expectations) clinical examination review presentations, and examination forms are available [Dental Therapy Examination Overview](#) page of the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website.
 - Candidate Guide
 - Pediatric Manikin & Periodontal Scaling Exams Candidate Manual
 - Restorative Exams Candidate Manual
 - Computer-based Exam Manual
- **Criteria Sheets** listing the criteria used to evaluate a candidate's performance and sample **examination forms** for candidate reference are available [Dental Therapy Examination Overview](#) page of the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website.

Dental Therapy Pediatric Manikin & Periodontal Scaling Exams

Endodontic Procedure

- Pulpotomy Access Opening Tooth #A

Restoration Procedure

- Class II Amalgam Restoration

Stainless Steel Crown Procedure

- Stainless Steel Crown Preparation Tooth #L
- Stainless Steel Crown Restoration Tooth #J

Periodontal Scaling Examination

- Periodontal Criteria
- Periodontal Examination Form

Dental Therapy Restorative Exams

Criteria Sheets:

- Anterior Composite Prep
- Anterior Composite Restoration
- Posterior Amalgam Prep
- Posterior Amalgam Restoration
- Posterior Composite Prep
- Posterior Composite Restoration

Examination Forms:

- Restorative Examination Forms
- Anterior Progress
- Anterior Modification
- Posterior Progress
- Posterior Modification
- Indirect Pulp Cap Request
- Direct Pulp Cap Request

- **Site Info Sheet.** If applicable, site-specific information pertaining to the exam site host, such as school-provided supplies, rental equipment, infection control protocols, etc. can be found in the [Site Info Sheet](#) for the respective exam site host on the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website.
- **Q&A Session** affords candidates the opportunity to ask questions about exam processes or other exam-related concerns, including host site-specific protocols, in advance of their clinical examination. Registered candidates are notified of their scheduled Q&A Session date and time via email; participation is strongly encouraged. Sessions may be virtual or onsite, depending on host site preference/availability. Q&A Sessions are not recorded by the American Board of Dental Examiners.
- **Questions?** Submit any exam-related questions via [Contact Us](#) prior to the exam.



INSTRUMENTS & MATERIALS

- Candidates are **responsible for furnishing their own instruments and materials** as needed to complete the required dental examination procedures.
- Candidates must use their best clinical judgment and diagnostic skills when determining which dental instruments and armamentarium are required to perform each procedure as an instrument list is not provided.
- Only instruments, materials and techniques within the standard of patient care for the dental procedure specific to each examination part may be used. (Use of inappropriate instruments, materials, solvents or techniques is prohibited and grounds for termination of the examination.)
- Instruments must be clean and disinfected, but sterilization is not required for simulated patient (i.e. manikin) examinations. Once the examination begins, all CDC infection control guidelines must be followed.
- Some locations may have instruments available for candidate use for an additional fee. For information regarding instrument availability, hand-piece compatibility, and materials provided, refer to the respective exam host [Site Info Sheet](#) located in the [Calendar](#) section of the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website. Contact the site host directly with questions regarding school-related information listed within their [Site Info Sheet](#). Any arrangements for instrument or equipment rental should be completed well in advance of the examination to ensure availability, if applicable.
- All candidate assignments are performed exclusively on American Board of Dental Examiners provided **proprietary magnetically retained typodonts and teeth**. However, [Acadental](#) offers similar typodonts and teeth suitable for candidate practice in advance of the examination.
- Manikin, shroud and mounting post are also provided during the examination.
- During the exam, notify the Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) immediately of any school equipment malfunction.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Contaminated Instrument Protocol

Once treatment begins, inform the CFE if an instrument becomes contaminated (e.g. dropped). In lieu of replacing the instrument, the candidate must explain the protocol followed for patient treatment, and **wipe down/disinfect** the instrument prior to use.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: School Equipment

Notify Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) immediately of any school equipment malfunction.

EXAMINATION TEAM MEMBERS

- **Chief Examiner** oversees exam administration in both Candidate and Grading Examiner clinics/areas
- **Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE)** oversees Candidate functions
- **Grading Team Captain/Grading Examiners** evaluate Candidate performance according to published criteria, no candidate interactions
- **Support Staff (ETA)** provides exam administration support in both Candidate and Grading Examiner clinics/areas



INFECTION CONTROL GUIDELINES

Candidates are required to adhere to current **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** infection control guidelines and recommendations for all simulated patient (manikin) examinations. However, the exam site host may impose additional requirements or restrictions. Refer to the [Site Info Sheet](#) for a list of school-provided materials and equipment, PPE requirements, and plan accordingly.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Candidates are responsible for following basic Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for all clinical examinations as outlined by American Board of Dental Examiners.

- Mask
- Appropriate clinical attire/scrubs
- Protective eyewear, loupes or prescription eyewear with side shields
- Gloves
- Close-toed shoes

Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) for additional information regarding minimum infection control requirements.

Instruments & Materials Used for Evaluation

Examiners utilize the following instruments and materials during the evaluation processes:

- Perio probe with millimeter markings (e.g. UNC-15)
- 11/12 explorer (Periodontal exam)
- Endodontic explorer (Endodontic exam)
- Sharp explorer (e.g. shepherd's hook) (Restorative exam)
- Dental floss, articulating paper (Restorative exam)
- Putty matrices/reduction guides (Prosthodontic exam)

Prohibited Items

Presence of the following prohibited items will result in confiscation of materials, as well as dismissal from and failure of the examination.

- Non-dental instruments
- Digital scanner
- Electronic devices (e.g. phone, smart watch, camera, etc.)
- Pre-made reduction guides/putty matrices and/or impressions
- Pre-made overlays, clear plastic shells, models
- Extra and/or pre-prepared typodont teeth
- Screwdrivers
- Solvents
- Non-official reference materials
- Dental assistants are not permitted during any aspect of the examinations.

Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) for additional information and violations applicable to all exam types.



EXAM ADMINISTRATION

Examination Timeline

Candidates are notified via email once their individual **examination schedule and Q&A Session** information are available in their Candidates.ADEXtesting.org profile approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the clinical exam.

The examination timeline below is for **example only**; actual schedules may vary by candidate procedure. Candidates perform the Endodontic procedures first, then the remainder of Pediatric procedures in any order they choose. All Pediatric procedures must be completed before beginning the Periodontal Scaling procedure. All candidates must be in line for Check-out by no later than 4:15 pm.

Session	Start Time	Stop/Finish Time
Candidate Clinic Entrance, Initiate Workstation Setup	6:30 AM	8:00 AM
Candidate Check-In	7:15 AM	
Complete Workstation Setup (fabricate putty matrices; mount manikin, typodont, shroud)	7:30 AM	8:00 AM
Endodontic Procedures (1.5 hours)	8:30 AM	10:00 AM
Restoration Procedures (1.5 hours)	10:00 AM	11:30 AM
Stainless Steel Crown Procedures (3 hours)	11:30 AM	2:30 PM
Periodontal Examination (1.0 hour)	3:00 PM	4:00 PM
Exam Check-out Begins (All candidate in line for Check-out)	4:15 PM	

NOTE: Treatment may begin only after the Chief Examiner or Clinic Floor Examiner announces the start of examination.

¹BREAKS. Breaks are permitted between exam component and taken at the discretion of the Candidate. Candidate must check-out/check-in with the CFE required prior to and upon return from any discretionary break. Time adjustments or extensions are not permitted for discretionary breaks taken during treatment timelines. Candidates should plan and manage their time accordingly.

²Start Time dictates Stop/Finish Time. Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) will record assigned Finish Times on **Progress Forms**.

TIME MANAGEMENT. All procedures of an exam component must be completed within the time allotted for that individual exam component (e.g. The Endodontic procedure must be completed within the 1.5-hour time allotment). However, all exam procedures must be completed within the allotted 7-hour timeframe for the Pediatric Manikin and Periodontal Scaling Examination.

Manage your time appropriately within the allotted timeframe for each procedure and the overall exam to ensure timely completion and avoid penalty. Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) for additional information and violations applicable to all exam types.



PROCEDURE OVERVIEW

The manikin must be mounted and maintained in a physiologically acceptable operating position while performing all procedures. The facial shroud must be maintained in the same position as the normal facial tissue.

A. Pediatric Manikin Examination procedures:

- **Exam Check-in Process.** Candidate must check-in with Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) for confirmation of rubber dam placement and authorization of typodont mounting. Treatment may begin only after check-in is complete.
- **Endodontic (Pulpotomy) procedure:**
 - A rubber dam must be used when performing the pulpotomy procedure. If a rubber dam is not used for this procedure, it will be noted as a violation of examination standards and that component of the examination may be terminated.
- **Stainless Steel Crown procedures:**
 - Candidates must fabricate their putty matrices/reduction guides *before* mounting the typodont.
 - Pre-made reduction guides, pre-made stents, pre-made impressions, overlays, clear plastic shells, models, or pre-preparations are strictly prohibited and grounds for dismissal.
- **Exam Check-out Process.** Once all Pediatric procedures are complete, request a CFE to begin the check-out process for the Pediatric Manikin Examination.

B. Periodontal Scaling Examination procedure:

- **Exam Check-in Process.** Candidate must check-in with Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) for confirmation of periodontal arch placement and authorization of typodont mounting. Treatment may begin only after check-in is complete.
- You may choose to start the Periodontal Scaling Exam earlier than the scheduled start time. If you opt to start early, the CFE will record your assigned finish time for the periodontal scaling procedure on your *Progress Form*, which will be one (1) hour from the time you start the Periodontal Scaling Exam.
- CFE will remove both Pediatric maxillary and mandibular arches and replace with a maxillary arch and the Periodontal Scaling mandibular arch in the articulated carrier trays. Both maxillary and mandibular arches must remain in place during treatment. Periodontal treatment may begin after check-in is complete.
- Candidates must stop working at their assigned finish time.
- **Exam Check-out Process.** Once periodontal treatment is complete, request a CFE to begin the check-out process for the Periodontal Scaling exam.

Assigned Procedures/Wrong Tooth. Only assigned treatment and/or procedures may be performed. Stop working and immediately notify a CFE if a procedure was started on the wrong tooth.

Refer to the respective [Criteria Sheet](#) for **evaluation criteria** for each exam procedure.



EXAM DAY

Pediatric Manikin Examination & Periodontal Scaling Examination

Treatment may not be initiated before the established starting time and must be completed within the allotted time for each procedure.

Clinic Entrance & Workstation Set-up

At 6:30 AM, Candidates may enter the clinic and begin cubicle/workstation setup

1. Identify cubicle/workstation. Cubicle/workstation assignments are posted in a prominent location in the designated clinic or simulation lab.
2. Setup instruments and materials

Exam Set-up Period

At 7:15 AM, CFE begins Check-in procedures: Candidate identification verification; distribution of Exam Packet (Candidate ID Labels, Cubicle Card, exam forms) and typodont

1. Place Candidate ID Badge Label on outermost clinical garment. ID Badge label must remain visible throughout the examination
2. Place Candidate ID Labels on all applicable forms:
 - a. Progress Forms
 - b. Cubicle Card (record cubicle number); Cubicle Card must be prominently displayed to identify your location
 - c. Typodont Box
3. Fabricate putty matrices/reduction guides (infection control guidelines not applicable to set-up period) for the SSC preparation *before* mounting typodont.
4. During set-up, Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) performs the following:
 - Monitors manikin set-up (proper mounting, shroud placement for treatment, anatomical positioning)
 - Inspects materials and replaces any defective materials
 - Notates appropriate manikin setup on Progress Form
 - Notates fabrication of putty matrices/reduction guide(s) on Progress Form

Exam Start

At 8:30 AM, Chief Examiner or Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) announces start of Endodontic examination.

- Alteration of the manikin setup or removal of the typodont without a CFE present after the exam begins is a violation of examination protocol and grounds for dismissal.
- Protective eyewear not required for manikin procedures.
- Endodontic procedure is completed first; remaining Pediatric procedures may be completed in any order. All Pediatric procedures must be completed before beginning the Periodontal Scaling procedure.

Exam Completion & Check-out

At 4:00 PM, all candidates must stop working immediately and step away from their manikins.

1. Candidates request CFE authorization to dismount typodont (further alterations of teeth are prohibited)
2. Once dismounted, Candidates should use the time between completion of treatment (4:00 PM) and check-out (4:15 PM) to clean (soap, water, brush/cotton) and dry (towels, air syringe) the typodont before turning it in.
3. Candidates *must* be in line for Check-out line no later than 4:15 PM to turn in all required materials.



4. Candidates are required to present the following items at the check-out station:
 - Progress Forms, examination forms
 - Any putty matrices, models, impressions, or reduction guides fabricated during examination
 - Sheet of Candidate ID Labels
 - Typodont and typodont box
5. At Check-out station, the CFE will collect all required materials and complete the following:
 - Affixes Candidate ID Label to tan-colored tag and typodont.
 - Attaches wing nut and bolt to prevent damage during shipment.
 - Places typodont, Progress Form and putty matrices in typodont box.
6. Candidates clean their assigned cubicle/workstation, then exit clinic with their belongings.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Time Management

Candidates are responsible for managing and monitoring their time appropriately to ensure timely arrival and completion of each procedure within the allotted timeframe and the overall exam timeframe.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: School Equipment

Notify Clinic Floor Examiner (CFE) immediately of any school equipment malfunction.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Contaminated Instrument Protocol

Once treatment begins, inform the CFE if an instrument becomes contaminated (e.g. dropped). In lieu of replacing the instrument, the candidate must explain the protocol followed for patient treatment, and **wipe down/disinfect** the instrument prior to use.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Official Resources & References

Only the **Candidate Manual**, **Candidate Guide**, and **Exam Criteria Sheets** are permitted in the clinic area. A Candidate's personal, handwritten notes or hand-drawn illustrations recorded on the pages of the manual are also permitted.

All other reference materials are prohibited.