

# Report to the Royal College of Dentists

August 2025

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## About the NDEB

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The National Dental Examining Board of Canada (NDEB) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1952. The Act makes the NDEB responsible for the establishment of qualifying conditions for a national standard of dental competence for general practitioners, for establishing and maintaining an examination facility to test for these national standards of competence, and for issuing certificates to dentists who successfully meet the national standards.

The NDEB works in collaboration with the Canadian Faculties of Dentistry, the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada, and the provincial Dental Regulatory Authorities to support quality dental care in Canada.

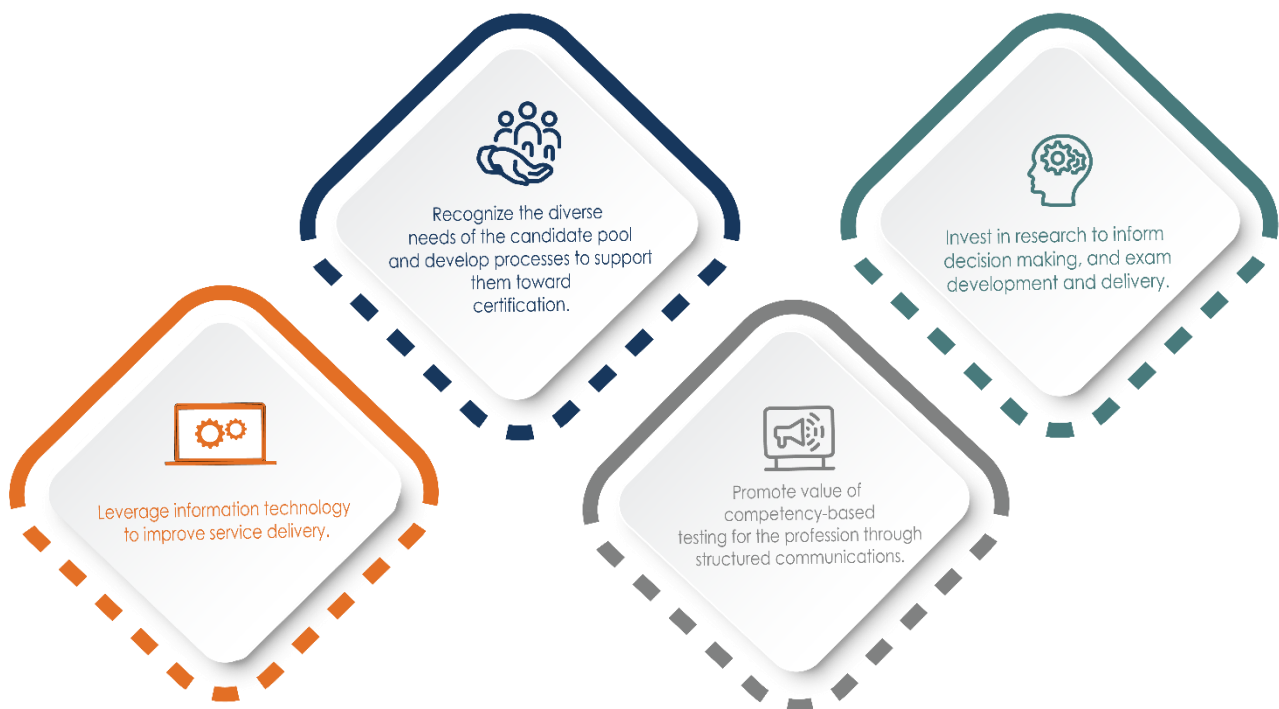
### Our Mission

Contributing to the oral health of Canadians by providing fair, valid, and reliable evaluation of competence.

### Our Priorities

In November 2024, the NDEB adopted a new 5-year strategic plan. The NDEB plays a key role in access to the profession and in public safety. This new 5-year plan will help solidify the value of the NDEB's competency assessments for dentists entering practice while recognizing the diverse needs of our candidate pool.

### Strategic Priorities 2025-2029



## NDEB Board

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The Board brings a wide range of perspectives and skills to the organization. Comprised of representatives from the provincial Dental Regulatory Authorities, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CDAC), and from the public, the Board oversees the mission and strategic direction, fiscal management, sustainability, and relationships with stakeholders through committees with specific tasks and full Board meetings.

The Board governs through policy creation and oversight, ensuring compliance with our By-laws, overseeing the management of our resources, and ensuring accountability to our stakeholders for the operation of the NDEB.

### Board Members



Stéfán Haas-Jean  
President



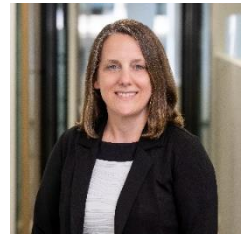
Sneha Abhyankar  
Vice President



Amarjit Singh Rihal  
Past President



Mintoo Bashati  
Alberta



Tanya Cook  
Nova Scotia



Bertrand Chan  
British Columbia



Noha Gomaa  
Ontario



Stéfán Piché  
Saskatchewan



Alan Robinson  
Prince Edward Island



Andrew Rowe  
New Brunswick



James Posluns  
CDAC



Debora Matthews  
CDAC



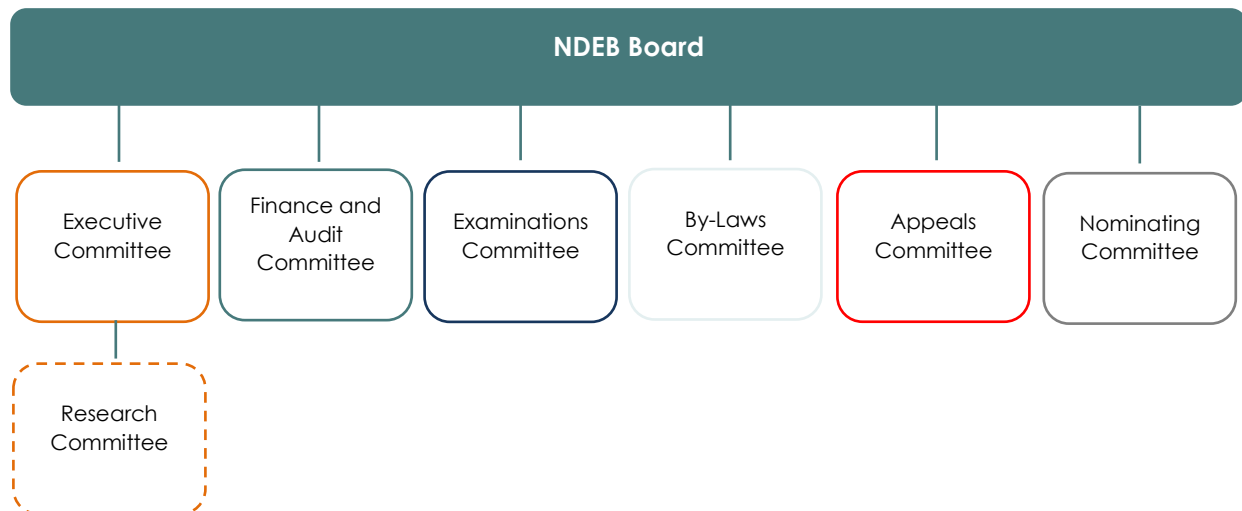
Jan Sheppard Kutcher  
Public Representative



Marie Dagenais  
Executive Director &  
Registrar

## Committees

The NDEB currently has seven standing committees. Each standing committee reports to the Board.



## Finance

The 2025-2026 budget and fee schedule were approved in May 2025. The 2025-2026 fee schedule includes examination fee reductions for the NDECC and the Virtual OSCE. This marks the third consecutive decrease in the NDECC fee since the implementation of the exam in 2022.

## NDEB Examiners

To fulfill its mandate, the NDEB needs the support and participation of dentists and dental specialists who work with the NDEB to:

- Develop questions or content for NDEB examinations
- Select and review questions for NDEB examinations
- Grade prescriptions written by examinees in the Virtual OSCE
- Invigilate the NDECC
- Grade requirements completed by examinees in the NDECC. Translate examinations and examination documents
- Translate examinations and examination documents

Accredited dental programs in Canada, provincial dental regulatory authorities, the Dental Council of New Zealand, the Royal College of Dentists of Canada, and the Canadian Armed Forces are approached annually to recommend individuals to be NDEB examiners.

## Stakeholder Relations

The NDEB is committed to maintaining strong connections with stakeholders who have an interest in the organization. This is accomplished through transparent and consistent

communication across different platforms. Most recently, the NDEB established a presence on LinkedIn and continues to enhance its presence on YouTube and Facebook.

NDEB representatives continue to meet with organizations representing various aspects of the dental community including dental students and internationally trained dentists to discuss areas of mutual interest. Key discussions have also occurred with partners regarding the Bridge Training to Dental Practice in Canada program launching in 2025 and with provincial regulators regarding the establishment of a national repository for credentials.

## Annual Report

The NDEB's Annual Report for the fiscal year 2023-2024 was published in March 2025, providing information on all the NDEB's activities. The report is available for download from the [publications](#) section of the NDEB website.

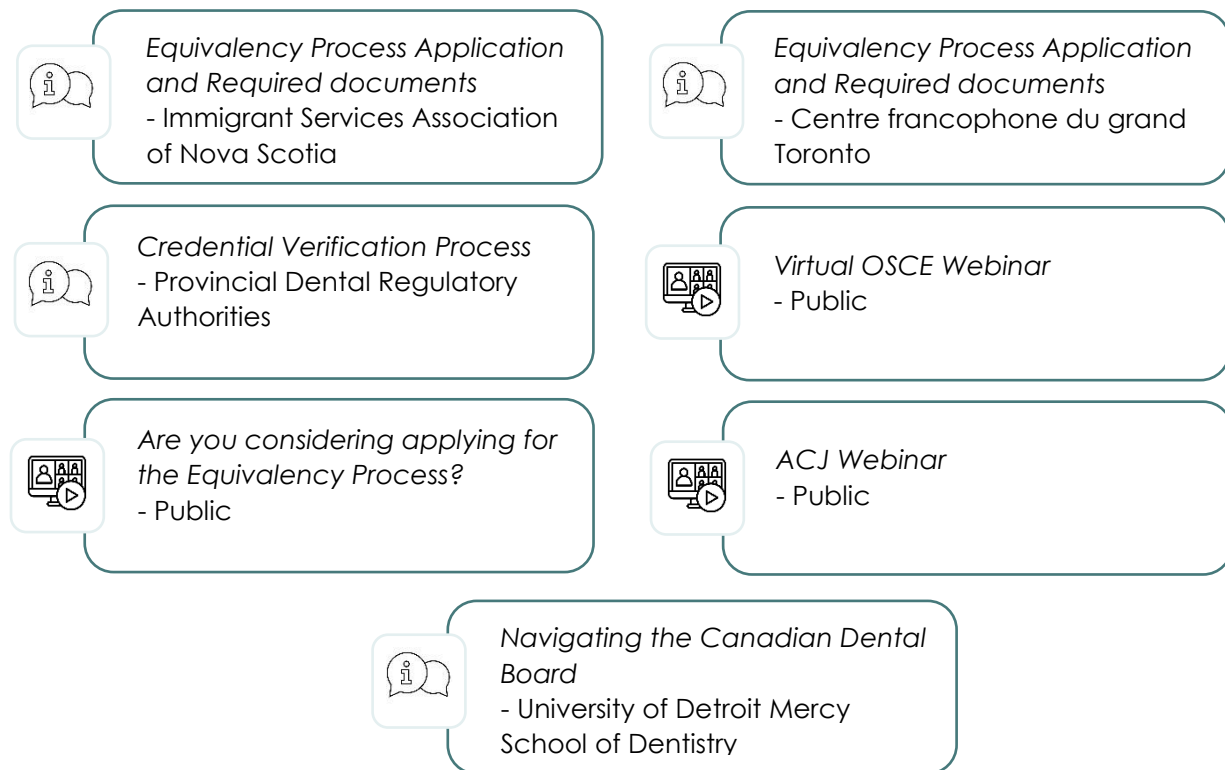
## Video Resources

Over the past year, the NDEB has focused on expanding its use of video resources to support candidates in both the Equivalency Process and the Certification Process. Video is a powerful tool for engagement and can effectively convey complex information. This initiative aligns with the NDEB's broader communication strategy to enhance its social media presence by leveraging additional platforms. Video content is now available on our YouTube channel and the NDEB website, providing candidates with accessible and informative resources.

## Info Sessions

Over the last year, the NDEB held seven virtual events targeting candidates and other stakeholders. These sessions are topic specific and designed to provide attendees with detailed information about NDEB processes.

## 2024-25 Info Sessions



## Examinations

The NDEB's primary function is to develop, administer, and grade objective examinations that evaluate the competence of beginning dental practitioners, providing dental regulators with evidence they need to make licensure decisions that protect the public. The entry to practice pathway for individuals pursuing licensure looks different depending on where they obtained their dental education.

### Equivalency Process

Graduates of international non-accredited dental programs must successfully complete the NDEB Equivalency Process or an accredited advance standing or degree completion program before taking the certification examination. The Equivalency Process includes three examinations: the Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK), the Assessment of Clinical Judgement (ACJ), and the NDECC.

Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK)

The AFK is a multiple-choice examination that evaluates biomedical science and applied clinical science knowledge. The pass % on the AFK decreased from 49.83% in 2023 to 33.10 in 2024.

2024 AFK Pass Percentage

Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK)	
Total Candidates	Pass %
1843	33.10

2024 AFK Repeat Test Taker Results

	Total Candidates	# Pass
1 <sup>st</sup> time test takers	1225	413
Repeat test takers (2 or more attempts)	618	197

\* Candidates can take the AFK a maximum of three times.

Assessment of Clinical Judgement (ACJ)

The ACJ consists of single-answer and multi-answer multiple-choice type questions. Case-based diagnosis, treatment planning and clinical decision-making questions evaluate the candidate's ability to formulate a diagnosis and to make clinical decisions.

The ACJ was standard set in 2024 resulting in a lower overall pass percentage. In 2024, the pass percentage moved from 81.92% to 57%.

2024 ACJ Pass Percentage

Assessment of Clinical Judgment (ACJ)	
Total Candidates	Pass %
1007	57

### 2024 ACJ Repeat Test Taker Results

	Total Candidates	# Pass
<b>1<sup>st</sup> time test takers</b>	700	402
<b>Repeat test takers (2 or more attempts)</b>	307	172

\* Candidates can take the ACJ a maximum of three times.

### NDECC

The NDECC has two components. The clinical skills component assesses clinical skills and techniques relevant to current Canadian standards. The situational judgement component assesses judgement required for solving problems in work related situations. Results for the NDECC are reported by component. The NDECC can be taken any number of times in a five-year period.

In 2024, the number of test takers and the overall pass % increased for both the clinical skills component and the situational judgement component.

### 2024 NDECC Clinical Skills Pass Percentage

Clinical Skills	
Total Candidates	Pass %
<b>1247</b>	45.79

### 2024 NDECC Clinical Skills Repeat Test Taker Results

	Total Candidates	# Pass
<b>1<sup>st</sup> time test takers</b>	802	366
<b>Repeat test takers (2 or more attempts)</b>	445	205

### 2024 NDECC Situational Judgement Pass Percentage

Situational Judgment	
Total Candidates	Pass %
<b>1046</b>	62.72

## 2024 NDECC Situational Judgement Repeat Test Taker Results

	Total Candidates	# Pass
<b>1<sup>st</sup> time test takers</b>	803	507
<b>Repeat test takers (2 or more attempts)</b>	243	149

## NDECC Clinical Skills Test Center

The NDECC is administered year-round at the NDECC test center located in the NDEB office in Ottawa. The test center was opened in September 2022 and had 12 dental simulators. To increase capacity, the NDEB remodelled the test center in January 2025 adding two additional simulators for a total of 14 simulators. This change will have a significant impact on the number of clinical skills exams that can be offered to dentists trained in non-accredited programs.

## Equivalency Process at a Glance: Fiscal Year 2023-2024



## Certification Process: Virtual OSCE

Graduates of accredited dental programs in Canada, the United States, Australia, Ireland and New Zealand must successfully complete the Virtual OSCE before applying for registration as a dentist in Canada.

The Virtual OSCE is a summative examination that assesses the problem solving and critical decision-making skills required of beginning dental practitioners in Canada. Examination items are based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of beginning dental practitioners in Canada.

The examination is administered three times a year in March, May and November.

### 2024 Virtual OSCE Pass Percentage

Virtual OSCE	
Total Candidates	Pass %
1459	90.40

### Virtual OSCE Repeat Test Taker Results

	Total Candidates	# Pass
1 <sup>st</sup> time test takers	1343	1230
Repeat test takers (2 or more attempts)	116	89

\* The Virtual OSCE can be taken a maximum of three times

## Blueprints

In the spring of 2024, a revised series of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of beginning dental practitioners in Canada was adopted by the Canadian Dental Regulatory Authorities Federation (CDRAF), NDEB and the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry (ACFD). As part of an ongoing process to ensure the fairness, job relatedness, and defensibility of its examinations, the NDEB held a workshop in April 2024 to review the document and assess the impact of these new KSAs on the blueprints for all its examinations. Small modifications to the blueprints for examinations in 2025 were approved as part of the examination protocols in November 2024.

In 2025, the NDEB will conduct a practice analysis to validate the new KSAs, and the information obtained will be used to inform an in-depth revision of the blueprints.

## Standard Setting

As an organization that delivers high stakes examinations, the NDEB has the responsibility to continually evaluate and revise its examinations.

A standard setting meeting for the Virtual OSCE was held in April 2025, after the March 2025 examination, to review performance level descriptors and cut scores. Fourteen subject matter experts took part in the standard setting process. The standard setting meeting used the modified Angoff method (Angoff, 1971) to establish a single passing point (or “cut score”) for the Virtual OSCE (i.e., the score in the examination that differentiates competent from not-yet-competent performance). A passing score was recommended by the Examinations Committee and approved by the Board in April 2025.

The standard reflecting the minimally competent candidate was applied to the March 2025 examination. In line with national standards, the NDEB uses a standardized (rescaled) passing score of 75 for all its examinations.

## Certification

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The NDEB issues certificates to individuals who have successfully completed the certification examination for general dentists. The number of candidates who receive NDEB certification annually has been increasing consistently since 2021 and has surpassed pre-pandemic numbers.

In 2024, 1,303 dentists were certified including 447 internationally trained dentists who successfully completed the Equivalency Process. This marks a notable increase of 355 certified dentists compared to the previous year, expanding the pool of candidates eligible to apply for licensure and join the Canadian dental workforce.

This growth reflects our commitment to increasing exam capacity and reducing the duration of the Equivalency Process – key efforts aimed at providing timely access to certification without compromising standards.

### 2024 NDEB Certification General Dentistry

Certified 2024	
Canadian accredited dental programs	524
Canadian accredited advance standing and international dentist degree programs	36*
Other accredited programs	271
Individuals who completed the Equivalency Process	447
<b>Total Certified</b>	<b>1303</b>

*\* Numbers of graduates of Canadian Degree Completion programs are based on information provided by Faculties of Dentistry.*