

Report to the Royal College of Dentists

August 2026

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This report provides an update on the National Dental Examining Board of Canada's (NDEB) activities over the last year, with a focus on governance, finances, research, examinations, certification, and stakeholder relations.

About the NDEB

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.



Strategic Priorities 2025-2029

The NDEB currently has four strategic priorities:

1. Recognize the diverse needs of the candidate pool and develop processes to support them toward certification.
2. Promote the value of competency-based testing for the profession through structured communications.
3. Leverage information technology to improve service delivery.
4. Invest in research to inform decision-making, and exam development and delivery.

Highlights



Investigating options to streamline the path to certification for international non-accredited dentists



Collaborating with settlement agencies to provide information to new and prospective Canadians



Piloting development of practice exams using AI



Building relationships with related organizations in the health care environment



Developing video resources for candidates



Hosting webinars and information sessions



Expanding presence on social media to reach broader audience



Looking at Equivalency Process candidate data to inform decision making.

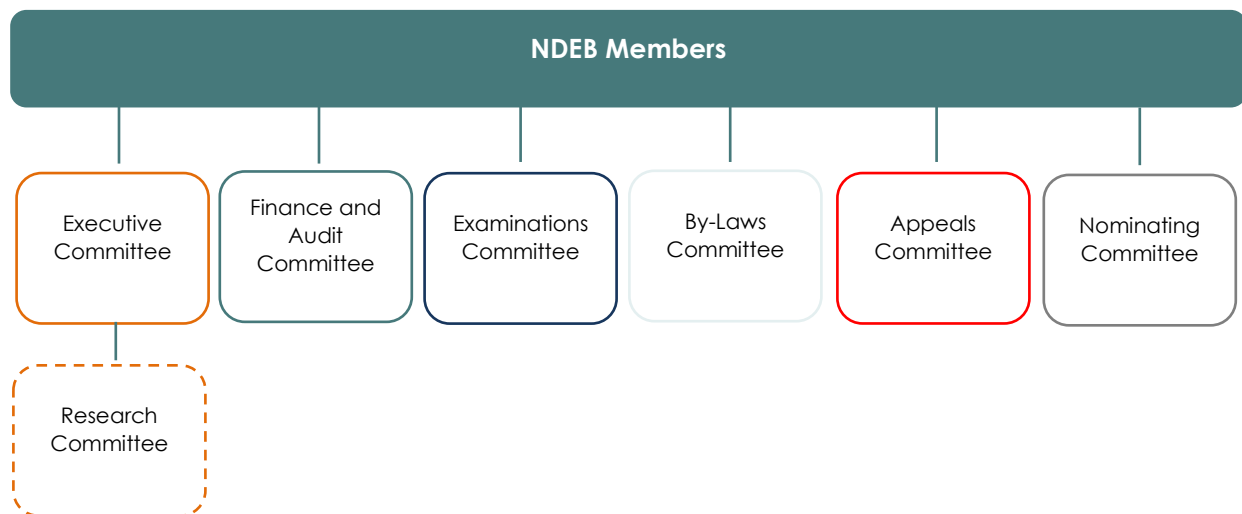
NDEB Members

The NDEB Members bring a wide range of perspectives and skills to the organization. The Members oversee the mission and strategic direction, financial management, sustainability, and relationships with stakeholders through committees with specific tasks and full Member meetings.

In October 2025, Mr. Miguel LeBlanc was appointed the NDEB Public Representative. Mr. LeBlanc succeeds Ms. Jan Sheppard Kutcher. The role of the Public Representative is to represent the public's interest as opposed to professional interests or the interests of any other body that is already represented through the Members.

Committees

The NDEB currently has seven standing committees.



By-law Updates

Following preliminary accreditation of the Bridge Training to Dental Practice in Canada program, in May the NDEB adopted new Certification and Examination by-laws that include completion of an accredited BTDCP as a route for internationally trained dentists to enter the Certification Process.

Finance

As a not-for-profit organization, NDEB's revenue comes from application and examination fees. A summarized financial statement for fiscal year 2024-2025 can be found in the NDEB Annual Report. In May 2026, the Members approved the examination fees and budget for fiscal year 2026-2027.

Research

Inline with the NDEB's strategic priorities, several projects are underway. Including:

- a comparison of the Australian Dental Council's Equivalency Process with the NDEB's Equivalency Process
- Practice Trajectory of Successful EP Candidates
- Developing exam questions using AI
- Machine scoring of typodonts

- Relationship between Virtual OSCE scores and dental school ranking.

The comparison of Equivalency Process pathways is now complete, and the Examinations Committee will be reviewing the final report at its meeting in the fall. Funding for the practice trajectory of candidates who complete the NDEB Equivalency Process was approved in the fall. The project is being led by Dr. Noha Goma, a member of the Research Committee and faculty member at Western University Schulich School of Dentistry.

Recommended Examiners

To fulfill its mandate, the NDEB needs the support and participation of a sufficient number of examiners who are recommended by 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.

As a recommended examiner, an individual may be asked to participate in the following ways:

- 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.

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, an accredited advance standing or international dentist degree program, or as of 2027 an accredited BTDP 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.

Applications

In 2025, we received 1677 new applications to the Equivalency Process. Current credential verification time for an applicant to the Equivalency Process is 8 weeks.

Ongoing global conflicts present challenges in verifying individuals' credentials, particularly for those displaced or unable to request direct-from-source documents. Changes to the NDEB Alternative documentation submission process have been implemented with the goal of addressing these growing challenges and continuing to ensure a fair application process. The revised process includes the applicant interviews conducted by a panel of standing committee members.

2025 Examination Statistics

During a calendar year, the NDEB holds two Assessments of Fundamental Knowledge and two Assessments of Clinical Judgement. The NDECC continues to be administered weekly throughout the year.

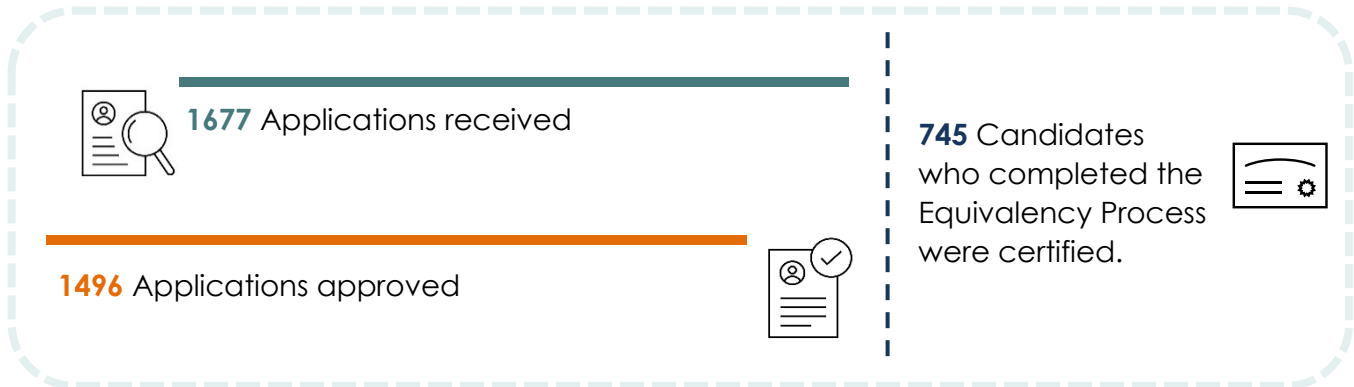
Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge				
Total Candidates	Pass%		# of candidates	# passed
1549	52.29%	1st time test takers	1073	532
		Repeat test takers	476	278

Assessment of Clinical Judgement				
Total Candidates	Pass%		# of candidates	# passed
892	62.44%	1st time test takers	643	393
		Repeat test takers	249	164

NDECC Clinical Skills				
Total Candidates	Pass%		# of candidates	# passed
1667	38.33%	1st time test takers	770	313
		Repeat test takers	897	326

NDECC Situational Judgement				
Total Candidates	Pass%		# of candidates	# passed
1227	57.46	1st time test takers	769	440
		Repeat test takers	458	265

EP Snapshot: Jan 1-Dec 31, 2025



Equivalency Process Consultation

In summer 2025, the NDEB undertook a consultation on proposed changes to Equivalency Process eligibility and result validity. Following a review of the feedback, it was determined to move forward with a recommendation to remove reapplication to the Equivalency Process if a candidate cannot pass the NDECC after five years. This change was supported by the Members and will be implemented in May 2027.

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 using questions based on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of beginning dental practitioners in Canada. The exam is offered three times per year in March, May, and November.

2025 Exam Statistics

Virtual OSCE				
Total Candidates	Pass%		# of candidates	# passed
1576	90.36		1st time test takers	1441
			Repeat test takers	135
				1313
				111

Practice Analysis

In fall 2025, a survey was sent to all registered Canadian dentists asking them to rate a series of competencies on importance and frequency in practice. The purpose of the practice analysis is to confirm that exam blueprints accurately reflect the real-world, day-to-day realities of the profession.

While response to the survey was lower than in 2014, enough responses were gathered to provide input on what areas of the KSAs NDEB examinations should focus. A meeting to review the outcomes of the practice analysis took place in June 2026.

Certification

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.

2025 NDEB Certification General Dentistry

Certified 2025	
Canadian accredited dental programs	520
Canadian accredited advance standing and international dentist degree programs	73*
International accredited programs	308
Individuals who completed the Equivalency Process	745
Total Certified	1646

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

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.

NDEB representatives continue to meet with organizations representing different aspects of the dental community including dental students and internationally trained dentists to discuss areas of mutual interest.