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 SEASON
2026

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ADDENDUM

Candidates are responsible for understanding content included in the Candidate Guide, Candidate Manuals and forms regarding simulated-patient examination procedures, protocols and processes applicable to the **January 1 through December 31, 2026 exam season**. Candidates are encouraged to periodically review these publications for changes or updates.

Any additions or modifications after initial publication will be noted below

- The ***Candidate Worksheet*** replaces the ***Assignment and Candidate Findings (ACF) Form***. (07/16/2026)

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 website for information regarding exam eligibility requirements, registration, the ***ADEX 18-Month Rule, 3-Time Fail Policy***, 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 (misconduct).

Candidates are required to adhere to these standards of conduct while participating in any examination administered by the American Board of Dental Examiners. 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, 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

Examination results are based on independent evaluations completed by three (3) calibrated examiners according to the published criteria as outlined in the Scoring Rubric. Each confidential evaluation of candidate performance is individually recorded and submitted electronically. Examiners are prohibited from discussing their evaluations.

Periodontal 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**

Exam content is based on the **"Universal Numbering System"** of dental notation.

Note: Periodontal probing measurement grading allows for ±1 mm leeway.

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 computer-based or clinical component of the examination series; 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 the Candidate.

10-Day 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 ≤ 3mm;
  - 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 > 3mm 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.

EXAM PREPARATION

OFFICIAL RESOURCES

Candidates are responsible for reading and understanding manual(s) and materials published by 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 reference only. Official printed forms are provided during the exam.

Typodonts & Manikins

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

Similar products for candidate practice in advance of the exam are available at Acadental.com.

Questions?

Contact Us

Site Info Sheets

Visit the Exam 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).

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.
- 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.)
- 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.
- Solicitation of instruments from fellow candidates during the examination is grounds for immediate dismissal
- 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.

Exam Site Information

Some locations may have instruments available for candidate use for an additional fee. Refer to the Site Info Sheet of the clinical exam location listed in the Calendar section of the ADEXtesting.org website for information regarding instrument availability, hand-piece compatibility, and materials provided.

Any arrangements for instrument or equipment rental should be completed well in advance of the examination to ensure availability, if applicable. Contact the site host directly with questions regarding school-related information listed within their Site Info Sheet.

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 the American Board of Dental Examiners, which include:

- Face Mask
- Gloves
- Clinical attire (e.g. scrubs)
- Close-toed shoes
- Protective eyewear, loupes or prescription eyewear with side shields

Refer to the Candidate Guide for additional information regarding infection control requirements.

EXAM ADMINISTRATION

EXAMINATION TIMELINE

Preliminary schedules are subject to change. Candidates are notified via email once their official individual **examination schedule and Q&A Session** information are posted in their Candidates.ADEXtesting.org profile, approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the clinical exam. Candidates assume all risk and responsibility for making travel or lodging arrangements in advance of receiving their official individual examination schedule.

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

Clinic Entrance. Time adjustments for late candidate arrival are NOT permitted. Refer to the Candidate Guide for additional information regarding the **Candidate Attendance & "No Show" Policy.**

START TIME: Treatment may begin only after the Chief Examiner announces the start of examination. All procedures must be completed within the allotted timeframe.

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 & EXAM DAY CHECK-IN

IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION

The following items are required for admission to the clinical examination. Refer to the Candidate Guide for **identification requirements** and **"No Show" Policy**.

- ***PHOTO IDENTIFICATION.*** A U.S. 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.

EXAMINATION TEAM MEMBERS

- **Chief Examiner** - oversees exam administration in Candidate clinics/areas
- **Exam Technical Coordinator (ETC)** - provides administrative and technical support in both Candidate and Grading Examiner clinics/areas
- **Grading Examiners** - evaluate Candidate performance according to published criteria; no candidate interactions

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).

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 ***Candidate Worksheet*** are located at each assigned operatory.

1. Affix Candidate ID Label to ***Candidate Worksheet*** in designated area.
2. Affix Candidate ID Label to plastic bag containing the mandibular treatment arch.
3. Mount mandibular treatment 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. Complete check-in at operatory with Chief Examiner or Exam Technical Coordinator (ETC) to confirm assignment and position of mounted typodont.

Clinical Treatment

Candidates have up to two (2) hours to complete the assigned treatment and record their findings on the ***Candidate Worksheet***. 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 ***Candidate Worksheet***.

Exam Announcements

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

Exam Completion

1. Notify Chief Examiner or ETC of finished treatment.
2. Enter and confirm ***Candidate Worksheet*** findings with Chief Examiner or ETC in electronic scoring system.
3. Fold ***Candidate Worksheet*** and place in plastic bag labeled with Candidate ID.
4. Remove mandibular arch from articulator; dry well.
5. Affix **Candidate ID Label** to mandibular arch.
6. Place mandibular arch in plastic bag containing ***Candidate Worksheet***.
7. Return ***Candidate Worksheet*, mandibular treatment 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.

Candidate Worksheet

Downloadable sample form is for candidate reference only, not for exam use. The official printed worksheet and assignment are provided at the exam site.

Note that all official exam records are digital. Any handwritten information that you record on the form is solely for your reference prior to manually entering the data into the exam tablet. **The onus is on the candidate to verify the accuracy of the data entry.**

CANDIDATE ID LABEL

CANDIDATE WORKSHEET

ADEX AMERICAN BOARD of DENTAL EXAMINERS

Unit/Cubicle #

Official exam records are digital. All exam communications are submitted via Tablet-entry. Candidates are responsible for ensuring accuracy of data entry.

Periodontal Treatment	ASSIGNED FINISH TIME:	

- ☐ **Typodont Mounting evaluated by Examiner**
- ☐ **Procedures Complete** (Authorization required to remove typodont arch)
- ☐ **Candidate Check-Out** (Collection of labeled Mandibular arch, Worksheet, ID labels)

Calculus Detection (Maxillary)
Record **Y = YES**, Calculus is present
Record **N = NO**, Calculus is NOT present

Tooth#	D	F	M	L
____	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
____	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
____	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N
____	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N

Calculus Removal Quadrant (Mandibular)
Remove calculus from all surfaces within the assigned quadrant

LOWER RIGHT

QUADRANT: LR
A B C D E

Draft of Notes to Examiners (if applicable):

Periodontal Probing Measurements (Mandibular)
Record in millimeters

ANTERIOR TOOTH	
____ DF	
____ F	
____ MF	
____ DL	
____ L	
____ ML	
POSTERIOR TOOTH	
____ DF	
____ F	
____ MF	
____ DL	
____ L	
____ ML	

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CANDIDATE WORKSHEET – PERIODONTAL

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