

Licensure Reform

District 4 ASDA

Who is involved?

The American Student Dental Association (ASDA), American Dental Association (ADA), American Dental Education Association (ADEA), and the Student Professionalism and Ethics Association (SPEA) have denounced the current licensure process.

Why advocate for reform?

Students are required to take this examination involving the performance of irreversible procedures on human subjects as a way to measure competency. The current licensure exam is not valid, reliable, or ethical. It does not put the best interests of the patients first and unnecessarily places candidates in morally compromising situations. No other healthcare professionals are required to take a clinical licensure exam on human subjects. Change must occur to protect the health and well-being of both patients and students.

What is the licensure reform timeline?

Licensure Reform is an ongoing process, with each state at a different point in the process. In 2016, ASDA adopted the L-1 policy to further licensure reform efforts and released its white paper on the use of human subjects in clinical licensure examinations. This paper details the reliability, validity, and ethics of the current exam. In 2018, the Coalition for Modernizing Dental Licensure was formed between ASDA, ADA, and ADEA. In July 2019, Connecticut became the eighth state to offer dental licensure without human subjects.

Where is more information?

ASDA's White Paper as well as the ADA, ASDA, and Coalition for Modernizing Dental Licensure websites

What does an ideal exam look like?

ASDA's ideal licensure exam is:

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

ASDA is not advocating for current licensure exams to be universally accepted, and is instead advocating for a new exam altogether.

Is there an alternative to the current exam?

The Dental Licensure Objective Structured Examination (DLOSCE), an alternative to the current licensure exam, is being developed currently. This exam is designed to be high stakes, standardized, and will allow students to use clinical skills to complete tasks involving dental problem solving. The DLOSCE pilot is planned to begin in Spring 2020 at the University of Washington and is expected to be available in other states for the class of 2021.

What are some fast facts?

- There is no positive correlation between success in dental school and licensure exam outcomes.
- 24% of patients do not receive the necessary follow-up care after a failed licensure exam.
- An ADEA survey found that 82% of deans do not believe the licensure exams are valid for clinical decision making.
- The current licensure exam system misclassifies at least 20% of candidates who should have passed but must retake the test, leaving an unknown number who pass by luck and should not have a license.