



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

Revised March 2026

*Supporting quality dental care through
the evaluation of competence.*



The National Dental
Examining Board of Canada
Le Bureau national d'examen
dentaire du Canada[®]

About us

We are a not-for-profit corporation established through an Act of Parliament. Our responsibility is to establish the national standard for beginning dental practitioners in Canada.

We develop, administer, and evaluate fair, valid and reliable assessments that determine an individual's readiness for NDEB certification.

These examinations are a key component of the entry-to-practice pathway for both Canadian and international graduates. Provincial Dental Regulatory Authorities use NDEB certification to confirm that applicants have demonstrated the competencies required for a beginning dental practitioner.

Our organization also specializes in the verification of educational and professional documentation confirming that individuals pursuing certification and licensure in Canada hold the necessary qualifications to practice dentistry.

By rigorously confirming both the legitimacy of credentials and the competencies of the practitioner, we are contributing to the oral health of Canadians and maintaining public trust.



From the President & Executive Director



Dr. Stéfán Haas-Jean, President

Since joining the NDEB Board in 2014, I have had the opportunity to work with and learn from so many exceptional leaders. In November, when I became President, I once again found myself surrounded and supported by an incredible group of people led by Marie Dagenais, Executive Director & Registrar. I am pleased to have the opportunity to collaborate with her on reporting the successes of the NDEB over this past year.

The last fiscal year picked up where we left off, with a lens toward removing barriers and reducing timelines to certification, particularly for graduates of international non-accredited dental programs. These efforts are reflected in our strategic priorities and in the work we have done which is highlighted throughout this report.

In the last few years there have been tremendous changes in the environment. Developing a new strategic plan was an important process to assist

us in maintaining a high level of exam delivery while keeping pace with and adapting to rapid changes in the health-care field. The strategic planning process provided an opportunity for us to connect one-on-one with our stakeholders and do a deep dive into what they saw as our strengths and opportunities, as well as our threats and weaknesses. Common themes surfaced from these interviews, like collaborative approaches across oral health care professions, innovation in competency assessment, evidence-based decision making, and technological advancement. These key trends are the foundation for our new five-year strategic plan and informed development of our strategic priorities. The plan was adopted in November 2024.

In November, we had the privilege of welcoming Dr. Viren Naik, CEO of the Medical Council of Canada as a guest speaker at our Annual Meeting. Dr. Naik spoke of the challenges and changing landscape in medical licensure and the new approaches being

From the President & Executive Director (cont.)

taken to assess the competence of international medical graduates. Dr. Naik's enthusiasm for the work the MCC has been involved with in this regard was contagious and sparked meaningful dialogue among the attendees.

After several years of inactivity, our executive and Board determined it was time to rejuvenate the research committee. The members worked diligently on defining the roles and responsibilities for this committee to align its outcomes with organizational needs. During the 2024 Annual Meeting, new Committee members were elected. Each member brings unique and extraordinary skills to this committee, and we could not be more pleased with the direction it has taken under the leadership of the Chair, Dr. Debora Matthews. The Committee has several projects underway as part of our overall initiative to look closely at the candidates in the Equivalency Process and how we can better support them towards certification.

This year we said goodbye to Dr. Jim Richardson who completed his term on the Board as the representative

from the British Columbia College of Oral Health Professionals (BCCOHP). Dr. Richardson was an incredible leader and made many contributions to the NDEB over his tenure. He served as President, Chair of the Examinations Committee, Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee, held the role of Assistant Chief Examiner for the Assessment of Clinical Judgment (ACJ) for four years, and was a mentor to new Board members. We are grateful for everything he has done for us and look forward to continuing to work together in other capacities.

With Dr. Richardson's departure, we welcomed a new representative from the BCCOHP, Dr. Bertrand Chan. Dr. Chan is a specialist in oral medicine with a background in education and experience in various capacities within organized dentistry. We look forward to working with Dr. Chan.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Board members, committee members, staff, examiners, evaluators and other stakeholders for their ongoing contributions. Your dedication and support are what continues to make this organization a success.



Dr. Marie Dagenais, Executive Director & Registrar

Year in Review 2024-2025



Adopted a new
strategic plan



Modified our
registration processes



Expanded the NDECC
Test Centre



Appointed a
new President

Verified
2804

Equivalency Process
applications



Hosted
7

virtual information
sessions



Facilitated
11

question development
workshops



Certified
1298

candidates



A Roadmap: The Next Five Years

In January 2025, we rolled out a new five-year strategic plan.

This new strategic plan sets a strong foundation for the future. It ensures that we uphold excellence in developing and administering examinations while supporting candidates in their journey toward certification. A significant focus of the new strategic plan is to continue streamlining processes to reduce the time required for candidates to become certified, while maintaining the requirement to demonstrate the ability to perform dentistry safely and effectively.

Our new plan focuses on four key priorities and corresponding objectives. This new strategic direction was developed through the collaboration and support of key stakeholders, the NDEB senior leadership team, and the Board, ensuring a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach.

Strategic Priorities



Recognize the diverse needs of the candidate pool and develop processes to support them toward certification.



Promote value of competency-based testing for the profession through structured communications.

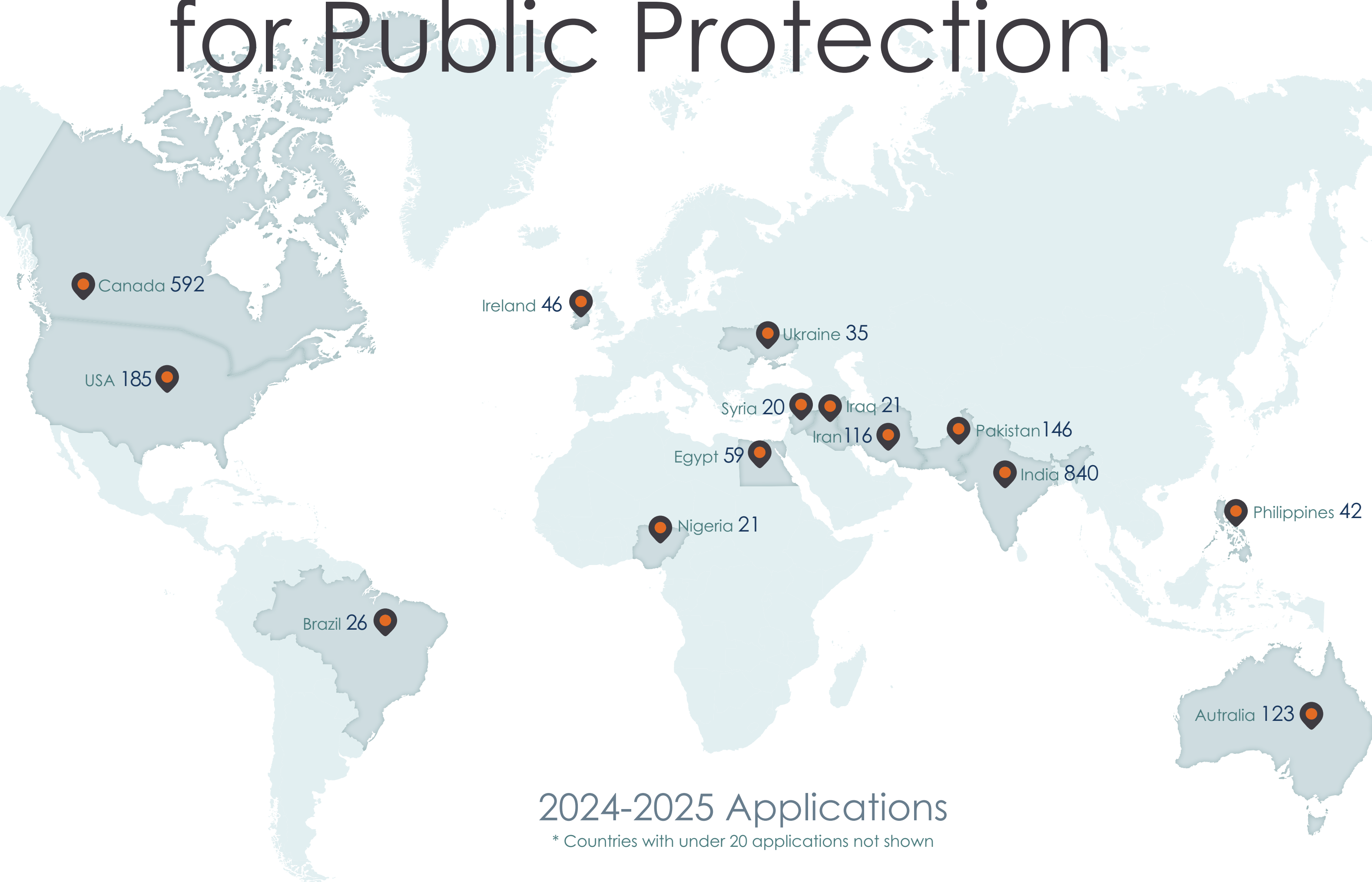


Leverage information technology to improve service delivery.



Invest in research to inform decision making, and exam development and delivery.

Authenticating Credentials for Public Protection



The importance of source verification

Last year, we received applications from candidates who attended dental programs at 398 universities in 79 countries. A key function of our organization is to verify the educational and professional credentials of each applicant.

Our credential verification process is designed to confirm that the individual submitting the documentation is the same person named on the credentials, verify that the educational credentials are valid and issued by a university that has the authority to award the credential, and that the individual has completed all aspects of the program and been granted the credential.

With the rise of education document fraud and the advancement of AI tools, source verification is necessary to ensure the integrity, accuracy, and reliability of credentials. Source verification is a standardized process used to confirm the authenticity of academic degrees, transcripts, and statements of good standing. It involves direct contact with the issuing institution or regulator. While this process may extend verification times, it is a key step in making sure only trained professionals receive an NDEB certificate and are able to apply for a license.

Sharing information to facilitate movement

With our existing document requirements and credential verification processes, we are well positioned to develop a system that would house documentation accessible to other parties. Similar projects have been undertaken by other health professions to facilitate access to educational documents and credentials that individuals need to provide at multiple points during their licensure journey.

Last year we engaged an external consultant, Dre Diane Legault, to spearhead the requirements gathering for a national repository of credentials. Dre Legault's experience in regulation and law made her an ideal choice for this project. Over the year, she met with regulators across the country to learn about their requirements for issuing a license and spoke with organizations that have undertaken similar initiatives to discuss accomplishments and lessons learned.

The final report provided an in-depth view of provincial needs and includes several recommendations for next steps. The report will serve as a jumping off point for further discussions with partners on the development of a national repository for credentials.



Supporting internationally trained dentists towards licensure

Increasing Exam Capacity

In December 2024 we undertook a renovation which added two additional simulators to the NDECC Test Centre.

The NDECC Test Centre first opened in September 2022 with capacity to hold 20 candidates in every NDECC session, 10 in the clinic and 10 in the situational judgment rooms. Since its opening, demand for seats for the NDECC has continued to increase. Consequently, some candidates were experiencing delays in securing a seat for the examination. The clinic expansion was part of our initiative to increase test capacity and reduce the duration of the Equivalency Process. By adding two additional simulators in the clinic, we increased our capacity for the clinical skills component of the NDECC by 20%.

The renovation was completed on schedule in January 2025 and candidates were welcomed back into clinic.

Evolving Internal Process to Support Candidates

Throughout the year, we looked at ways to reduce the amount of time it takes a person to complete the exams in the Equivalency Process. During our review, it was identified that the NDECC was a bottleneck. A deep dive showed that this was a result of numerous factors including reduced testing during Covid, capacity in the NDECC Test Centre, higher success rates in the ACJ, and increased number of attempts for the NDECC. With the goal of facilitating access to the NDECC and getting candidates through the exams quicker, we introduced a priority registration system. Now when a candidate receives a passing grade on the prerequisite exam, they are offered a seat in the next NDECC series. This provides candidates with the opportunity to take the exam within six months of passing the ACJ.

Several interactions with internationally trained dentists have led to discussions about prioritizing exam seats for candidates who are already in Canada. While access to the exams should in no way be limited to those living in Canada, those who have established themselves here are unable to work as dentists until they complete the exams. In early 2025, we began to collect proof of Canadian citizenship or permanent residency as part of the documentation candidates can submit with their Equivalency Process application. This was followed by process changes that would provide early access to NDECC registration for those with an approved PR or citizenship document. This change is intended to help get candidates into practice sooner.

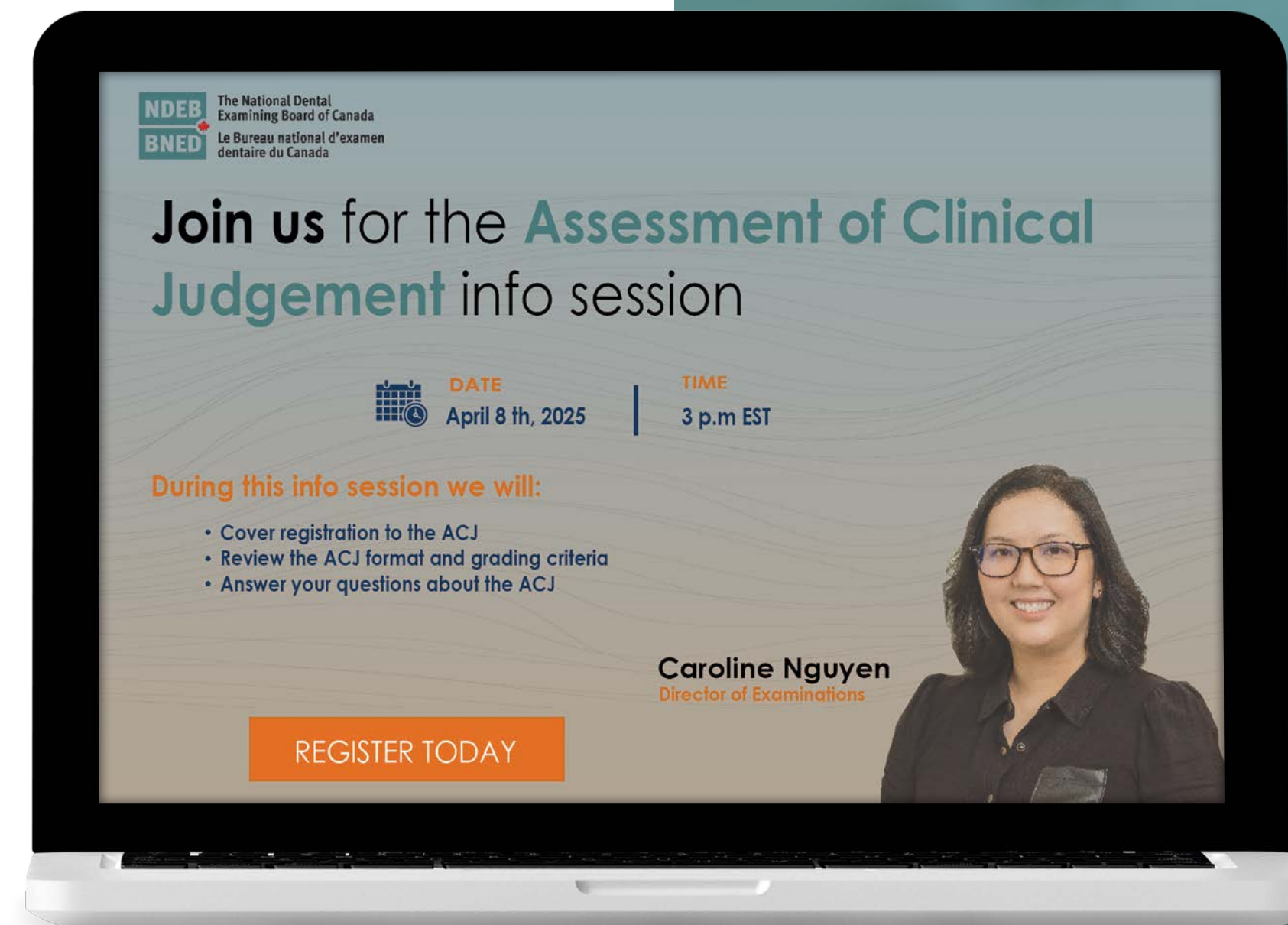
Engagement with the ITD community

We continue to meet with representatives from the internationally trained dentist community, specifically the leadership of the Internationally Trained Dentists Association of Canada. These exchanges provide valuable opportunities for structured exchange of information and ideas that support non-accredited internationally trained dentists.

Building on our strategic priorities, we also held several information sessions to review application and credential verification processes with potential applicants and with organizations that work with dentists educated outside of Canada.

In April, we hosted our first Assessment of Clinical Judgement information session. During this session, Dr. Caroline Nguyen, Director of Examinations, and Ms. Kim Phillips spoke about the exam and answered questions from the 500 participants. Feedback from the session was positive and has been the impetus for the development of an information session focussed on the Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge.

Internationally trained dentist: an individual who has received a BDS/DDS/DMD degree from a post-secondary institution outside of Canada.



Applicant Support

Our client support and credential verification teams continue to support internationally trained dentists on an individual basis through email and phone appointments.



**Credential Verification
phone appointments**

549



Email response time

14 days
or less

Data driven decision making

This year, our data analyst worked closely with the Research Committee to look at trends within the Equivalency Process.

Over the past decade, Canada has seen a significant influx of graduates from non-accredited international programs. These individuals come from a wide variety of countries and educational institutions, each with differing levels of exam success. As part of our commitment to equity and evidence-based policy support, we undertook a comprehensive analysis of examination outcomes for international candidates over the past 14 years. The purpose of the analysis was to identify the average and median duration of a candidate to complete the Equivalency Process and certification exam and look at success rates by country of education and institution.

The analysis provided a structured overview of the past 14 years of historical exam data, transforming a large and complex dataset into clear, interpretable insights. It offers a comparative view of candidate performance across different countries and schools, highlighting patterns in pass rates, first try pass rates, fail rates, and candidate outcomes over time. The findings can support regulatory bodies, educational institutions, and policymakers in developing targeted support programs, such as preparatory courses or mentorship initiatives, particularly for candidates from consistently underperforming regions or institutions. At the same time, the analysis can help identify outstanding non-accredited programs that consistently produce strong candidates, providing valuable evidence to guide future recognition or collaboration efforts.



Maintaining the national standard of competence through assessment

The Role of Examinations in Determining Competence

With a lack of homogeneity in dental education around the world, we rely on a series of examinations to determine if an individual pursuing licensure has the knowledge, skills and abilities of a beginning dental practitioner in Canada. Unlike in accredited dental education programs where an independent body evaluates the programs against defined standards for the purposes of quality assurance and continuous enhancement the breadth and depth of dental programs in many parts of the world are unknown. This is where examinations come in.

Examinations serve as an important mechanism for objectively determining an individual's competence in relation to established standards. Through fair, valid and reliable examinations we can uphold the integrity of credentials, support informed decision-making, and maintain public confidence.

At the NDEB, we support the integration of dentists trained outside of Canada into the profession through examination processes that assess the competencies required of Canadian dentists before they enter independent practice.



Applications and Examinations

Certification Process

To become a licensed dentist in Canada, individuals must successfully complete our Certification Process. On successful completion of the Certification Process an individual is eligible to apply for licensure anywhere in Canada.

Graduates from Canadian dental programs, as well as graduates of international programs recognized by the Commission on Dental Accreditation can proceed directly to the Certification Process with no prerequisite examinations. Individuals from international non-accredited dental programs must first complete the Equivalency Process, or a recognized degree completion program at an accredited university.

Total number of **new candidates**
to the **certification process**
from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

1408

Applications

Graduates of Canadian programs	592
Graduates of CODA accredited programs in the United States and international	185
Graduates of accredited programs in Australia	123
Graduates of accredited programs in New Zealand	7
Graduates of accredited programs in Ireland	46
Graduates of international non-accredited programs that completed the Equivalency Process	455

We received **26** special consideration applications for the Certification Process. A special consideration application is required when an individual completes an accredited dental program more than five years before applying to the Certification Process. Application for special consideration requires the applicant to provide evidence of both continuous practice and continuing education between the time they completed their education program and their application to the NDEB.

Virtual OSCE

The Virtual OSCE is the certification examination and is required for licensure in Canada. The Virtual OSCE is a summative examination that assesses problem solving and clinical decision-making skills of beginning dental practitioners in Canada. This one-day examination is offered three times a year across Canada and in some international locations.

Virtual OSCE Statistics
(For exam sessions between July 1 and June 30)

2023-2024				
Total Candidates	Pass Rate	Test Takers		Passed
1461	90.69%	1 st time	1353	1245
		Repeat	108	80
2024-2025				
Total Candidates	Pass Rate	Test Takers		Passed
1465	89.42%	1 st time	1328	1203
		Repeat	137	107

Equivalency Process

Graduates of international non-accredited dental programs seeking licensure as dentists in Canada can select one of two pathways. The first is an accredited degree completion program. Offered by Faculties of Dentistry, these programs are designed to prepare international non-accredited dental graduates to meet Canadian dental practice standards.

The second is the Equivalency Process, a series of three examinations which together assess the knowledge, skills and abilities of international non-accredited dental graduates. The disparity between the number of internationally trained dentists and spaces in accredited degree completion programs is significant. This results in many individuals pursuing the examination pathway.

Applications

Applications to the Equivalency Process have decreased by 16% this year. India, Iran and Pakistan remain the countries with the largest number of new applicants per year.

Equivalency Process Applications Created

2023-2024	2024-2025
1984	1697

Applications Reviewed

Total	Incomplete*	Approved
2804	1105	1699

*Applications reviewed that required submission of additional documentation.

Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK)

The AFK is the first examination in the Equivalency Process. It evaluates biomedical science and applied clinical science knowledge. The AFK is offered twice a year in February and August. Candidates must pass the AFK before moving to the next examination in the Process.

AFK Statistics

Total Candidates	Pass Rate	Test Takers		Passed
1581	42%	1 st time	1123	448
		Repeat	458	216

Assessment of Clinical Judgement (ACJ)

The ACJ is the second examination in the Equivalency Process. It assesses the ability to formulate a diagnosis, make clinical decisions, and evaluates knowledge of oral radiology, radiographic interpretation and diagnosis. The ACJ is offered twice a year.

ACJ Statistics

Total Candidates	Pass Rate	Test Takers		Passed
854	61.36%	1 st time	585	353
		Repeat	269	171

NDECC

The NDECC is the last examination in the Equivalency Process. The purpose of the NDECC is to assess clinical competence of dentists trained in non-accredited programs. The NDECC is comprised of two components over a two-day exam. The clinical skills component assesses clinical procedures and techniques relevant to current Canadian standards. The situational judgement component assesses judgement required for solving problems in work-related situations. The NDECC is the only time a graduate of a non-accredited dental program has their clinical skills assessed prior to obtaining a license to practice dentistry in Canada.

Clinical Skills Component Statistics				
Total Candidates	Pass Rate	Test Takers		Passed
1386	41.27%	1 st time	822	352
		Repeat	564	220

Situational Judgement Component Statistics				
Total Candidates	Pass Rate	Test Takers		Passed
1101	62.31%	1 st time	822	516
		Repeat	279	170

455

candidates completed the
Equivalency Process
in this fiscal year.

Certification

Receiving NDEB certification means that an individual, no matter where they trained, has met the national standard for a beginning dental practitioner in Canada.

In fiscal year 2024-2025, 1289 dentists were certified, of those 699 were trained in dental programs outside of Canada.

As we continue to assess the knowledge, skills, and abilities of dentists, our goal remains clear: to support a strong, competent, and diverse dental workforce by certifying those who meet Canada’s standards of dental care.

	2023-2024	2024-2025*
Canadian DDS/DMD Programs Includes DCP/QP	584	590
International Accredited Programs	303	243
International Non-Accredited Programs	447	456

**2024-2025 numbers include candidates who passed the May 2025 Virtual OSCE and were certified on July 3, 2025.*

Governance

The NDEB Board oversees the organization's mission and strategic direction, financial management, sustainability, and relationships with stakeholders. This includes governing the organization through policies; overseeing compliance with the By-laws of the organization; overseeing the management of the organization's resources; accounting to stakeholders for the operation of the organization. The Board members are representatives from the provincial Dental Regulatory Authorities, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CDAC), and from the public.

2024-2025 Board

From left to right:

Dr. Stéfán Haas-Jean, Dr. Bertrand Chan, Dr. Tanya Cook, Dr. Mintoo Basahti, Dr. Sneha Abhyankar, Dr. Andrew Rowe, Ms. Jan Sheppard Kutcher, Dr. Stéfán Piché, Dr. Noha Gomaa, Dr. Debora Matthews, Dr. Alan Robinson, Dr. Jim Posluns



Committees

Appeals Committee

The Appeals Committee meets on an as needed basis to hear appeals on the conduct of an examination and appeals of misconduct decisions. This Committee ensures that candidates who feel that their examination result was affected by something beyond their control can be heard at the highest levels of the NDEB.

By-laws Committee

The By-laws Committee is responsible for reviewing the By-laws and recommending to the Board changes for implementation. This keeps the NDEB By-laws clear and up to date, and in compliance of internal practices, processes, and policies.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee meets regularly between meetings of the Board to ensure the timely continuity of business and administrative affairs. In addition, the Executive Committee is responsible for hearing compassionate appeals and special consideration applications from licensed dentists who graduated from an accredited program more than sixty months prior to the date of the Virtual OSCE they intend to take.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee assists the Board by identifying and nominating people to serve on the Standing Committees and any ad-hoc committees consistent with the NDEB's By-laws.

Membership 2024-25

- Lise Payant /Chair
- Maureen Bourgeois
- Claire Deschamps
- Doug Mackey
- Michel Moreau
- Stéfan Piché

Membership 2024-25

- Gurminder Singh (Mintoo) Basahti /Chair
- Alan Robinson /Vice Chair
- Andrew Rowe

Membership 2024-25

- Amarjit Singh Rihal /Past President
- Stéfan Haas-Jean /President
- Sneha Abhyankar / Vice President / Treasurer
- Gurminder Singh (Mintoo) Basahti
- Alan Robinson

Membership 2024-25

- Amarjit Singh Rihal /Chair
- Stéfan Haas-Jean



Committees (cont.)

Finance and Audit Committee

The Finance and Audit Committee oversees the external audit, the financial planning process, and the development and compliance with financial policies and processes. This committee ensures that the NDEB remains viable and sustainable as a Not-for-Profit corporation.

Membership 2024-25

- Stéfan Haas-Jean
- Sneha Abhyankar /Chair
- Gurminder Singh (Mintoo) Basahti
- Jimmy Mui
- Alan Robinson

Examinations Committee

The Examinations Committee is responsible for making recommendations that will provide for the conducting of examinations in a fair and equitable manner for all concerned. Our examinations are not static; therefore, this committee is charged with ensuring that the exams remain relevant and up to date so that Canadians can be confident that candidates who pass them demonstrate a level of competence consistent with that of an entry level dentist in Canada.

Membership 2024-25

- Cristina Ionescu /Chair
- Tanya Cook /Vice Chair
- Lara Friedlander
- Keven Hockley
- Jim Yuan Lai
- Pierre Éric Landry
- Steven Patterson
- Lise Payant
- Amarjit Singh Rihal
- Jan Sheppard Kutcher
- Laurie St-Pierre

Senior Leadership Team

From left to right - Front Row: Ms. Kim Phillips, Director of Communication, Dr. Caroline Nguyen, Director of Examinations, Ms. Christine Desbien, Director Human Resources, Ms. R. Pyka, Manager Credential Verificaiton & Legal, Dr. Marie Dagenais, Executive Director & Registrar, Mr. Travis McCuish, Manager Finance -Back Row: Ms. Grace Manaog, Manager NDECC, Ms. Neesha Gaind, interim Manager Examinations, Ms. Karen Frost, Manager IMIT, Mr. G. Scharf, Chief Financial Officer (absent)



Financial Position

The National Dental Examining Board of Canada (NDEB) operates as a non-profit organization.

The NDEB realized a net excess of revenue over expenses of \$1.15 million for the year ending June 30, 2025, compared to a surplus of \$2.54 million for the previous fiscal year.

Net revenues are \$1.66 million over budget primarily driven by higher than anticipated investment income in FY2025. With a budget of 1,200 examinees, Virtual OSCE actual examination revenue totalled \$2.96M (~\$560K over budget) with 1,480 total examinees in FY2025. The combined non-accredited exam revenue came in around \$100K under budget for F2025.

Direct costs came in over budget by \$830K (\$729K over budget in FY2024) primarily driven by the additional NDECC material expenses and the direct costs incorporated with running additional Virtual OSCE exams.

Administrative expenses are approximately \$103K over budget (\$280K under budget in FY2024) primarily driven by salary & benefits and general IT & Software maintenance expenses.

The IRNA expenses came in over budget by \$44K (\$31K under budget in FY2024) with additional spending towards judicial reviews and further development of electronic examinations.

Financial Results July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

Summary Statement of Financial Position as at June 30, 2025	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Assets		
Cash	2,594,126	4,819,105
Accounts Receivable	16,304	- 0
Prepaid Expenses	297,325	325,693
Accrued Interest	125,081	130,026
Investments	23,862,459	21,731,660
Capital Assets	2,945,982	3,240,109
	29,841,277	30,246,593
Liabilities		
Trade and other Operating Liabilities	1,087,386	1,083,435
Deferred Revenue	4,586,874	5,987,329
Lease Inducements	1,820,963	1,979,307
	7,495,223	9,050,071
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	13,261,276	11,783,245
Internally Restricted	9,084,778	9,413,277
	22,346,054	21,196,522
	29,841,277	30,246,593

Financial Results July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 (cont.)

Summary Statement of Operations Year ended June 30, 2025	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Revenue		
Application Fees (accredited, non-accredited, DSCKE, NDSE)	1,947,274	2,150,200
Examination Fees (accredited)	3,163,232	3,098,057
Assessment Fees (non-accredited)	12,143,088	12,003,175
NDSE Examination Fees	360	3,935
DSCKE Examination Fees	60	72,200
Other income	1,318,833	1,184,686
Payment processing fees	(906,925)	(1,009,770)
	17,665,922	17,502,483

Summary Statement of Operations Year ended June 30, 2025	2025 (\$)	2024 (\$)
Operating Expenses		
Direct expenses		
Certification (accredited, non-accredited)	145,546	94,179
Examinations (accredited)	1,484,590	1,462,537
Assessments (non-accredited)	7,851,627	7,378,826
DSCKE	- 0	3,789
Other	- 0	- 0
Administrative expenses	6,706,128	5,833,568
	16,187,891	14,772,899
Internally Restricted	328,499	194,374
	16,516,390	14,967,273
Excess of Revenue over Expense	1,149,532	2,535,210

The summary financial statements do not contain all the disclosures required by Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

The audited financial statements may be obtained from The National Dental Examining Board of Canada at www.ndeb-bned.ca.

CONTACT US



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