



Mid-Atlantic Advocacy Academy ASDA Districts 2, 3, and 4



Licensure Reform

The American Dental Association along with the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) and Student Professionalism and Ethics Association in Dentistry (SPEA) are committed to reforming the current dental licensure system. As it stands, current licensure examinations are not valid, reliable, or ethical. On top of that, the tests are not universally accepted and evaluate only a small range of clinical skills.

In terms of reliability and validity, there is no positive correlation between a student's success while in dental school and the outcome of their licensure exam. Twenty percent of candidates on average are misclassified as having "failed" and must retake the exam. The test also does not produce consistent results. It is impossible to standardize live patient exams between factors such as anatomical variations and systemic health discrepancies.

Ethically speaking, not all patients receive follow-up care. Many are ultimately left to deal with permanent substandard care and irreversible tooth damage as a result of a student who failed the test. Twenty-four percent of patients do not have follow-up care despite it being necessary.

In 2016, the American Student Dental Association adopted a policy to combat licensure reform, formally known as ASDA's L-1 Policy. In this policy, ASDA published what it believes are the components of an ideal licensure exam. These components include:

- Does not use human subjects in a live clinical testing scenario
- Is psychometrically valid and reliable in its assessment
- Is reflective of the scope of current dental practice
- Is universally accepted

ASDA is not advocating for universal acceptance of all clinical exams, but instead a new exam that is valid, reliable, ethical, and universally accepted. Through advocacy we have the power to do away with current licensure in order to maintain the integrity of dentistry and look out for the welfare of ourselves and our patients.