2026

Virtual OSCE® Protocol

Effective January 19, 2026

Contents

Purpose of the Virtual OSCE

The Virtual OSCE is a summative examination that assesses your problem solving and critical decision-making skills that are required of beginning dental practitioners in Canada.

The Virtual OSCE is the national standard of competence for dentists in Canada. The examination leads to NDEB certification and is required for licensure in Canada.

Check-in

During check-in, you must show current government-issued photo identification. Acceptable forms of government-issued photo identification are:

- driver's licence,
- passport, or
- provincial photo identification card.

The ID must be in English or French. Photocopies and digital images will not be accepted.

Photo identification must show your name exactly as it appears in your online profile and must not be expired. If the photo identification does not have an expiry date, it must have been issued within the last 10 years.

If you do not provide government-issued photo identification, you will not be permitted to take the examination.

During check-in, staff may inspect eyeglasses, jewellery, and other accessories. This may require a physical inspection and it may occur each time you enter the examination room.

You are advised to refrain from wearing jewellery, except for wedding rings. Any other jewellery, including ornate hair accessories, will need to be removed and placed in a designated area.

Please refer to the Examination Day Regulations for information on what you can and cannot bring into the examination room.

Additional Check-in Information for Prometric Test Centres

During check-in at Prometric sites, you may be scanned with a metal detector wand, fingerprinted, required to raise your pant legs above your ankles, empty and turn all pockets inside-out, and raise shirt sleeves above your wrists prior to entry into the test room.

Prior to the examination, candidates must read and be familiar with Prometric's test centre policies including arrival and check-in procedures. These procedures may change at any time. It is your responsibility to know the test centre policies prior to your examination. If you do not comply with Prometric's policies, you may be refused entry to the test centre.

Content

Examination items are developed based on the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) for beginning dental practitioners in Canada available in the Exam Resources section of the NDEB website.

Blueprint

The blueprint below shows the content areas and approximate percentage of questions in each area.

Each blueprint category will contain questions pertaining to diagnosis, treatment planning, and management, including pharmacology & therapeutics, of patients across all age groups as well as patients with special needs. Questions related to radiology and dental anesthesia will be distributed across all categories. Questions pertaining to the principles underpinning the scientific literature, health promotion and professionalism may also be included in the examination.

Virtual OSCE Blueprint	Percentage of Questions
Operative Dentistry	16 ± 5
Periodontics	14 ± 5
Oral Medicine and Pathology	12 ± 5
Pain	12 ± 5
Prevention and management of medical emergencies including management of medically complex patients	12 ± 5
Endodontics	10 ± 5
Prosthodontics	10 ± 5
Surgery	8 ± 5
Orthodontics	6 ± 5
Total	**100**

Format

The Virtual OSCE is a computer-based examination consisting of approximately 200 questions in a single day. There are approximately 50 standard single-answer multiple-choice questions and approximately 150 case-based questions. The examination is six hours in duration with one scheduled break.

Standard Single-Answer Multiple-Choice Questions

Questions with a single correct answer are identified by the direction "Select **ONE** correct answer." For these questions, you should select the most likely or most appropriate answer. There is no penalty for incorrect answers. You should always answer a question, even when you are unsure.

Example of standard single-answer multiple-choice question

Which of the following cells participate in clot formation?

- ● Platelets.
- ○ Monocytes.
- ○ Lymphocytes.
- ○ Leukocytes.

Case-Based Questions

The case-based questions require you to review the information provided (e.g., case history, dental charts, relevant images including radiographic images, and/or diagrams) and answer a question. The question can be a single answer multiple-choice question, a multi-answer multiple-choice type question, or a short-answer question (e.g., writing a prescription).

The case-based questions use the Virtual OSCE Frameworks. These are available in the Exam Resources section of the NDEB website.

Each Virtual OSCE framework may include more than one question that can be used with that set of answers. Below are examples of questions that may be used with that framework in the examination. The frameworks include lists of distractors that can be very long. All distractors may not appear on a given question in the examination.

Case-Based Question with a Single Correct Answer

Case-based questions with a single correct answer are identified by the direction "Select **ONE** correct answer." For these questions, you should select the most likely or most appropriate answer. There is no penalty for incorrect answers, so you should always answer a question, even when you are unsure.

[Image of a panoramic radiograph provided.]

Select **ONE** correct answer.

What is the most likely radiographic diagnosis?

- ● Impacted tooth.
- ○ Hyoid bone.
- ○ Torus (Tori).
- ○ Osteoma.
- ○ Sclerosing osteitis.
- ○ Cementoblastoma.
- ○ Odontoma.
- ○ Sialolith(s).
- ○ Calcified lymph node(s).
- ○ Calcified stylohyoid ligament.
- ○ Tonsillolith(s).
- ○ Phlebolith(s).
- ○ Foreign body.

Case-Based Question with Multiple Correct Answers

Case-based questions with multiple correct answers are identified by the direction "Select **ONE OR MORE** correct answers". These questions can have one correct answer or multiple correct answers. For ease of reading, the plural formulation is used for all questions which can have ONE OR MORE correct answers.

The grade you receive for each question depends on whether you select all the correct answers, some of the correct answers, or an incorrect answer.

All questions have a maximum score of 1 and a minimum score of 0. Every answer in a case-based question with multiple correct answers has a value. For each question, you must select all the correct answers to receive a score of 1. If you select one or more incorrect answers, you will receive a score of 0 for the question, even if all your other answers are correct,

Rarely, some answers may be given a value of "0" if they are neither definitively correct nor incorrect. Selecting one of these answers will not affect your score.

The example below shows the responses of three different candidates and their respective score for each question based on their answers when they assess a bite-wing radiograph for the presence of caries.

[Bitewing radiograph provided.]

Candidate 1

Select **ONE or MORE** correct answers.

There is radiographic evidence of caries on

☐	distal of tooth 2.3	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.4	-1
☐	distal of tooth 2.4	-1
■	mesial of tooth 2.5	.33
■	distal of tooth 2.5	.33
■	mesial of tooth 2.6	.34
☐	distal of tooth 2.6	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.7	0
☐	distal of tooth 2.7	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.8	-1
☐	distal of tooth 2.8	-1

Total mark: 1

Candidate 1 has selected the three correct answers and no incorrect answer for a total of 1 mark.

Candidate 2

Select **ONE or MORE** correct answers.

There is radiographic evidence of caries on

☐	distal of tooth 2.3	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.4	-1
☐	distal of tooth 2.4	-1
■	mesial of tooth 2.5	.33
■	distal of tooth 2.5	.33
☐	mesial of tooth 2.6	.34
☐	distal of tooth 2.6	-1
■	mesial of tooth 2.7	0
☐	distal of tooth 2.7	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.8	-1
☐	distal of tooth 2.8	-1

Total mark: 0.66

Candidate 2 has selected two correct answers and no incorrect answer. They have not selected all correct answers, so part marks are given for the question.

Candidate 3

Select **ONE or MORE** correct answers.

There is radiographic evidence of caries on

☐	distal of tooth 2.3	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.4	-1
☐	distal of tooth 2.4	-1
■	mesial of tooth 2.5	.33
■	distal of tooth 2.5	.33
■	mesial of tooth 2.6	.34
■	distal of tooth 2.6	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.7	0
☐	distal of tooth 2.7	-1
☐	mesial of tooth 2.8	-1
☐	distal of tooth 2.8	-1

Total mark: 0

Candidate 3 has selected four answers. Three of the answers are correct, but one answer is incorrect and has a value of -1. The candidate receives 0 for this question.

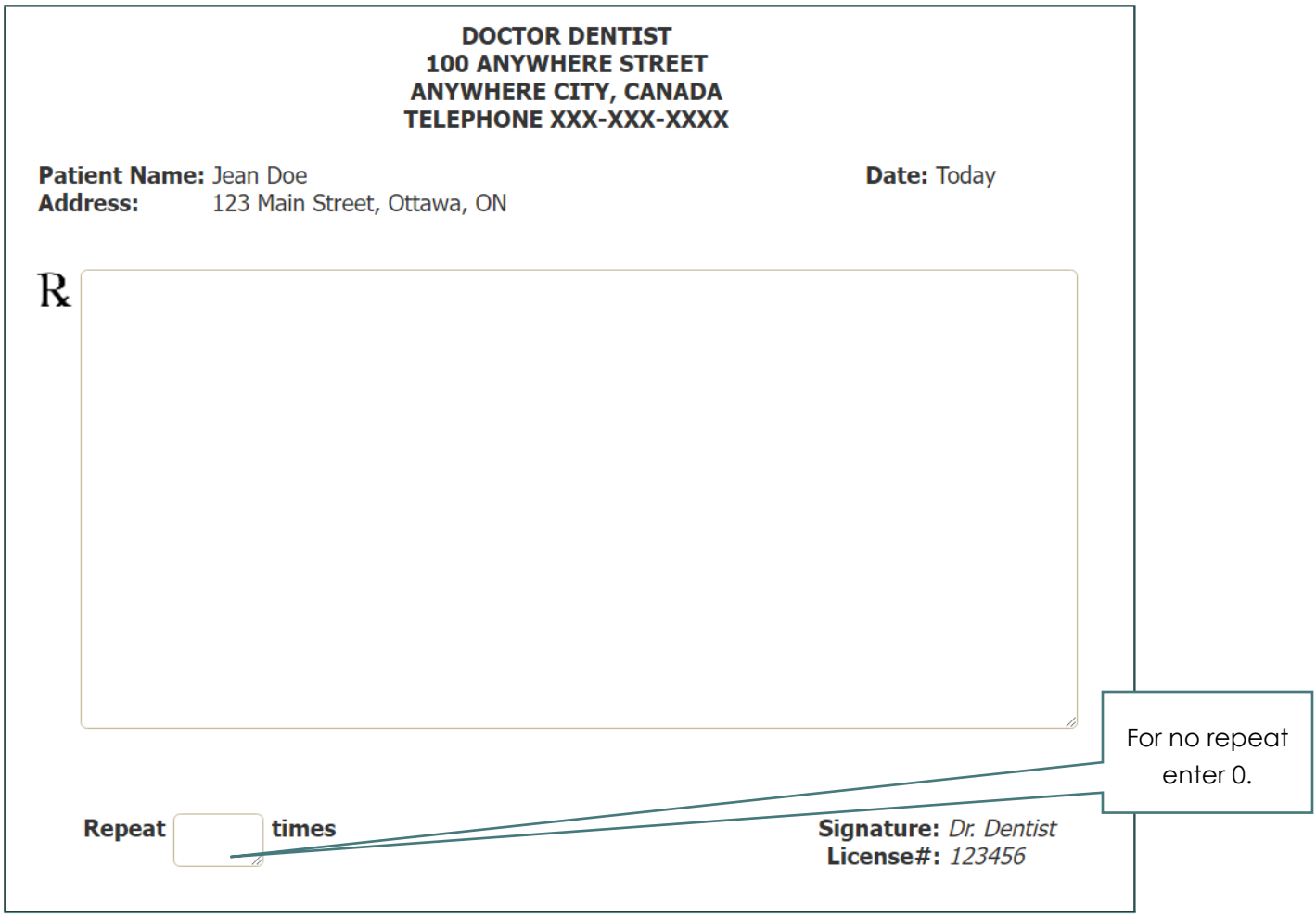
Case-Based Short-Answer Questions

Case-based short-answer questions will require you to complete prescriptions for a medication commonly prescribed by general dentists in Canada. These questions are worth four marks.

A blank prescription, illustrated below, is provided. You will complete an appropriate prescription for the patient, as described in the case history.

There are two types of prescriptions used in the exam. All boxes on the prescriptions will expand to accommodate your text.

Examples of prescription forms



DOCTOR DENTIST
100 ANYWHERE STREET
ANYWHERE CITY, CANADA
TELEPHONE XXX-XXX-XXXX

Patient Name: Jean Doe **Date:** Today

Address: 123 Main Street, Ottawa, ℞

Drug: **Strength:**

Disp.:

Sig.:

Repeat **times**

Signature: *Dr. Dentist*
License #: 123456

For no repeat enter 0.

Case History

Most case-based questions include a patient case history in the following format:

50 year old female	
Chief Complaint/ Reason for Visit:	"I want to replace my tooth."
History of Chief Complaint:	Tooth extracted over 20 years ago.
Dental History:	Regular dental care.
Medical History:	Hypothyroidism. Medication: Levothyroxine (Synthroid®).
Clinical Findings:	

- General information about the patient will be in the top row.
- Cells in case history tables will be empty if there is nothing significant. Images and charts may be presented below the case histories.
- A general statement "This area reflects the overall periodontal condition of this patient" may be included in the Clinical Findings section of the Case history table for cases that include a periodontal chart for a few teeth.

Periodontal Chart

Some case-based questions include a periodontal chart in the following format:

VESTIBULAR	**Furcation**						II			I		
	CAL	3	4	3		2	8	3	3	2	4	
	Recession		1			-1	-2		-1	-1		
	BOP						•					
	Probing	3	3	3		3	10	3	4	3	4	
	Tooth	**3.4**			**3.5**	**3.6**			**3.7**			
LINGUAL	**BOP**											
	Probing	3	3	3		3	4	4	4	4	3	
	Recession	1	1	1		1	1	1				
	CAL	4	4	4		4	5	5	4	4	3	
	Furcation						I					
	Mobility						1					

Each chart will utilize the following notations:

- The portion of the chart above the tooth numbers denotes the findings on the vestibular (buccal and/or labial) surfaces of the teeth. The portion of the chart below the tooth numbers denotes the findings for the lingual surfaces.
- Missing teeth are denoted by an empty column.
- Implants will be identified in the chart.
- Probing depth is measured in millimetres. Probing depths greater than 3 mm are written in red.
- BOP means "bleeding on probing" and is denoted by "•".
- Recession is shown in millimetres. Recession with a positive value indicates the gingival margin is apical to the CEJ. Recession with a negative value indicates the gingival margin is coronal to the CEJ.
- CAL means "clinical attachment loss" and is measured in millimetres.
- Furcation involvement is classified as Class (I, II, III).
- Mobility is classified as 1/2/3, using the Miller classification.
- Cells will be empty if there is nothing significant or if the measurement is 0.

Percussion, palpation, cold test, electric pulp test and bite test results may be provided in a chart below the Periodontal chart. Further details on how this information is charted is provided in the Endodontic Chart section of the Protocol.

Endodontic Chart

Some case-based questions include an endodontic chart in the following format:

Tooth		**1.3**			**1.4**			**1.5**		
Probing	**Vestibular**	2	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	5
	Lingual	2	2	2	3	2	3	4	2	5
Mobility		Physiologic			1			1		
Percussion		++			-			+		
Palpation		++			-			+		
Cold Test		-			Normal			++ Lingering		
Electric Pulp Test		80/80			30/80			20/80		
Bite Test		Sensitive upon pressure			Normal			Sensitive upon release		
Heat Test		-			Normal			+ Lingering		
Discolouration		Yes			No			No		

- Not Performed means that the test was not conducted on this patient.
- Mobility is classified as Physiologic or 1/2/3 using the Miller classification.
- Percussion is classified in terms of pain intensity as ++/+/-.
- Palpation over the root apex is classified in terms of pain intensity as ++/+/-.
- The results of the Cold Test and Heat Test are described in terms of pain intensity as ++/+/-/Normal.
    - "-" is used when there is no response to a Cold Test or Heat Test.

    - If the Cold Test or Heat Test response is ++ or +, the duration can be described as Short or Lingering.

- The result of the Electric Pulp Test has a maximum value of 80.
- For endodontically treated teeth, N/A (Not Applicable) is used for the Electric Pulp Test, Cold Test, and Heat Test.
- The Bite Test is described as Normal or Sensitive upon pressure or upon release.
- Discolouration is assessed as Yes (present) or No (absent).

Orthodontic Chart

Some case-based questions include an orthodontic chart in the following format:

27 year old female	**Mean**	**Patient**
SNA	81°	80°
SNB	79°	75°
Sella-Nasion to Mandibular Plane	32°	31°
Frankfort Horizontal to Mandibular Plane	24°	25°

Mean: Average measurement for a North American patient population.

Images

All clinical images, including radiographs, are displayed anatomically, as if you are looking at the patient, or intraorally.

Important Definitions

Differential diagnosis: up to three likely diagnoses based on the information provided.

Immediate management: the management required at this appointment for that specific clinical case.

Initial treatment/management:	the first step in a more complex or comprehensive treatment or the first step in that specific clinical case.
Investigations:	refers to all investigations for that specific clinical case, and may include laboratory and clinical tests, radiographs, biopsies, etc.
Management:	refers to all patient-centered therapies for that specific clinical case and may include preventive, restorative, surgical, pharmacological, non-pharmacological treatments, nutritional therapies, education, counseling, monitoring, and follow-up.
Most appropriate management:	refers to the most suitable management for that specific clinical case. Since the management of a situation can include several steps, "the most appropriate management" could include more than one answer.
Most likely:	refers to the most probable correct answer for that specific clinical case.
Next step:	refers to the next step you would take in the management of that specific clinical case.

Examples of Formulations

Example of ONE appropriate management for a specific clinical case

[Case history and periapical radiograph provided of tooth 2.6.]

Select **ONE** correct answer.

What is the most appropriate management for tooth 2.6?

- ○ Occlusal equilibration.
- ○ Nonsurgical endodontic retreatment.
- ○ Surgical endodontic treatment (apicoectomy).
- ● Extraction.
- ○ Observation and re-evaluation in 2 weeks.
- ○ No treatment.

Example of ONE OR MORE appropriate treatments in the management for a specific clinical case

[Case history, photograph and periapical radiograph of tooth 8.5]

Select **ONE OR MORE** correct answers.

What is the most appropriate management for tooth 8.5?

- ■ Indirect pulp capping.
- ☐ Direct pulp capping.
- ■ Direct restoration.
- ☐ Pulpotomy.
- ☐ Pulpectomy.
- ☐ Extraction.

In the example above, managing tooth 8.5 requires both an indirect pulp capping and a direct restoration.

Example of ONE OR MORE periodontal diagnoses for a specific clinical case

[Case history, photographs and radiographs]

Select **ONE OR MORE** correct answers.

What are the periodontal diagnoses?

- ■ Clinical gingival health.
- ☐ Gingivitis.
- ☐ Periodontitis.
- ☐ Intact periodontium.
- ■ Reduced periodontium.
- ☐ Non-periodontitis patient.
- ■ Stable periodontitis patient.

Preparation Materials

You are encouraged to use the NDEB resources available to prepare for the Virtual OSCE. These resources are for personal use only.

Virtual OSCE Frameworks

The Frameworks for the questions that may be in the Virtual OSCE are available in the Exam Resources section of the NDEB website. You are strongly encouraged to visit the website in preparation for the examination.

Virtual OSCE Orientation Video

The Virtual OSCE is a computer-based examination. The Virtual OSCE Orientation should be viewed prior to taking the examination.

During a computer-based examination, you may experience short technical delays. The NDEB has accounted for such delays in the time allotted for the examination.

Although the examination is to be delivered electronically, the NDEB reserves the right to change the delivery method of the examination if required.

Reference Texts

A list of reference materials used in Faculties of Dentistry in Canada can be found in the Exam Resources section of the NDEB website. The NDEB also references journal articles, clinical guidelines, and practice standards issued by specialty organizations.

Released Questions

The NDEB publishes many released single answer multiple choice questions which are available in the Exam Resources section of the NDEB website.

Tooth Numbering System

The World Dental Federation (FDI) two-digit tooth numbering system is used in all examinations.

FDI / UNIVERSAL NUMBERING SYSTEM

PERMANENT DENTITION

FDI	**1.8**	**1.7**	**1.6**	**1.5**	**1.4**	**1.3**	**1.2**	**1.1**	**2.1**	**2.2**	**2.3**	**2.4**	**2.5**	**2.6**	**2.7**	**2.8**	**FDI**
Universal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Universal
Universal	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25	24	23	22	21	20	19	18	17	Universal
FDI	**4.8**	**4.7**	**4.6**	**4.5**	**4.4**	**4.3**	**4.2**	**4.1**	**3.1**	**3.2**	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.5**	**3.6**	**3.7**	**3.8**	**FDI**
				RIGHT									**LEFT**				

PRIMARY DENTITION

FDI	**5.5**	**5.4**	**5.3**	**5.2**	**5.1**	**6.1**	**6.2**	**6.3**	**6.4**	**6.5**	**FDI**
Universal	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	Universal
Universal	T	S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K	Universal
FDI	**8.5**	**8.4**	**8.3**	**8.2**	**8.1**	**7.1**	**7.2**	**7.3**	**7.4**	**7.5**	**FDI**
	RIGHT									**LEFT**	

Training Courses

Be advised that the NDEB is not affiliated with, nor does it endorse any third-party providers of test preparation courses. The use of the NDEB's name by third parties, unless expressly authorised, is prohibited. The disclosure, distribution, solicitation and reconstruction of NDEB examination content is strictly prohibited, as is the use of NDEB examination content for commercial purposes, including released questions or examination materials on the NDEB website.

Copyright and Exam Security

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Information on exam security and NDEB's Intellectual Property Statement can be found on the NDEB website.

Examination Day Regulations

You are required to follow all regulations. Any failure to comply will be formally documented and reported to the NDEB.

- You must be punctual for all sessions. If you arrive late for a session, you may be denied entry to the examination.
- All devices with recording or transmitting and/or receiving abilities are prohibited. This includes all portable electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, tablets, laptops) and wearable smart technologies. These devices must be turned off and placed in the designated area. These devices cannot be accessed during the break.
- All watches are prohibited and must be placed in the designated area. These cannot be accessed during the break.
- You must not wear a hat, scarf, coat, outdoor clothing, hoodie with the hood up, or bulky clothing (except where the listed items constitute religious attire).
- You must empty all pockets before entering or leaving the examination room.
- Food is not allowed to be consumed in the examination room.
- Water is allowed in the examination room in a transparent bottle with the label removed. No other beverages are permitted.
- If you require food, medicine, or medical equipment during the examination, you must submit a request pursuant to the NDEB test accommodation policy.
- Ear plugs will be provided. You will not be allowed to use your own ear plugs.
- You will be required to read and agree to a Confidentiality and Non-disclosure Agreement before you can begin the examination.
- You are prohibited from communicating, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting any part of your examination, in any form or by any means, verbal, written, or electronic, for any purpose.
- You will be provided with scratch paper, a pencil, and an eraser. You cannot write on anything other than the scratch paper provided. The scratch paper, pencils and eraser must be submitted to staff at the end of the examination.
- You cannot leave and re-enter the examination room unattended once the examination has started.

It may be necessary for the NDEB to introduce new regulations or modify existing regulations for specific examination administrations. Any new or modified regulations will supersede regulations published in the protocol.

Test Accommodations

Test accommodations are granted on an individual basis and are dependent on the nature and extent of the request, documentation provided, and requirements of the examination. Read the NDEB's policies and procedures for test accommodations on the NDEB website.

Exceptional Circumstances: Withdrawals, Compassionate Appeals, and Appeals of the Conduct of the Examination

Withdrawals

If you experience a health-related issue or personal circumstance prior to the start of an examination that will prevent you from demonstrating your ability, you must withdraw. If you do not attend the examination, you will not lose an attempt.

Login to your NDEBConnect account to withdraw from an examination. All withdrawals are subject to a fee.

Compassionate Appeals

If you believe you have been prevented from demonstrating your ability because of a serious medical circumstance or unanticipated medical circumstance during the examination, you can submit a compassionate appeal to have the results of the examination voided. Compassionate appeals must be submitted through your NDEBConnect account within seven days of the examination.

More information can be found in the Compassionate Appeal section of the website and in the NDEB By-laws and policies.

Appeal of the Conduct of an Examination

If, during the examination, you believe there may have been an irregularity or inconsistency in the conduct of the examination that prevented you from demonstrating your ability, it must be immediately reported to staff at the examination centre.

Should you want to submit an appeal based on the reported irregularity or inconsistency, it must be submitted through your NDEBConnect account within seven days of the examination.

More information is available in the Appeal of the Conduct of an Examination section of the website and in the NDEB By-laws and policies.

Results

Results are normally released within eight weeks of the examination. You will receive an email notification when your results are available in your online profile.

Results will be reported as a Pass/Fail. Those who receive less than 75 will also receive their test equated rescaled score.

Results will not be released by telephone, email, or fax.

Passing Standard

To assure a consistent level of difficulty, the NDEB uses test equating and re-scaling procedures to correlate raw scores to scores on a reference examination and to a standardized passing score of 75.

You must obtain a minimum test equated, re-scaled score of 75 to be successful on an NDEB examination.

Information on test equating and re-scaling is available on the NDEB website.

Appeals and Rescoring

If you receive a failing grade, you have one month from the date results are released to request a verification of your score.

Information can be found in the Appeals and Rescoring section of the NDEB website.

In no case will you have access to the examination questions or responses.

Repeats

The Virtual OSCE can be taken a maximum of three times.