



DENTAL LICENSURE FAQ

WHAT DOES ASDA ADVOCATE FOR IN AN IDEAL LICENSURE EXAM?

ASDA advocates for an ideal licensure exam that does not use human subjects, is psychometrically valid and reliable, is reflective of the scope of current dental practice and is universally accepted. ASDA believes this should be demonstrated through a manikin-based kinesthetic assessment and a non-patient based Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE). This is in line with ASDA's L1 policy as adopted by the House of Delegates.

WHAT IS THE L-1 POLICY?

ASDA's L-1 policy was adopted by the 2023 House of Delegates and outlines ASDA's ideal licensure exam. The L-1 policy directs ASDA's advocacy efforts related to licensure reform and helps form what we ask for when approaching state dental boards and legislators.

HOW LONG HAS ASDA BEEN ADVOCATING FOR THIS, AND WHY WON'T ALL STATES ACCEPT IT?

ASDA has been advocating for licensure reform since the 1990's. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, ASDA members successfully advocated for non-patient based alternatives in states that had favorable climates for change, such as Colorado, California and Iowa. The pandemic catalyzed licensure reform, because the administration of live-patient examinations was not possible due to public health concerns. With non-patient based examinations available, states had alternative pathways to initial dental licensure to accept.

There are many reasons for why states don't accept non-patient based examinations. For many, the live-patient exam is simply what has been done for years. It's tradition. If a state's dental practice act requires a live-patient exam as a requirement for initial dental licensure, the state board must vote to remove that language. Depending on the climate in that state, this can be challenging. Furthermore, many state dental boards' members are examiners with regional testing agencies. This can cause conflicts of interest when determining which exams are accepted in a state. Lastly, states may be more willing to accept alternative pathways to dental licensure as more statistics become available about the reliability and validity of the exams.

DO ALL STATES ACCEPT THE SAME EXAM?

No. There is no single exam accepted in every state. Most states accept examinations administered by one of the three regional testing agencies: CDCA-WREB-CITA, CRDTS and SRTA. Some states also accept alternative exams (portfolio, manikin-based exams, DLOSCE, etc.) or credentials (PGY-1). Many states accept more than one of these pathways to initial licensure.

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHICH EXAM I NEED TO TAKE?

This will depend on the state you are practicing in. The Coalition on Modernizing Dental Licensure's Dental Licensure Map outlines the pathways to initial dental licensure that are accepted in each state. You can also contact the state dental board for more information.

HOW MANY STATES AND TERRITORIES HAVE PERMANENTLY ADOPTED A MANIKIN-BASED OPTION IN 2023?

Prior to 2020, only 10 states accepted non-patient based alternative exams. As of April 2023, nearly all states have moved to permanently accept many of the alternatives that they started accepting during the pandemic. At least 48 states (including DC) now permanently accept a manikin exam as an alternative to the live-patient exam. 6 states accept the DLOSCE, the Dental Licensure Objective Structured Clinical Examination.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED TO HELP ADVOCATE FOR LICENSURE REFORM?

ASDA encourages dental students to get involved in grassroots advocacy within their state. Interested students should familiarize themselves with ASDA's resources on licensure reform and assemble state-level coalitions of dental students, state dental associations and school administrations where applicable. Advocates should work with their district trustee and state licensure liaison to ensure a coordinated effort.

WHERE SHOULD I BE LOOKING FOR INFORMATION I NEED?

Licensure can be overwhelming. The links included in this document should help you find the information you need. National ASDA is always here for you, too. Please reach out to your district trustee or email advocacydept@ASDAnet.org with your licensure reform questions.

RESOURCES

- [DLOSCE Technical Report](#)
- [ASDA's White Paper](#)
- [ASDA Licensure Reform Talking Points](#)
- [TARP Report](#)
- [Coalition for Modernizing Dental Licensure website](#)
- [Map of states' licensure requirements](#)

ASDA WEBINARS

- [Dental Licensure Updates for 2021 & Beyond](#)
- [Dental Licensure Updates and How To Take Grassroots Action](#)
- [Licensure Reform Strategy and the Coalition for Modernizing Dental Licensure](#)
- [Action-oriented licensure reform](#)