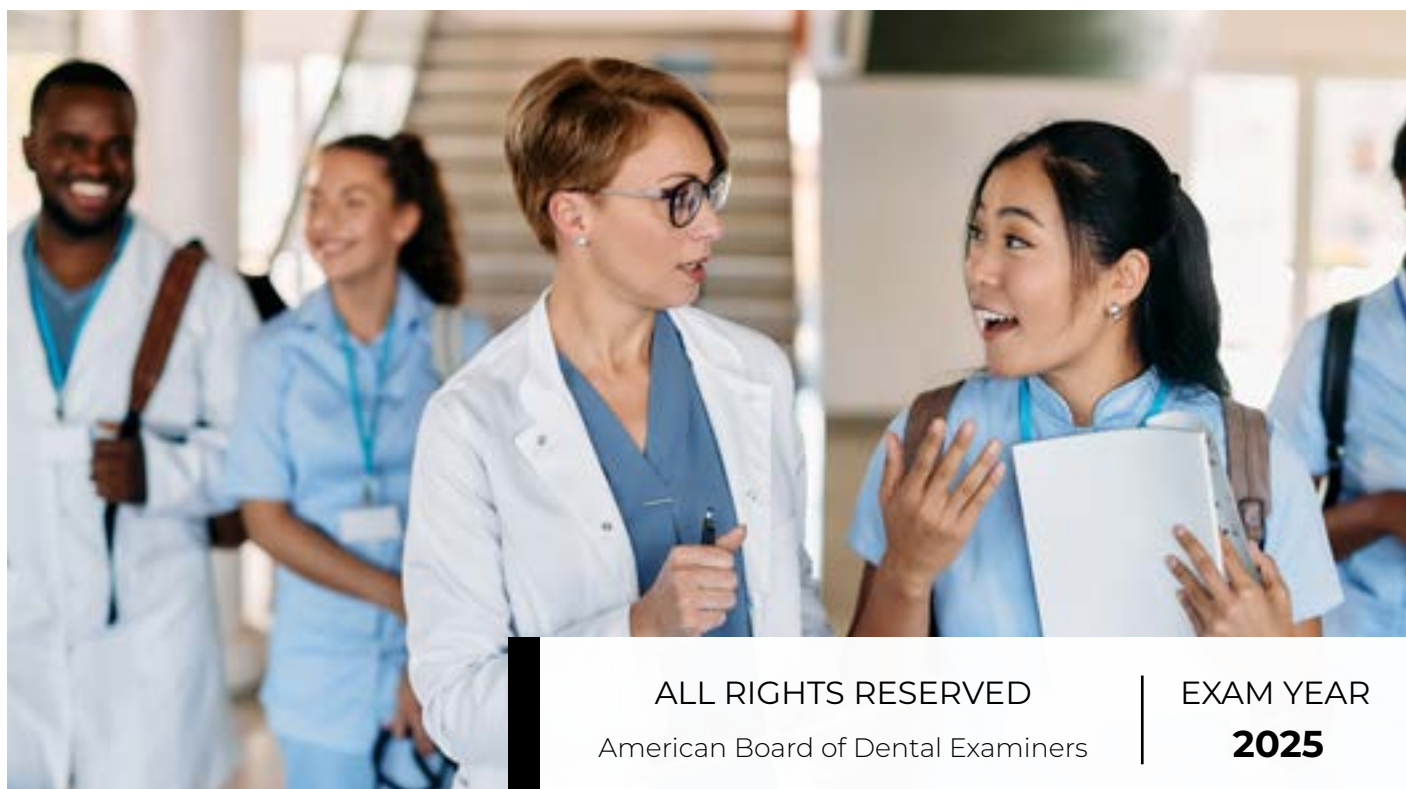




The ADEX Dental Hygiene Examination Series

DENTAL HYGIENE CANDIDATE MANUAL

Simulated Patient Treatment Clinical
Examination (SPTCE) Procedures



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American Board of Dental Examiners

EXAM YEAR
2025

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

Both components of the ADEX Dental Hygiene Examination series must be successfully completed (passing scores of 75 or greater) 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](https://www.adextesting.org) website for more information regarding the **ADEX 18-Month Rule**, exam eligibility, registration, and other administrative policies.

- A. The computer-based **Computer Simulated Clinical Examination (CSCE OSCE)** assesses various levels of treatment planning knowledge, skills, and abilities. Clinically-based questions are utilized through computer-enhanced photographs, radiographs, optical images of study and working models, laboratory data, and other clinical digitized reproductions. Refer to the separate [Computer Simulated Clinical Examination \(CSCE OSCE\) Candidate Manual](#) for more information.
- B. The **Simulated Patient Treatment Clinical Examination (SPTCE)** is performed on maxillary and mandibular typodonts provided by the American Board of Dental Examiners. Each unique assignment evaluates a Candidate's ability to detect calculus, remove calculus, accurately measure periodontal probing depths, and manage treatment appropriately. See [Performance Expectations](#) for Scoring Rubric, criteria and point values.

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 unethical and/or unprofessional conduct relative to established procedural skills and/or professional judgment standards.

Candidates are required to adhere to these standards of conduct while participating in an ADEX Examination or any American Board of Dental Examiners administered examination. Refer to the [Candidate Guide](#) for conduct and violation of examination guidelines resulting in penalties or automatic failure of the examination and/or examination series (e.g. use of prohibited electronic devices, etc.).

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



Evaluations of candidate performance are made according to defined criteria, on a point accrual basis with the potential of earning 100 points. 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.

ADEX SPTCE Scoring Rubric

Skills Assessment	Criteria	Points Possible
Calculus Detection	4 assigned maxillary teeth 4 surfaces per tooth (M, D, F, L) 16 surfaces evaluated for presence or absence of subgingival calculus (1 point each)	16
Calculus Removal _____ Complete Calculus Removal	- One mandibular quadrant assigned 12 assigned key surfaces evaluated for calculus removal (5.5 points each) - Evaluation of calculus removal on all remaining surfaces within assigned quadrant. Calculus remaining: 1 surface (-3 points) 2 or more surfaces (-6 points)	66 _____ 6
Periodontal Probing Measurement	2 assigned teeth (1 anterior; 1 posterior) 6 measurements per tooth (DF, F, MF, DL, L, ML) 12 measurements evaluated (1 point each)	12
TOTAL		100

Note: Candidates are permitted a ± 1 mm leeway with regard to periodontal probing measurements.

Additional Point Deductions. Tissue management or other penalty points are deducted from total points accrued.

Result Details. A score of 75 or greater is required to pass each part of the examination; however, results are reported as Pass/Fail to licensing jurisdictions for each part. Failed attempts are reported to Candidates as a numerical value based on the Scoring Rubric. Post-exam images, details or explanation beyond the stated criteria are not reported to candidates.

Retake Waiting Period. A 10-day waiting period is required between the date of failure and the re-attempt of any part of the ADEX examination.



Treatment Management

Candidates must effectively complete treatment without causing unwarranted hard or soft tissue damage to the simulated dentition and gingiva. Penalty points will be assessed for each area of tissue damage according to the following criteria, and subtracted from the total points accrued during the grading process.

SOFT Tissue Damage

- **Penalty Point assessment criteria:**
 - One point deducted for each site of minor soft tissue damage, up to three (3) sites.
 - The presence of four (4) or more **minor** soft tissue damage sites, or one **major** soft tissue damage site results in automatic failure [critical error].
- **Minor Soft Tissue Damage.** Slight soft tissue trauma that is inconsistent with the procedure, including:
 - A laceration/abrasion that is $\leq 3\text{mm}$;
 - A laceration or injury that would not result in the need for suturing, periodontal packing, or further follow-up treatment.
- **Major Soft Tissue Damage.**
 - A laceration/abrasion that is $> 3\text{mm}$ and that would require sutures, periodontal packing, or further follow-up treatment.
 - A laceration/injury that would result in exposure of alveolar bone, flap, or amputation of papilla.
 - An unreported broken instrument tip in the sulcus or soft tissue.

HARD Tissue Damage

- **Penalty Point assessment criteria:**
 - One point deducted for each site of minor hard tissue damage, up to three (3) sites.
 - The presence of four (4) or more **minor** hard tissue damage sites, or one **major** hard tissue damage site results in automatic failure [critical error].
- **Minor Hard Tissue Damage.** Slight hard tissue damage that is inconsistent with the procedure or a pre-existing condition; may include all hard tissue surfaces that would not require additional definitive treatment.
- **Major Hard Tissue Damage.** Major damage to the hard tissue that is inconsistent with the procedure and a pre-existing condition; may include all hard tissue surfaces that would require additional definitive treatment.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Treatment Assignment

Notify Chief Examiner immediately if teeth outside of the assigned quadrant were treated in error.

INSTRUMENTS & MATERIALS



Examiners use an 11/12 explorer and a probe with 1 mm markings during calibration exercises and Candidate performance evaluation.



11/12 Explorer (e.g. ODU 11/12)



Probe marked with 1mm increments
(e.g. UNC 1-12 probe)

Instrument Guidelines

- Candidates are **responsible for furnishing their own instruments and materials** as needed to complete the required dental hygiene examination procedures.
- Solicitation of instruments from fellow candidates during the examination is grounds for immediate dismissal.
- Candidates must use their best clinical judgment and diagnostic skills when determining which instruments and armamentarium are required to perform each dental hygiene treatment procedure as an instrument list is not provided.
- Only instruments, materials and techniques within the standard of patient care for the dental hygiene procedure specific to each examination part may be used. (Use of dental restorative instruments, or non-dental 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.

CONTAMINATED INSTRUMENT PROTOCOL

Once treatment begins, inform the Chief Examiner 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. Continued use of a contaminated instrument without discussion with the Chief Examiner will result in a 100 point penalty (exam failure).

EXAM PREPARATION



OFFICIAL RESOURCES

Candidates are responsible for reading and understanding manual(s) and materials published by the the American Board of Dental Examiners. Candidates bear all risk of any misunderstanding resulting from the use of or reliance on unofficial, non-authorized or third-party information or materials.

Refer to the [Dental Hygiene Examination Overview](#), [Test Prep](#) and [FAQs](#) pages of the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website for official resources and information.

Candidate Guide, Exam Manuals & Forms

Official resources available for candidate use during the examination.

- Refer to the Candidate Guide for American Board of Dental Examiners policies and procedures regarding eligibility requirements, infection control protocols, results release, exam administration, and candidate conduct standards.
- Refer to the Candidate Manual for exam protocols, procedures, materials, and performance expectations.
- [Downloadable](#) **sample forms** are for candidate reference only, not for exam use. Official printed forms are provided at the exam site during Operator Setup.

Typodonts & Manikins

All candidate assignments are performed on the American Board of Dental Examiners provided **proprietary magnetically retained typodonts and teeth**. Manikin, shroud and mounting post are also provided for candidate use during the examination.

Questions?
[Contact Us](#)

Site Info Sheets

Visit the [Calendar](#) section of the [ADEXtesting.org](#) website for **Site Info Sheets** regarding host-provided supplies and equipment, infection control protocols, PPE, equipment rental, and other valuable information for each clinical exam location. Contact the site host directly for questions regarding school-related information listed in their **Site Info Sheet**.

Submit questions regarding exam availability, registration and fees to the American Board of Dental Examiners via [Contact Us](#).

Video Tools

Visit the [Test Prep](#) page to access **videos** highlighting the examination day experience. Only [ADEX Testing Media](#) branded videos are valid sources of information. However, these videos are for demonstration purposes only, not a replacement for information contained within this **Candidate Manual**.

Q&A Session

The **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 (ADEX).

EXAM ADMINISTRATION



EXAMINATION TIMELINE

Candidates have up to two (2) hours to complete the required examination procedures. The timeline below is for **example only**; actual schedules vary by exam location. Candidates are notified via email once their individual **examination schedule and Q&A Session** information is available in their [Candidates.ADEXtesting.org](https://www.adextesting.org) profile approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the clinical exam.

1-3 Sessions	Group A	Group B	Group C
Clinic Entrance, Operatory Setup, Candidate Check-In	7:30 - 8:00 AM	10:30 - 11:00 AM	1:30 - 2:00 PM
Exam Start Time	8:00 AM	11:00 AM	2:00 PM
Exam Finish Time	10:00 AM	1:00 PM	4:00 PM
Enter Candidate Findings, Candidate Check-out	10:00 - 10:30 AM	1:00 - 1:30 PM	4:00 - 4:30 PM

START TIME: Treatment may begin only after the Chief Examiner announces the start of examination.

Breaks. Breaks are permitted at the discretion of the Candidate. After the exam begins, all procedures must be completed within allotted timeframe. Time adjustments or extensions are not permitted for breaks; plan accordingly.

Typodont Removal. Do not remove Mandibular arch from articulator until instructed or end of examination is announced. Examination attempt is considered complete upon arch removal.

FINISH TIME: All procedures must be stopped when the Chief Examiner announces the examination finish time. Failure to meet the examination timeline requirements for a procedure results in a violation of exam standards penalty.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Time Management

Candidates are responsible for managing and monitoring their time appropriately to ensure timely procedure completion according to their assigned examination schedule or finish time to avoid penalty.

CLINICAL EXAMINATION



IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

The following items are required for admission to the clinical examination:

- **PHOTO IDENTIFICATION.** A government or school issued photo ID. Acceptable forms of non-expired photo identification include such documents as current, valid driver license, passport, military ID, or official school ID.
Recent Name Change. If your legal name has recently changed, bring a copy of the supporting name change document (e.g. marriage certificate, dissolution decree or court document) to the clinical examination.

Candidate ID Number, Badges & Labels

CANDIDATE ID NUMBER. Note that your Candidate ID Number will be used on all badges, labels and forms to maintain your anonymity during the examination; and in conjunction with your name on all post-exam results reports.

ID BADGES. Upon identity verification, candidates receive a sheet of candidate labels, including two (2) Candidate Photo Badge labels. Photo badge labels must be worn on your outermost garment during the exam.

LABELS. Affix your Candidate ID Label to all examination materials, including the mandibular typodont arch upon exam completion.

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 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements for all clinical examinations as outlined by the American Board of Dental Examiners, which include:

- Face mask
- Gloves
- Protective eyewear, loupes or prescription eyewear with side shields

Protective Clothing. Candidates are expected to wear **clinical attire (e.g. scrubs) and close-toed shoes** during the examination. Protective clothing (e.g. gown, jacket, lab coat) that covers skin and personal clothing is required during procedures or activities where contact with blood, saliva, other potentially infectious materials (OPIM), or airborne particulates is anticipated.

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



Operatory Set-up & Check-In

When clinic entrance time is announced, Candidates will proceed to their assigned workstation and perform the following tasks. The **SimProDH typodont** and **Assignment and Candidate Findings (ACF) Form** are located at each assigned operatory.

1. Affix Candidate ID Label to **Assignment and Candidate Findings (ACF) Form** in designated area
2. Affix Candidate ID Label to plastic bag containing your treatment arch
3. Mount mandibular arch in provided articulator and shroud
4. Set up exam instruments
5. Adjust chair to a comfortable and appropriate operator position
6. Confirm operatory and supplies are ready for treatment
7. Chief Examiner or Exam Technical Coordinator (ETC) will check the position of mounted typodont
8. Chief Examiner or ETC will ask candidate to confirm their assignment

Clinical Treatment

Candidates have up to two (2) hours to complete the assigned treatment and record their findings on the **Assignment and Candidate Findings (ACF) Form**. Note the Chief Examiner is available throughout the exam; notify Chief Examiner immediately of any issues or concerns.

1. Record **Calculus Detection** on assigned **maxillary** teeth
2. Complete **Calculus Removal** for assigned **mandibular** quadrant
3. Record **Periodontal Probing depth measurements** (recommended **after** calculus removal)
4. Confirm that all findings are recorded on **ACF Form**

Exam Announcements

- Start examination
- 1-hour remaining
- 15 minutes remaining
- End examination

Exam Completion

1. Notify Chief Examiner or ETC of finished treatment
2. Remove mandibular arch from articulator; dry well
3. Affix **Candidate ID Label** to mandibular arch
4. Place mandibular arch in plastic bag labeled with Candidate ID Label
5. Confirm recorded **ACF Form** findings with Chief Examiner or ETC in electronic scoring system
6. Fold **ACF Form** and place in labeled plastic bag containing mandibular arch
7. Return **ACF Form/mandibular arch** and any **unused labels** to Chief Examiner or ETC
8. Dry arch and inside shroud with paper towels and compressed air. **Maxillary arch remains in manikin.**
9. Clean operatory as directed
10. Gather personal belongings; exit examination area

IMPORTANT REMINDER: School Equipment
Notify Chief Examiner immediately of any school equipment malfunction.



Assignment and Candidate Findings Form

[Downloadable sample forms](#) are for candidate reference only, not for exam use.

Official printed forms are provided at exam site during Operatory Setup.

Dental Hygiene Simulated Patient Assignment and Candidate Findings Form																																																						
Cubicle #				Quadrant: LR/LL																																																		
CANDIDATE LABEL																																																						
Typodont mounting approved & Assignment confirmed by Examiner #:																																																						
CALCULUS DETECTION FINDINGS Maxillary For the assigned teeth, indicate the presence or absence of subgingival calculus by placing an X in the appropriate box for each of the four surfaces on each tooth: Mesial, Distal, Facial, and Lingual Yes = present No = not present/absent		<table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Tooth #</th><th colspan="2">D</th><th colspan="2">F</th><th colspan="2">M</th><th colspan="2">L</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td></td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td><td>YES</td><td>NO</td></tr></tbody></table>								Tooth #	D		F		M		L			YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO		YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
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CALCULUS REMOVAL ASSIGNMENT Mandibular You are evaluated on the removal of all calculus in the assigned quadrant.		QUADRANT: LOWER RIGHT/LEFT																																																				
PERIODONTAL PROBING MEASUREMENT Mandibular For the assigned teeth, measure and record in the appropriate boxes the depth of each sulcus on the indicated surfaces to nearest mm.		<table border="1"><thead><tr><th colspan="2">Anterior Tooth #</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>DF</td><td>DL</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>L</td></tr><tr><td>MF</td><td>ML</td></tr></tbody></table>				Anterior Tooth #		DF	DL	F	L	MF	ML	<table border="1"><thead><tr><th colspan="2">Posterior Tooth #</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>DF</td><td>DL</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>L</td></tr><tr><td>MF</td><td>ML</td></tr></tbody></table>				Posterior Tooth #		DF	DL	F	L	MF	ML																													
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