

Dental Board of California

Candidate Guide

Registered Dental Assistant Practical Examination



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RDA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

APPLICATION AND EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code section 30(c) a licensing board may not process any application for an original license unless the candidate or licensee provides its federal employer identification number or social security number where requested on the application.

To qualify for RDA examinations, candidates must:

1. Graduate from a Board-approved RDA educational program; or
2. Complete at least 15 months (1,280 hours) of satisfactory work experience as a dental assistant with a dentist licensed in one of the states in the United States; or
3. Complete a California Department of Education-approved 4-month educational program and 11 months of work experience with a dentist(s) licensed in one of the states of the United States.
4. Complete Board-approved courses in coronal polishing and radiation safety.
5. Complete and show proof of completion of a Board-approved course in the Dental Practice Act completed within five (5) years of application.
6. Complete and show proof of completion of an eight (8)-hour Board-approved course in infection control completed within five (5) years of application.
7. Complete and show proof of completion of a basic life support course offered by an instructor approved by the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association.
8. Submit fingerprint clearances from both the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). This process can take 60 days or more. If a candidate has a criminal history, the arrest report and court records must be obtained and investigated before a decision is made to issue or deny the license.

Criminal Background Check

For consumer protection, California law requires all applicants to undergo a criminal background check. Until further notice, all applicants may submit their fingerprints by either using the live scan system or submitting their fingerprint cards. Candidates residing in California must utilize the live scan system. Candidates residing out of California may either come to California and utilize the live scan system or submit their fingerprints on standard FBI fingerprint cards.

Board regulation requires two "classifiable" sets of fingerprints on forms provided by the Board to complete the application. Fingerprints may be submitted via live scan or standard FBI fingerprint cards. Classifiable means that the prints can be "read" by the California DOJ and the FBI. Fingerprints are more likely to be classifiable if they are taken by a large local law enforcement agency such as a police or sheriff department.

Convictions

Applicants must report all convictions including infractions, misdemeanors, and felonies, with the exception of a conviction for an infraction resulting in a fine of less than \$300. Applicants must report a conviction(s) even if he or she pled nolo contendere (no contest) or received a subsequent order expunging the conviction under section 1203.4 of the Penal Code.

Applicants who have previous convictions or pleas that answer "no" to the question may have their applications denied for knowingly making false statements on the applications pursuant to section 480 (c) of the Business and Professions Code.

To obtain a California registered dental assistant (RDA) license from the Dental Board of California (Board), candidates must:

1. Pass a hands-on practical examination performed on a typodont.
2. Pass a State computerized written general knowledge examination.
3. Pass a State computerized law and ethics written examination.

Once this process is completed and a candidate is qualified for licensure, a pocket identification card and wall certificate are issued. There is no license fee required for the initial license other than the initial application and examination fees.

ADMISSION TO EXAMINATION

Before the examination, candidates will be provided a notice of admission, which contains their assigned location, date, and time of their practical examination. **The assigned examination date and time are final; no changes in scheduling will be made.**

Failure to appear at the examination will result in forfeiture of the candidates' examination fees.

A current, valid driver's license or other official government photo identification, such as a passport, must be presented at check-in to be admitted to the examination. (Driver's licenses must be current and may not be expired.)

Other acceptable forms of photo identification are:

- Military ID
- Alien registration card

No written materials, such as, but not limited to, notes, books, and notebooks, are allowed in the examination area. Pictures, tape recorders, and cellular phones, are also prohibited in the examination area. **Candidates who have any of these items with them or in their possession will not be admitted into the examination area.** Pursuant to Title 16, Section 1080.1(d) of the California Code of Regulations, candidates will be dismissed from the examination if they bring any unauthorized materials into the examination area. Extra teeth

or an extra typodont brought into the examination area are prohibited. No persons are allowed into the testing centers except scheduled candidates and test administrators.

****NOTE: All kits and materials in the examination room are subject to inspection at any time.**

REQUIRED MATERIALS

All candidates must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (i.e. uniform, lab coat, closed-toe shoes, gloves, a mask, side shields, safety glasses). **Candidates will not be admitted into the examination without the proper clinic attire.**

Candidates must also provide all necessary armamentarium to perform the procedures to be tested. Specifically, **candidates must bring the following items to the exam:**

1. **Typodont:** Only the model series listed below with soft flexible gingivae are appropriate and allowed to be used for the testing procedures. All teeth must be present and in a condition that will not interfere with candidates successfully completing the examination.
 - a. Columbia Dentoform M-PVR660
 - b. Columbia Dentoform M-PVR860
 - c. Kilgore Model D95 DP-200
2. **Bench Mount:** Must be appropriate for the typodont and must be equipped with an adjustable heavy-duty ball joint in the upright rod, a pole that is 4 inches, 6 inches, or 8 inches in length only, and a base part that clamps to a bench top.
3. **Prepared Teeth:** The prepared teeth used in the examination will become the property of the Board. Typodonts must be presented with approved prepared teeth for the temporary restoration, and the typodonts must also have all other original unrestored teeth. A prepared tooth for the temporary crown procedure will be supplied by the Board at the exam.

****NOTE: If a candidate's typodont or bench mount is deemed unacceptable by an examiner at any time, it is the candidate's responsibility to provide an acceptable replacement.**

4. Other Materials

- a. For the temporary crown, only temporary resin acrylic NON-monomer material may be used. **No Snap, Trim, Jet, or similar products allowed.**
- b. Cement may only be used for the temporary crown. **No light curing materials allowed.**
- c. For the temporary restoration, self/auto-cure materials must be used to prepare and place a temporary restoration. **No light activating devices will be allowed.**
- d. Electrical or cordless trimming devices are acceptable.
- e. **Impression material and trays are optional** - Candidates may either bring an impression for the typodont they will be using OR take the impression during their test time – but NO water is available in the exam room and no additional time will be given to take the impression.

Prohibited Materials

1. Snap, Trim, Jet, or similar products
2. Light curing materials
3. Light activating devices
4. Use of emery boards

****NOTE: The Board is not responsible for the malfunction of handpieces, and no additional time will be given to candidates if there is equipment failure.**

Armamentarium

Each of the candidates is solely responsible for ensuring that the typodont, bench mount, and armamentarium meet the criteria defined by the Board and that everything is in proper working order.

Candidates using a “kit renter” are advised to allow sufficient time before check-in to become familiar with the equipment provided in the kit and to check the equipment before entering the examination area. Once in the examination area, candidates will not be allowed to leave and re-enter the examination area without just cause and examiner approval.

Equipment Rental

The Board is not associated with, and derives no benefit, from renting or selling equipment or materials belonging to schools or private parties. The Board assumes no responsibility for the availability, condition, or cost of any supplies or equipment provided to candidates for the examination by schools or private parties.

Each candidate is solely responsible for bringing all required equipment and materials to the examination and for ensuring that the equipment and materials are in good working order.

****NOTE: The Board does not approve or endorse any preparatory classes for the examination.**

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

GENERAL PRACTICAL EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

At check-in, typodonts must be presented with all original teeth and approved prepared teeth for the procedures to be tested.

All candidates are solely responsible for ensuring that their typodont, bench mount, and armamentarium meet the criteria described under “Required Materials” and that their materials are in proper working order. Candidates will also be required to set up their own typodont and armamentarium.

If a typodont and/or bench mount is deemed unacceptable by an examiner at any time, the candidate will be solely responsible for providing an acceptable replacement. Failure to do so will result in failure of the examination.

All candidates shall also observe the following examination rules:

- The maxillary and mandibular arches may not be separated from each other.
- The procedures may not be performed in any other manner than would be performed on a patient. For example, the typodont may not be worked on when it is upside down, opened flat or the jaws separated, or as though working from the throat.
- Candidates will not be allowed to use the equipment, instruments, or materials belonging to other test-taking candidates or the testing facility.
- Candidates may not talk or in any way help each other.
- Candidates may not leave their work areas or the exam room without permission and shall occupy the space assigned to them throughout the examination.

Failure to follow the examination rules will be cause for dismissal from and failure of the examination.

Additional instructions about the procedures that must be performed will be provided in the examination room.

TYPODONT CHECK-IN AT EXAMINATION

- At check-in, typodonts must be presented with all original teeth and approved prepared teeth for the procedures to be tested.
- The maxillary and mandibular arches may not be separated from each other.
- Typodonts are not required to be equilibrated for the examination; however, reasonable stability is required and will be assessed by the examination proctors prior to the start of the examination.
- Typodonts will be assessed for proper articulation using blue articulating paper prior to the start of the examination.
- If a typodont and/or bench mount is deemed unacceptable by an examiner at any time, the candidate is solely responsible to provide an acceptable replacement. Failure to do so will result in failure of the exam.

PROCEDURES AND SCORING

PROCEDURES TO BE TESTED AND GRADING CRITERIA

Three procedures will be tested during the examination. You will be given 1 ½ hours to complete the exam. However, the entire examination process, including registration, grading, and cleanup, will take approximately 5 hours.

Below are the general grading criteria used by examiners to determine each candidate's minimal competence for licensure as an RDA:

1. Fabrication of a Temporary Crown

Fabricate an appropriate temporary crown on tooth #8 that recreates proximal contact and proper occlusion but that does not extend beyond the margin of the crown preparation.

Candidates may either bring an impression to the examination or may take an impression(s) during their test time. No additional time will be given to make the impression during their 1 ½ hour test time and no water will be available in the exam room.

The Board will provide the prepared tooth at the exam; candidates must present a typodont with a normal typodont tooth #8.

2. Cementation of a Temporary Crown

Cement a temporary crown on tooth #8.

3. Placement of a Temporary Restoration

Place a temporary restoration on tooth #19 DO or tooth #30 MOD. The appropriate material should be smooth, have sealed margins, and recreate the occlusal anatomy and proximal contact areas of the natural tooth/teeth. Candidates must present a typodont with a Board-approved prepared tooth inserted for tooth #19 DO and/or tooth #30 MOD. If a candidate performs restorations on both tooth #19 and #30, the candidate will fail the procedure.

The RDA Practical Examination is scored based on a rating scale of 1 to 5 where a final value of 3 or higher is considered the passing level. The value of 3 is defined to represent minimally competent performance for all scoring criteria. The grading criteria are based upon margins, contacts, and occlusion with reasonable contours. The 5-point rating scales used to evaluate candidate performance are provided on the following pages.

TEMPORARY CROWN AND CEMENTATION: RATING SCALE AND SCORING CRITERIA

RATING		SCORE	MATERIAL QUALITY AND HANDLING	FABRICATION AND PLACEMENT	CEMENTATION
P A S S	HIGHLY SATISFACTORY <small>(ideal or minor errors)</small>	5	Crown has no fractures, cracks, or voids in acrylic. Acrylic and/or cement excess is removed.	Tooth contours, occlusal, and proximal surfaces appropriately restored. Proximal embrasures and contacts appropriate. Finish lines are smooth. Occlusion is correct. Acrylic line is appropriate.	Crown is cemented in place and is stable.
	SATISFACTORY <small>(slight errors)</small>	4	Crown exhibits slight roughness. Small amounts of acrylic and/or cement remain as excess.	Slight over or under contour. Morphological features slightly lacking. Weak contact. Finish line exhibits slight roughness. Occlusion slightly high. Acrylic finish line slightly extends past or short of margin.	
	MINIMALLY SATISFACTORY <small>(moderate errors)</small>	3	Crown exhibits moderate roughness. Moderate amounts of acrylic and/or cement remain as excess, but will dislodge with tooth brushing.	Moderate over or under contour. Morphological features moderately lacking. Minimal contact. Finish line exhibits moderate roughness. Occlusion moderately high but will not likely dislodge crown. Acrylic finish line moderately extends past or short of margin.	
F A I L	UNSATISFACTORY <small>(major errors)</small>	2	Crown has major surface roughness with fractures, cracks, or voids. Major amounts of excess acrylic and/or cement remain and will not likely be removed with normal tooth brushing.	Major absence of appropriate anatomical features. Morphological features inadequate. Improper contact. Traumatic occlusion. Major gaps in acrylic finish line.	
	VERY UNSATISFACTORY <small>(critical errors)</small>	1	Critical surface roughness with fractures, cracks, or voids. Critical amounts of excess acrylic and/or cement remain, subgingival or in embrasures.	Critical absence of appropriate anatomical features. Morphological features exhibit critical failure. Critical lack of proximal contact. Critical traumatic occlusion. Critical errors exhibited with the acrylic finish line.	
	GROSSLY UNSATISFACTORY <small>(gross errors)</small>	0	Gross surface roughness with fractures, cracks, or voids. Gross amounts of surface acrylic and/or cement remain subgingival or in embrasures.	Restoration fractured or displaced. Complete lack of proximal contact. Morphological features exhibit gross failure. Gross traumatic occlusion interfering with the other teeth to make contact. Gross errors exhibited with the acrylic finish line.	Crown is unstable or comes completely off of the preparation.

CLASS II TEMPORARY RESTORATION: RATING SCALE AND SCORING CRITERIA

RATING		SCORE	MATERIAL QUALITY AND HANDLING	MARGINS	OCCCLUSION	PROXIMAL CONTACT
P A S S	HIGHLY SATISFACTORY <small>(ideal or minor errors)</small>	5	Uniform smoothness of entire surface of restoration. No detectable surface irregularities. Material is properly set. Correct restorative material was selected for this procedure.	Occlusal surface and proximal box form are sealed appropriately.	Occlusion does not cause any interference.	Appropriate attempt to establish contact. Proximal box form anatomically correct, no excess O/B/L. No overhang present.
	SATISFACTORY <small>(slight errors)</small>	4	Restoration exhibits slight roughness with acceptable voids that will not affect the restoration.	Slightly open occlusal or box form margins. Will not cause dentin sensitivity.	Slight hyper occlusion that will not fracture the restoration.	Appropriate attempt to establish contact with slight errors. Proximal box form anatomically correct, slight excess O/B/L. Slight overhang present.
	MINIMALLY SATISFACTORY <small>(moderate errors)</small>	3	Restoration exhibits moderate roughness with voids that will not affect the restoration.	Moderately open occlusal or box form margins. Will not cause dentin sensitivity.	Moderate hyper occlusion that will not fracture the restoration.	Appropriate attempt to establish contact with moderate errors. Proximal box form anatomically correct, moderate excess O/B/L. Moderate overhang present.
F A I L	UNSATISFACTORY <small>(major errors)</small>	2	Major surface roughness with voids that are unacceptable and will affect the restoration.	Major open occlusal or box form margins. Will cause dentin sensitivity.	Traumatic major hyper occlusion that will fracture the restoration.	Inappropriate attempt to establish contact. Proximal box form anatomically incorrect, major excess O/B/L. Major overhang present.
	VERY UNSATISFACTORY <small>(critical errors)</small>	1	Critical surface roughness with voids that will affect the restoration.	Critical open occlusal or box form margins. Will cause dentin sensitivity.	Traumatic critical hyper occlusion that will fracture the restoration.	Inappropriate attempt to establish contact. Proximal box form anatomically incorrect, critical excess O/B/L. Critical overhang present.
	GROSSLY UNSATISFACTORY <small>(gross errors)</small>	0	Gross surface roughness with voids to the DEJ that will cause sensitivity. Material is not properly set. Incorrect restorative material selected for this procedure.	Grossly open occlusal or box form margins. Restoration does not meet standards and will not function as a temporary. May cause pulpal pathology.	Traumatic gross hyper occlusion that will fracture the restoration.	Inappropriate attempt to establish contact. Proximal box form anatomically incorrect, gross excess O/B/L. Gross overhang present.

GRADING

After performing the designated procedures of the examination, candidates will be escorted from the examination area into a designated secured area where they must wait while their exams are being graded. The candidates will not be allowed to leave the secure area to make phone calls, obtain snacks, etc.

The approximate time from the beginning of the exam to actual dismissal is **5 hours**. Two grading examiners will then independently evaluate and score each of the tested procedures without observing or discussing each other's evaluation. After the grading has been completed, the candidates will then return to the examination room to clean up and retrieve their kits.

For each procedure, candidates will be issued one of two grades: either 55% (fail) or 75% (pass). In order to pass, candidates are required to attain 75% on each of the tested procedures. If a passing score is not attained, candidates must file another application to take the entire exam again during the next open filing period and pay the required fees.

NOTICE OF RESULTS

Results will be mailed 6 weeks after the **LAST** day of testing. Candidates may not phone for exam results because results cannot be given over the phone.

OTHER

IMPROPER PERFORMANCE AND UNETHICAL CONDUCT

Candidates may be dismissed from or fail the examination due to improper performance or unethical conduct.

Examples of improper performance include, but are not limited to:

- Unprofessional, unkempt, or unclean appearance.
- Rude, abusive, or uncooperative behavior.
- Disregard for aseptic technique.
- Performance grossly inadequate in the validated judgment of the examiners.
- Failure to adhere to Dental Board of California guidelines.

Examples of unethical conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Using unauthorized equipment at any time during the exam.
- Dishonesty.
- Communicating written or electronic (computer) examination item information to other candidates or individuals.
- Any other behavior which compromises the standards of professional behavior.

LAW CHANGES AFFECTING RDA LICENSURE

Effective July 1, 2002, Business and Professions Code section 1752.1(d) requires all candidates who pass the RDA Practical and Written Examinations to provide copies of his or her yellow coronal polish card and radiation safety certificate to the Board in order to be issued an RDA license.

An RDA licensed on and after January 1, 2010, shall provide evidence of successful completion of a Board-approved course in the application of pit and fissure sealants prior to the first expiration of his or her license that requires the completion of continuing education as a condition of renewal. The license of an RDA who does not provide evidence of successful completion of that course shall not be renewed until evidence of course completion is provided.

****NOTE: RDA licenses will not automatically be issued once candidates pass both exams. The Board must first complete its criminal history investigation of each candidate.**