

Overview of the National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE)

Last updated: January 5, 2026



Federation of
Dental Hygiene
Regulators of Canada

Fédération des organismes
de réglementation d'hygiène
dentaire du Canada

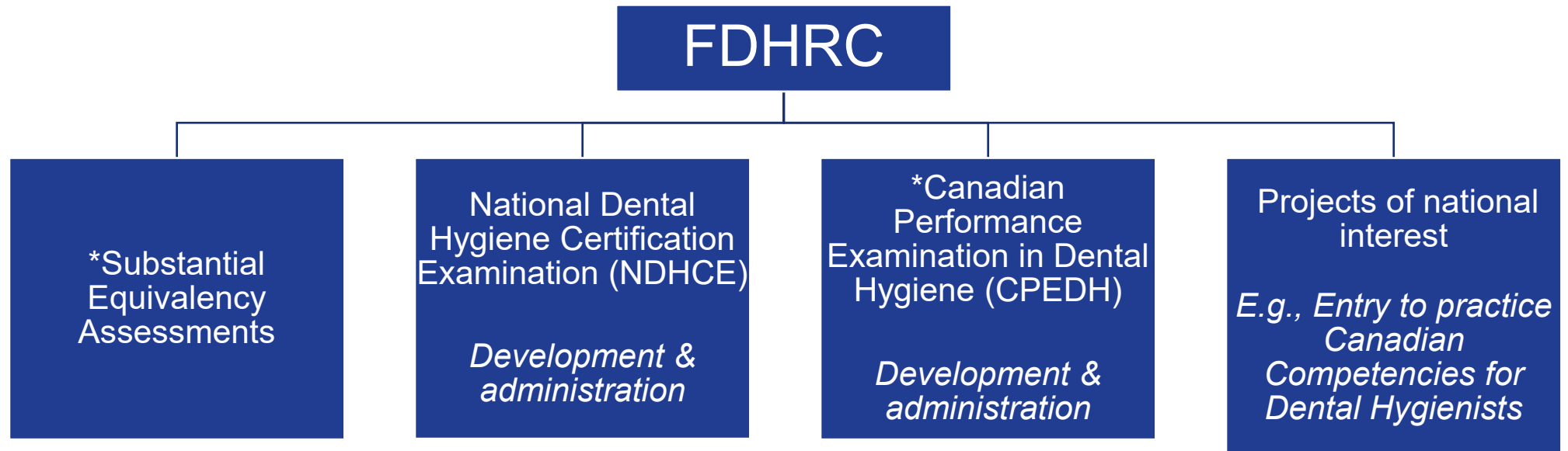
The National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE)

- Assists regulators in protecting the public by assessing minimal competence of entry-level practitioners;
- Evaluates knowledge/skill/judgment on all published Canadian national DH competencies;
- Required for licensing/registration in BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, NB, NS, PE, NL, and territories;
- Facilitates portability between provinces.



About the FDHRC

- In 2022, the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) merged with the Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada (FDHRC) and the new organization operates as the FDHRC.



*Required for graduates of non-accredited dental hygiene programs

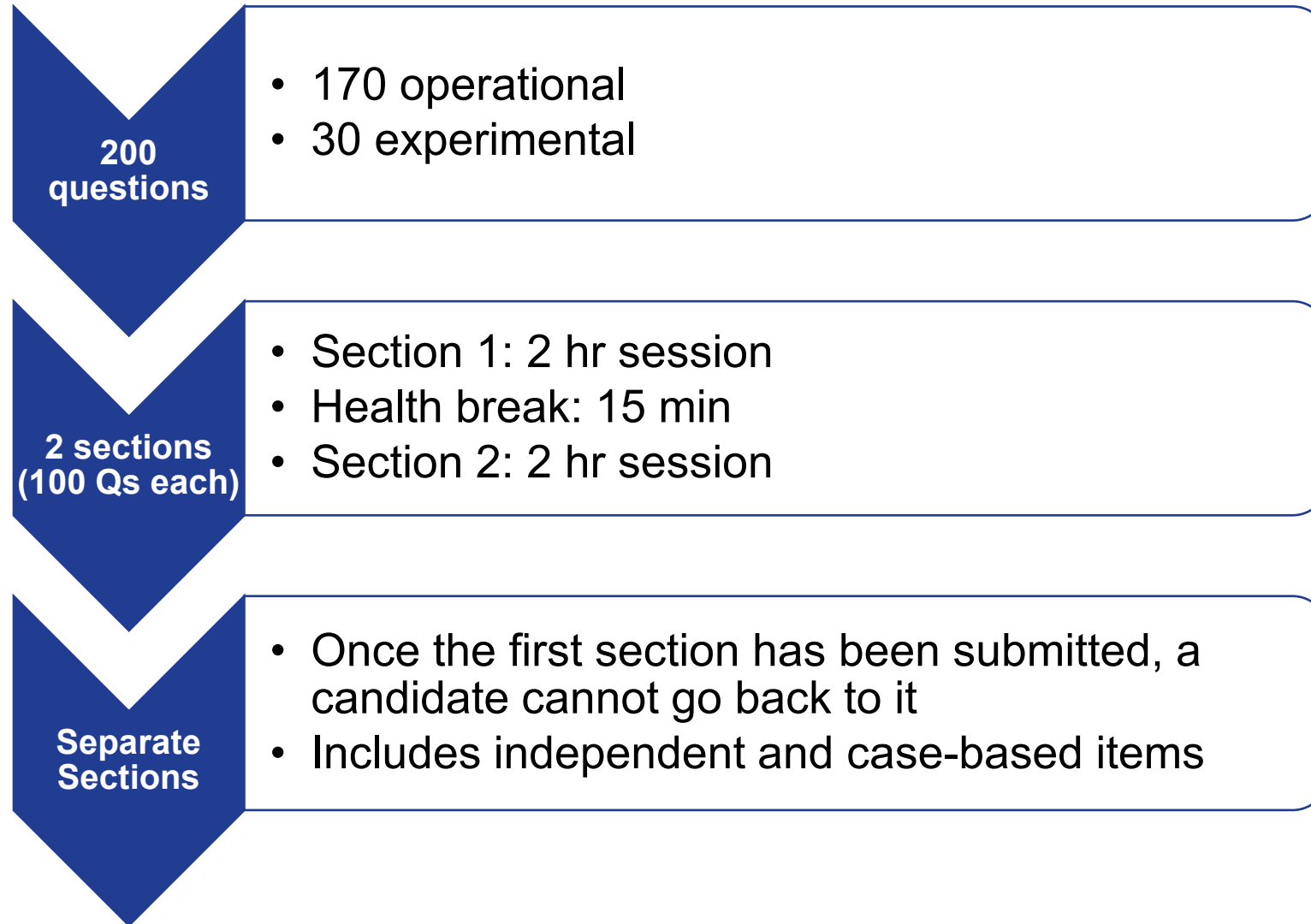


National Dental Hygiene Certification Examination (NDHCE)

- As of May 2026, the NDHCE reflects the 2021 [Entry-to-Practice Canadian Competencies for Dental Hygienists](#).
- The [NDHCE Blueprint](#) was updated in May 2025 for use on the May 2026 exam onwards.
- The FDHRC maintains a registry of successful candidates.



| NDHCE Format



| NDHCE Format

Domains of Expertise

Domains of Expertise	Percentage of Scored Items
A Professionalism	5-11%
B Evidence-informed Practice	2-8%
C Communication	2-8%
D Collaboration	11-17%
E Practice Management	5-11%
F Prevention, Education, and Health Promotion	17-23%
G Clinical Therapy	37-43%
TOTAL	100%

Cognitive Levels

Cognitive Levels	Percentage of Scored Items
Knowledge	10-20%
Application	55-65%
Critical Thinking	20-30%



| NDHCE Format: Contextual Variables

The NDHCE represents the demographic and cultural realities of the Canadian population that requires dental hygiene care in a variety of practice settings.

- Exam items may specify a client age or gender.
- Cultural issues are integrated within the exam without introducing cultural stereotypes or biases.
- Practice setting is only specified when required.

Some items include images, such as radiographs and clinical photos



NDHCE Historical Results

NDHCE Results	2021		2022		2023		2024*		2025	
	#	% Pass	#	% Pass	#	% Pass	#	% Pass	#	% Pass
JAN	265	86%	410	80%	457	84.5%	496	86.7%	668	84.9%
MAY	688	88%	826	87.8%	755	89.3%	914	88.5%	976	90.4%
SEPT	598	84%	442	84.6%	349	78.5%	527	83.1%	521	83.7%
TOTAL	1551	86%	1678	84.9%	1561	85.5%	1937	86.6%	2165	87.1%

*From January 2024 onwards virtual proctoring was no longer offered. All sittings held via testing centres.



| NDHCE Development

- Item Writing with Pan Canadian Subject Matter Experts
- Item Critiquing and Appraising
- Item Group Review and Confirmation of Readiness for Testing as Experimental
- Item Translation by an official French translator
- Item Translation Validation Meeting
- Item Testing as an Experimental Question
- Item Scoring and Item Analysis (Statistics)
- Item Revisions and Retesting as Experimental OR Item Banking as Operational Question



| NDHCE Sitings



The NDHCE sittings are typically held three times per year over a period of two days



Examination dates and deadlines can be found [here](#)



Until further notice, NDHCE will be in testing centres only



| How to Apply for the NDHCE

- To know when registration opens, follow the FDHRC on Facebook, Instagram and/or LinkedIn
- Apply online once registration opens
 - Complete the registration form
 - Include a passport-style photo (i.e. do not submit a filtered photo, a photo of your ID, or a graduation photo)
 - Pay the fees
- Request for test accommodations **MUST** be submitted in full by the registration deadline. Requests received after the deadline may not be able to be accommodated.
- Pay attention to the application deadline – under no circumstances will applications be accepted after the deadline



| Test Accommodations

- Accommodation refers to any modification of the testing conditions on the NDHCE that is necessary under human rights laws to allow a candidate to overcome a barrier to equitable participation on the examination that is caused by personal circumstances
- [NDHCE policy](#) has been revised based on best practice and legal advice
- Completed test accommodations documentation **MUST** be correctly filled out and submitted **by the registration deadline** – don't wait until the last minute.
- Please ensure that what you are requesting for accommodations aligns with what is listed in the supporting documentation.
- If you have questions about accommodations before registration opens, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- Note – if you haven't been receiving approved, documented accommodations throughout your education (including dental hygiene school), you may not qualify for accommodations. In addition, FDHRC policy may be different from that of your educational institution.



What happens after I submit my Examination application?

- The FDHRC staff will:
 - review the application to confirm eligibility;
 - process the payment.
- After the registration period closes, the FDHRC will contact the program director/coordinator from your graduating institution to confirm your eligibility.
- You will then receive an email from the FDHRC and our exam administration vendor with next steps.
- **YOU MUST MONITOR YOUR EMAIL INBOX.** The FDHRC primarily uses email to correspond with candidates. Please add the email address, info@fdhrc.ca, to your list of safe emails in your email system to avoid important communications going into your junk folder.
- If you have not yet graduated, your program director/coordinator must advise the FDHRC before the exam to revoke you if you will not meet the eligibility requirements.



| Exam Modality

- Until further notice, the FDHRC will be administered at writing centres **only**. Virtual proctoring **will not** be available.
- On the application form, you will be asked for your preferred writing centre location. Seats will be filled on a first-come-first-serve basis based on availability. No changes to writing centre location requests will be accepted after the registration deadline.
- More information on writing centres can be found [here](#).



| Prepare for the NDHCE

- Perform a Strengths and Weaknesses analysis of your preparedness to write the examination.
- Review the [NDHCE Preparation page](#) as well as the [Blueprint](#).
- Self-assess your strengths and weaknesses against the national dental hygiene competencies.
- Review the sample questions, approved references and online Lexicon, all available on the [NDHCE Preparation page](#).



Prepare for the NDHCE: Preparatory Tests

- FDHRC offers 4 Preparatory Tests
- They are single use only and must be purchased by each candidate. Not valid for use by a group.
- Do not copy, photograph or disseminate prep test questions and responses online. This is a violation of copyright law.
- Apply to do at least 1 of 4 online [Preparatory Tests](#) (\$37.50 + tax/test/75Q).
 - The Preparatory Tests will be available as of March 1, 2026 to reflect the updated 2026 Blueprint.
 - While there are other NDHCE preparation courses offered, these are not endorsed by the FDHRC. The FDHRC assumes no responsibility for assuring that these programs courses will prepare candidates for a successful examination. Use them at your own risk.
- Reassess your preparedness to write the NDHCE.



| How is the NDHCE graded?

- A scaled score is a mathematical transformation of a candidate's raw score (i.e., total number of items correct) on an exam to a common scale. This scaled score allows for valid comparisons of results across exam administrations even if there are differences in the difficulty of the exam taken.
- For the NDHCE, the scaled score range is from 200 to 800 with a typical passing score of around 550.



| After the Exam

- Scoring takes between 4 to 6 weeks.
- Unofficial Results will be posted on the FDHRC website as soon as they are available no sooner than 4 weeks post exam.
- Your result will be listed beside your ID number.
- Do not lose your ID number – staff will not provide it to you over the phone.
- Official Results are sent within 6 weeks of exam date.
- If you experience a significant administrative, technological, exam delivery or other procedural irregularity during the exam that had or was likely to have had a material impact on your performance, you may submit a request for [Reconsideration](#).



| When the Results are Ready

If you passed the exam:

- You will receive a “pass” result letter in the mail, along with your certificate
- You must then contact the regulatory authority of the jurisdiction you wish to be registered in to complete your registration/licensure process

If you were not successful:

- A letter and a personalized Performance Profile will be uploaded to your candidate account on the FDHRC website. You will be notified **by email when they are uploaded**
- You have up to 3 attempts at the NDHCE
- Information on Rescoring, Reconsiderations and Appeals can be found [here](#)



What happens if my result is labeled “Under Review”?

- Examination incidents are investigated by the FDHRC and according to internal security policies.
- The FDHRC reserves the right to withhold examination results that are under review due to irregular circumstances – these will be labelled as “Under Review.” In accordance with NDHCE policies, the candidate may or may not be made aware that their exam is under investigation.



| Exam Security

- Review permitted and prohibited items.
- Read the Candidate Statement of Understanding carefully before beginning the exam.
- Remember that this is a professional exam – by taking the exam, you agree to keep information confidential. The NDHCE is protected by Canadian copyright law. This means, no talking about or sharing exam content before, during and after the exam.



| Exam Security (cont'd)

- The FDHRC reserves the right to nullify, invalidate, cancel and/or withhold any examination results when, in the sole opinion of FDHRC, a testing irregularity occurs; cheating has occurred; there is an apparent discrepancy in, or falsification of, a candidate's identification; a candidate engages in misconduct or plagiarism; when aberrancies in performance are detected for which there is no reasonable and satisfactory explanation; or the results are believed to be invalid for any reason.
- The FDHRC reserves the right to impose further consequences, such as but not limited to a cooling off period prior to reattempting the exam, banning you from taking further FDHRC examinations, reporting the incident to Canadian dental hygiene regulatory bodies, legal action, etc.



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Questions?

