

# **Candidates' Guide to the American Board of Dental Public Health Examination**

## **Overview of the American Board of Dental Public Health (ABDPH)**

The American Board of Dental Public Health was incorporated under the laws of the State of Colorado in July 1950. The Board was organized in accordance with the Requirements for Approval of Examining Boards in Dental Specialties of the American Dental Association's Council on Dental Education and Licensure. Dental Public Health was recognized formally as a dental specialty by the American Dental Association in October 1950. Subsequently, the American Board of Dental Public Health was officially designated as the national examining and certifying agency for the specialty by the House of Delegates of the American Dental Association in October 1951 and was reviewed in 1986, 2001, 2011, and 2021. The Board is a not-for-profit corporation. The Directors of the Board receive neither salaries nor compensation for services to the Board.

## **Mission Statement of the ABDPH**

The mission of the American Board of Dental Public Health is to protect and improve the public's health through the study and creation of standards for the practice of dental public health in all its aspects and relationships, and to grant and issue certificates of special knowledge and ability in dental public health to dentists.

## **Purposes of the ABDPH**

As defined in its Articles of Incorporation, the principal purposes of the Board are:

1. To protect and improve the public's health by the study and creation of standards for the practice of dental public health in all of its aspects and relationships;
2. To grant and issue dental public health certificates to dentists who have successfully completed the prescribed training and experience requisite for acquiring the special knowledge and ability needed for the practice of dental public health; and
3. To ensure continuing competency of Diplomates.

## **The Specialty of Dental Public Health – Definition**

Dental public health is the science and art of preventing and controlling dental diseases and promoting dental health through organized community efforts. It is that form of dental practice that serves the community as a patient rather than the individual. It is concerned with the dental health education of the public, with applied dental research, and with the administration of group dental care programs, as well as the prevention and control of dental diseases on a community basis. Implicit in this definition is the requirement that the specialist have broad knowledge and skills in public health administration, research methodology, the prevention and control of oral diseases, and the delivery and financing of oral health care.

## Eligibility

Requirements for eligibility to be examined by the ABDPH are as follows:

1. Moral and ethical standing in the dental profession satisfactory to the Board.
2. Graduation from a school of dentistry accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation or from a Canadian dental school with accreditation recognized by the Commission.
3. Graduates of schools from other countries must possess equivalent educational qualifications.
4. Advanced education that shall include successful completion of at least two years of advanced educational preparation for the practice of dental public health (See section on Educational Preparation).

## Educational Preparation

The primary reason for the educational requirements is to ensure that individuals are prepared for an effective career in all facets of dental public health practice. Another important reason is to enable candidates to successfully complete an examination that measures competences within the specialty.

The basic guide governing the Board's evaluation of a candidate's preparation is the requirement of the Council on Dental Education and Licensure of the American Dental Association that a candidate successfully complete two years of an advanced accredited program specifically designed for the study of dental public health. The requirement of two years of advanced preparation can be satisfied by:

1. At least **two** academic years of study in a program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation that leads to a master-level or doctoral-level graduate degree in dental public health specifically, the course content of which shall include biostatistics, epidemiology, health care policy and management, environmental health and behavioral science.
2. Completion of a graduate-level degree in public health, the course content of which shall include biostatistics, epidemiology, health care policy and management, environmental health, and behavioral sciences. The graduate degree is typically the Master of Public Health (MPH), but related degrees are acceptable, including doctoral-level degrees, if they meet the content requirements. Graduate study programs in the United States must be accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education at the time the degree is conferred. Graduate degrees from outside the United States are also acceptable, providing that they are equivalent to U.S. degrees and coursework meets the content requirements. Following attainment of a graduate degree in public health, the candidate must successfully complete a residency in dental public health accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

The Board will grant credit toward satisfying the educational requirements for applicants whose

degree programs did not include course work in biostatistics, epidemiology, health care policy and management, environmental health, or behavioral sciences after the candidate submits documentation of satisfactory completion of one graduate level academic course work in each of these five core areas. Such coursework must be completed prior to successful completion of the Commission on Dental Accreditation-accredited dental public health residency training program.

Dental Public Health Residency Programs are approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. They must be at least 12 months full-time or the equivalent in part-time. Part-time residencies may not exceed twice the length of a full-time residency. The applicant's residency experience should include planned instruction, observation and active participation in a comprehensive, organized public health program that includes training on all aspects of dental public health.

### **The ABDPH Examination Process**

The American Board of Dental Public Health examination for certification as a Diplomate is a two-step process designed to be comprehensive and fair to all candidates. The two steps to the certification process are described separately, below.

#### **Step 1 – Qualifying Examination**

This is a comprehensive written examination that includes Part A: multiple choice questions with five response options (80%), and Part B: short-answer questions (20%). The Qualifying Examination is designed to test the candidate's knowledge of the theory and practice of Dental Public Health. Questions are based upon the core knowledge areas required in Dental Public Health educational programs and the ten Dental Public Health Competencies. The score for Part A is based upon the number of correct answers; thus, candidates should choose what they consider to be the most correct answer for each question (Do not leave questions unanswered). Examinees are allowed to bring into the examination room ONLY a pen, No. 2 pencil(s), pencil eraser, time piece, and a pocket calculator. There will be some simple calculations on a few of the questions and a calculator, although not absolutely necessary, would be helpful. Cell or smart phones, iPads, or tablets are NOT allowed. A proctor will be available during the four hours allocated for the qualifying examination. The proctor will not be able to answer issues of content but will bring to the attention of the Board if there is a missing page or a typographical error. In the event of situations in which in-person testing is not possible such as during a pandemic, the Qualifying Examination may be administered electronically by using a commercial testing service. In such situations, ABDPH will inform candidates of the test-taking details and technical requirements.

#### ***Additional Information***

**The Qualifying Examination is a Pass/Fail examination**, and is distinct from the Certification Examination; the score on the Qualifying Examination is not used to compute the score for the Certification Examination. **Candidates must pass the Qualifying Examination before they can attempt the Certification Examination.** Candidates may apply for the Qualifying Examination near the end of their specialty training program, provided that they have completed at least 75% of the program at the time of the examination. Candidates must achieve a score of at least 70% on the Qualifying Examination to pass and to be able to apply for the Certification Examination.

If a failing score is received on the Qualifying Examination, the candidate can retake the examination

the following year upon payment of the appropriate fee, up to two times (i.e., a total of 3 attempts). Upon passing the Qualifying Examination, candidates have up to five years to complete the Certification Examination; if they do not do so, they will need to repeat the Qualifying Examination.

### **Step 2. Certification Examination**

The certification examination is a 3-part examination that can be taken only after completion of the candidate’s educational program and only after successful completion (passing) of the Qualifying Examination. Candidates may not take the Certification Examination during the same year as the Qualifying Examination – the Qualifying Examination must be successfully completed prior to applying to take the Certification Examination.

The three sections of the Certification Examination are: (1) the written Project Reports; (2) the oral examination on the Project Reports; and (3) the Assigned Problem.

<b>ABDPH Certification Examination Section</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Section 1. Written Project Reports</b>	30%
<b>Section 2. Oral Examination 1 – Project Reports</b>	30%
<b>Section 3. Oral Examination 2 – Assigned Problem</b>	40%
<b>Overall Score</b>	100%

Each section of the examination is scored separately and individually by each examiner. A candidate receives a final score, which is the weighted average of all sections using the percentages described above. A passing score requires BOTH an overall average score of 70 AND a score of 60 or above on each of the three sections.

The Board evaluates each component of the examination annually, and after completion of the examination, each candidate has an opportunity to comment about the examination and to make suggestions for future improvement.

Preparation for the examination should be thorough.

One reference to serve as the basis for review is: “New Competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dental Public Health”, *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* Volume 76, Supplement 1, 2016.

Candidates may request from the Executive Director the results of their separate section and total examination scores. Those candidates who would like to receive their examination score must submit a written request to the ABDPH Executive Director within 60 days of completing the examination.

For **Candidates who previously passed the ABDPH Written Examination in 2020 or earlier**, the Board will honor that result, allow such candidates to challenge the Certification Examination, and will apply the scoring scheme that had been used previously. That is, for those candidates, the score from the Written Examination will be used to compute the total score for the examination.

## **Description of each Certification Examination Section:**

**Section 1: Written Project Reports.** This is the Board’s evaluation of two project reports. The reports must be received by October 1 of the year prior to the one in which the applicant will be examined. One PDF file for each report must be submitted to the ABDPH Executive Director: [executive.director@abdph.org](mailto:executive.director@abdph.org)

Name the Project Reports as: ABDPH-20XX (Year of Exam)-PR1 (or PR2)-YYY (YYY is the candidate number assigned by ABDPH. For example: ABDPH-2099-PR1-007 and ABDPH-2099-PR2-008). The Executive Director will review the reports for compliance with the guidelines, so **it is important that candidates fully comply with the instructions** – please see “Instructions for Preparing Project Reports” below. Board Directors will score the reports and send the scores to the Executive Director. Candidates will be informed as to whether they have received a failing score for one or both reports no later than February 1. A failing score is less than 60% on either of the two reports. Candidates will not be informed, however, if they have received a passing score.

Failure of Section I: Written Project Reports constitutes a failure of the Certifying Examination. A candidate who fails the Certifying Examination may reapply for the examination for a fee after submitting revised or new project reports.

**Scoring of Project Reports.** The two Project Reports are considered as one of the three sections of the Certifying Examination. The scores on the two projects count for 30% of the final score. Candidates will be scored based on the information provided showing logical processes and scientific rigor, from the initial question to the conclusions of the project.

Prior to grading, each Project Report is evaluated according to the following criteria to determine if it is eligible for grading:

1. Is the project primarily the work of the candidate?
2. Is the project primarily concerned with Dental Public Health, as defined on page 1 of this document?
3. Does the project report’s format conform to the sections’ guidelines specified in the “Instructions for Preparing Project Reports”? (see below)

If the Board approves the Project Reports after applying these three criteria, then each project is scored anonymously based on each of the following criteria. (If a Project Report does not meet these three criteria, the candidate will fail the Certification Examination and will need to reapply in a future year).

- A. Problem identification
- B. Background and review of the current pertinent literature
- C. Objective(s) and Hypothesis(es)
- D. General description of methods and procedures

- E. Results
- F. Discussion
- G. Strengths and limitations of the study
- H. Conclusions and public health recommendations
- I. Clarity of writing and overall style of the report

**Section 2: Oral Examination on Project Reports.** This section is the Board's evaluation of the candidate's ability to discuss, defend, and explain various aspects of the two written project reports previously submitted. For each project, the candidate will be asked to give a five-minute oral overview of the project, followed by 30 minutes of oral questions from the examiners. Candidates will be expected to answer questions to: (a) display their familiarity with all aspects of their project, including research, epidemiological, and administrative methodology; (b) justify selection of the project protocol and consideration of alternatives; and (c) display general knowledge of topics related to dental public health.

**Section 3: Oral Examination on Assigned Problem.** This section is a test of candidates' ability to discuss their analysis and possible solutions to a hypothetical dental public health problem. This section of the examination is designed to: (a) evaluate the candidate's ability to understand the problem in relation to the information provided; (b) present rational solutions and alternatives based on the available information; (c) assess the candidate's rationale for selecting the choice of approaches; and (d) evaluate the reasonableness and practicality of the choice of solution in regard to timing, resources, public and professional acceptance, legal and ethical considerations, cost-effectiveness, and justification of the resources required. Although there is no single correct solution, any proposed solution must be reasonable, practical, and realistic. Each candidate's approach is expected to be the candidate's own work. A written description and supplementary information on the Assigned Problem will be given to each candidate on the first day of the exam and candidates will have approximately 24 hours to prepare their response. An oral examination of the candidate's solution to the problem will be conducted the following day. Candidates will be given 20 minutes to present their solutions, followed by 40 minutes for questions from the examiners. Candidates may bring written notes to this examination for reference while making their presentation. The Assigned Problem and handouts must be returned after the presentation.

PowerPoint presentations on an LCD projector are NOT allowed due to time constraints; however, the candidate MUST provide a handout to each examiner that outlines or summarizes the components of their solution. There is no specific requirement for the format of the handout. A PowerPoint handout is acceptable.

If a candidate fails a single section of the Certification Examination, the candidate is given the opportunity to retake only that section of the examination at a regularly scheduled examination, with payment of the appropriate fee. If the candidate is unsuccessful on two or more sections of the examination or if an overall average score of 70% is not achieved even though no individual score is below 60%, it would be at the discretion of the Board as to what the requirements would be for

reexamination. If the Board allows the candidate to retake two or more sections of the examination, the fee is the same as for the full exam.

## **Instructions for Preparing Project Reports**

### ***Project Report Guidelines***

Project Reports should be clearly numbered 1 and 2. The projects **must** be completed at the time of submission. Terms such as “results will be presented at the oral examination” or “these are preliminary results” are NOT acceptable. Those projects will receive a failing score. Each report should summarize a **dental public health** project originated and completed by the Candidate, or a project on which the candidate made a major contribution to its planning, implementation, and interpretation. Protocols, grant applications, reviews of the literature, white papers, site visit reports, and preparations for a conference are **not** acceptable project reports. Term papers, dissertations or published papers may serve as a basis for project reports but need to be re-written to meet the required format. A systematic review of the literature may be a suitable project report only if a quantitative meta-analysis is included in the methodology. Literature reviews, scoping reviews and white papers will not be accepted.

The project reports should demonstrate a depth of experience in dental public health and must represent a separate project (not two reports from one project), with the two projects having distinct methodology and data sources. The projects must be significant in scope and represent an extensive effort. At least one project must demonstrate the analytical or statistical skills of the candidate.

Types of acceptable Project Reports include: (1) administrative program planning and implementation; (2) epidemiologic studies; (3) health services research studies; (4) clinical trials; (5) oral health promotion and disease prevention projects; and (6) other research projects related to dental public health. Secondary analyses of collected data may be accepted. However, if two secondary analyses are submitted, the project reports must clearly demonstrate knowledge of two bodies of distinct literature, use different datasets, have different questions that are being addressed, use different analytical skills, demonstrate different competencies and make contributions to divergent policy areas.

The chosen projects must have been completed within 10 years of the applicant’s examination and the Project Report must represent current knowledge. If a candidate postpones an examination after Project Reports have been graded, and changes have occurred that affect the projects or the relevant scientific literature, the ABDPH may ask the candidate to resubmit Project Report(s). The ABDPH does not provide advice on the suitability of specific studies (planned or conducted) as Project Reports. The Board encourages candidates to discuss the two project reports with their supervisors before and after the projects are completed.

### ***Project Report Format***

Project Reports should be no more than 25 double-spaced, numbered, typewritten pages, including the cover page, table of contents, abstract, main body of the report, references, tables and figures, and appendices if needed. The body of the report should be no more than 15 pages in Times New Roman 12-point font. All margins should be one inch on standard 8.5 x 11 inch paper. Number and

label each section as recommended in the guidelines (below). Do not alter the order of the sections. Do not leave extra line spaces between sections. The ABDPH strongly recommends having the final manuscript reviewed by your Program Director or another person with previous experience in editing scientific publications. The submitted report should be of the same quality as a manuscript one would submit for publication in the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry (JPHD)*. See *JPHD's* Instructions for Contributors at:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/page/journal/17527325/homepage/forauthors.html>

After completing each of these steps, candidates must create a PDF file for **each** project report and submit both project reports to the ABDPH Executive Director at [executive.director@abdph.org](mailto:executive.director@abdph.org)

Project Reports **must** conform to the following structure and guidelines:

1. Title of the Project. A cover sheet bearing the title should be the first page of the report. Please do not place your name on it. ABDPH will assign a three digit code number to each report. Name the Project Reports as: ABDPH-20X1X (Year of Exam)-PR1 (or PR2)- YYYY: (YYYY is the candidate number assigned by ABDPH) followed by the Title of the Project. [Example: ABDPH-2099-PR1-007: Title of the Project and ABDPH-2099-PR2-008: Title of the Project).
2. Table of contents.
3. Abstract. Structured abstract with clearly labeled Objectives, Methods, Results, and Conclusions/Recommendations and no longer than 250 words.
4. Candidate's role. Describe in one or two paragraphs with sufficient level of detail the candidate's specific role as originator or major contributor to the project. Explain your participation in the planning, implementation, interpretation and completion of the project. Also include information on any collaborations pertinent to the project, and how the candidate developed these collaborations and worked with collaborators.
5. Problem identification. Please describe the public health problem addressed in the project and described in your project report.
6. Background and review of the current pertinent literature. Candidates should not only describe the studies supporting hypothesis or objectives, but also should provide some assessment of the quality of the works cited.
7. Objective(s) and hypothesis(es). Describe study/project objective(s) and/or the specific hypothesis(es).
8. Methods and procedures. Provide sufficient information to demonstrate the logical process and scientific rigor of the approach to test the hypothesis or achieve the objectives. Include analytic methods with sufficient level of detail. Reports must include information on how social determinants of health were considered and incorporated into the project. Reports must also address consideration of human subjects, including consent and assent if applicable. Discuss Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. If the study involves human subjects and was exempt from IRB



approval, explain why and who granted that exception. (For example, if a project was administrative and not research, IRB approval would not be necessary.)

9. Results. Aside from text, include self-standing information in tables and graphs.
10. Discussion. This section should be comprehensive and clear. Did the project achieve its objectives? Did the project support or reject the hypotheses? How do results agree or disagree with similar studies? Provide potential reasons for lack of agreement with other studies' findings. Highlight how results contribute to filling knowledge gaps, resolving controversies, or providing new knowledge on the topic. What are the public health implications of the results?
11. Strengths and limitations of the study. Include what would be done differently if the project was to be repeated.
12. Conclusions and public health recommendations. Emphasize the new and important aspects of the study and conclusions that follow from them, particularly as these relate to public health policy.
13. References. Please be sure that all references in the text are included in the list of references and that references are not repeated. Check special formatting requirements below.
14. Tables and Figures.
15. Appendices. Use this section to provide any documentation in support of the methods. Please do not include figures and tables here. Keep in mind that these pages are included within the total number of pages allowed.
16. Clarity of Writing and Overall Style of the Report. Consider syntax, grammar, presentation, formatting, and adherence to the writing guidelines.

**Note:** Candidates are advised to follow the preceding guidelines exactly before submitting them. The ABDPH evaluates the project reports in the format in which they are received. Scores will be reduced if the requested information is missing or misplaced.

**References.** The candidate must verify cited references against the original publications. Identify references in text, tables, and legends by Arabic numerals in parentheses; number them consecutively in the order in which they are first mentioned in the text. Avoid using abstracts as references. Abstracts not published in the periodical literature (e.g., printed only in an annual meeting program) may be cited only as written communications in parentheses in the text. "Unpublished observations" and "personal communications" may not be used as references, although references to written communications may be inserted in parentheses within the text. For papers accepted but not yet published, identify the journal and add "In press." Information from manuscripts submitted, but not yet accepted, should be cited in the text as "unpublished observations" (in parentheses). Candidates should use the Vancouver style as described in the *Journal of Public Health Dentistry* Instructions for Contributors.

**Tables and Figures.** Tables and figures should be numbered in the order in which they appear in the presentation of results, and included at the end of the report (as described above). Each Table and figure should have a descriptive title indicating what is in the table, the population represented, place of the study, and time. Use footnotes in each table to clarify acronyms or groups in the table that are statistically compared. Use Arabic numbers as call characters for each footnote. A large table can be broken into two components with clarification on the title that the second part is a continuation of a previous table.

Graphs are meant to be easy to understand and clarify an item that is not visually clear in the tables. Make graphs of appropriate size and clearly labeled. Do not break a figure across separate pages. Keep in mind that tables and graphs are “self-standing”, meaning that a reader should be able to understand the table without referring to the written text. Include all figures and tables after the references in the Project Reports. Do **not** insert the tables and figures in the text. Do not collate all tables and figures in an Appendix.

### **Reexamination**

Candidates who fail any part of the Certification Examination can apply to be reexamined. The reexamination fees in place at the time of reexamination will apply. Below is other relevant information:

1. Candidates who fail any part of the Certification Examination shall be accepted for one reexamination by the Board.
2. If the candidate is unsuccessful on one section of the Certification Examination, that section of the examination will need to be retaken.
3. Applications to re-take a section of the Certification Examination must meet the same deadline as new applications for the examination.
4. If the candidate is unsuccessful on two or more sections of the Certification Examination, it is at the discretion of the Board as to the requirements for reexamination. At a minimum, the sections failed would need to be retaken.
5. If an overall average score of 70% is not achieved, it is considered a failure. It is at the discretion of the Board as to what the requirements would be for reexamination.

Candidates who fail to pass the reexamination shall be required to submit satisfactory evidence to the Board of additional formal training or supervised field experience in Dental Public Health before they can be readmitted for the Certification Examination.

### **Applications**

There are separate applications for the Qualifying and Certification examinations, with different application deadlines.

### **Qualifying Examination**

Applications for the Qualifying Examination must be received by December 1 of the year prior to that in which the applicant wishes to take the examination. The application must be signed by the applicant and submitted electronically as a Word document and as a PDF file along with copies of credentials and supporting documentation to the Executive Director at [executive.director@abdph.org](mailto:executive.director@abdph.org)

### **Certification Examination**

The ABDPH Application for Board Eligibility and Certification Examination must be received no later than August 15 of the year prior to that in which a candidate wishes to take the Certification Examination. The Certifying Examination application and fee schedule are available at [www.aaphd.org/ABDPH](http://www.aaphd.org/ABDPH) under ABDPH Application for Board Eligibility and Certification Examination.

The application must be signed by the applicant and submitted electronically as PDF file along with copies of supporting documentation to the Executive Director at [executive.director@abdph.org](mailto:executive.director@abdph.org) . The supporting documentation to be sent electronically as PDF files includes: (1) the applicant's curriculum vitae; (2) the applicant's certificates or degrees in dentistry and public health; (3) certificate of a completed residency in Dental Public Health (when a residency serves as a portion of the educational preparation); and (4) any other necessary documentation. If the graduate degree is not an MPH or if the dental degree is not from an institution accredited by CODA or is from an educational institution outside of the United States or Canada, the candidate should include electronic copies of the course transcripts. If the courses are not clearly labeled as one of the required areas in Dental Public Health described above, the ABDPH will request the candidate to submit the course syllabi.

The application fee for eligibility is due at the time of application submission. Please remit that amount by credit card by contacting Sandi Steil ([ssteil@associationcentral.org](mailto:ssteil@associationcentral.org)) if you wish to pay by credit card (Visa or Mastercard); she will provide you the credit card authorization form to send to them. If you wish to pay via check, you can send a check made payable to AAPHD to the address below.

**AAPHD**  
**PO Box 7317**  
**Springfield, IL 62791-7317**

The ABDPH will review candidates' applications and qualifications and notify them of their eligibility no later than September 25.

NOTE: Once declared Board Eligible, a candidate must take and pass the Certification Examination within a five-year period.

An eligible candidate must submit separate PDF files for each of the two project reports by October 1 of the year before the candidate wishes to take the Certification Examination. Please remit the balance of the fee (\$1000) by credit card by contacting Sandi Steil ([ssteil@associationcentral.org](mailto:ssteil@associationcentral.org)) if you

wish to pay by credit card (Visa or Mastercard); she will provide you the credit card authorization form. If you wish to pay via check, you can send a check made payable to AAPHD to the address below.

**AAPHD**  
**PO Box 7317**  
**Springfield, IL 62791-7317**

**NOTE:** The total fee for application for Board Eligibility (\$350) plus the Certification Examination (\$1000) is paid in two installments.

#### **Cancellation of the ABDPH Examination:**

1. Qualifying Examination: If candidate pays the fee to take the Qualifying Examination and does not do so, the candidate forfeits the fee.
2. Certification Examination: If candidate pays the fees for ABDPH eligibility and the Certification Examination:
  - a. Their ABDPH eligibility is valid for 5 years.
  - b. If candidates postpone the Certification Examination after September 1, they must inform the Executive Director of their intent to postpone as soon as possible. Barring extenuating circumstances beyond the candidate's control, submission of an additional exam fee will be required when the candidate decides to take the Certification Examination.

#### **Appeal Mechanism**

A candidate who fails the Certification Examination has the right to appeal, as provided for in American Board of Dental Public Health Policy and Procedures for Appeal.

##### ***1. Actions Subject to Appeal***

Any appeal to the American Board of Dental Public Health must be based on one of the following circumstances: (1) there was a procedural or clerical error during the application process or in the administration of the examination; (2) there were extenuating circumstances that may have affected a candidate's performance during the examination. The Board will not consider appeals except under one of those circumstances. Examinations will not be re-scored.

Requests for additional information regarding an application or examination result are not considered part of the appeal process. Examinations will NOT be returned to the applicant for review for any reason, including any appeals. The correspondence for such information becomes part of the candidate's or applicant's file, but does not modify or alter any decision made by the Board.

##### ***2. Communication Regarding an Appeal***

All correspondence regarding an appeal will be through the ABDPH Executive Director.

### **3. *Submission of an Appeal***

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the ABDPH Executive Director within seven days of receiving the score notifications of the examination. The written appeal should be dated, identify in concise terms the decision being appealed, and provide a brief outline of the reasons for the appeal. No decision shall become final while an appeal is pending or until the seven-day period for filing notice of appeal has elapsed. The appellant will be notified in writing of the receipt of the appeal, and informed that the appeal will be reviewed and responded to within sixty days of the receipt of the appeal. Each appeal is subject to a non-refundable fee in the amount of \$300.

### **4. *Appeals Review Process***

The appeals process begins with a review of the submitted appeal by the Appeals Committee, which is comprised of two Board Directors and the Immediate Past-President, once removed. The Appeals Committee will review the appeal and all relevant facts, and submit their recommendation to the Board. The final decision will then be transmitted by the Executive Director to the appellant.

If the decision is not acceptable to the appellant, the appellant has sixty days to resubmit the appeal. This second appeal is reviewed by an Appeals Panel consisting of three past presidents (not including the past-president serving on the Appeals Committee). The Appeals Panel is selected by the Board and members serve for a five-year period. The Appeals Panel has sixty days to process the appeal. If the appeal necessitates a hearing, the hearing will be scheduled at the next annual meeting of the Board.

Appellants will incur the costs of their travel and the Board will cover the travel costs for Appeals Panel members. The recommendation of the Appeals Panel will be provided to the Board, who in turn will review it and submit their second and final response to the appellant.

### **Timelines:**

- A. Electronic Application for the Certification Examination is due no later than August 15 of the year before the candidate intends to take the examination.
- B. Candidates are notified of eligibility to take Certification Examination and to submit Project Reports no later than September 25 of the year before candidates intend to take the examination.
- C. Electronic Project Reports are due to Executive Director no later than October 1 of the year before the candidate intends to take the examination.
- D. Results of failing scores (less than 60%) for either Project Report are sent to Candidates on or about February 1 of the year of the examination.
- E. Electronic Application for Qualifying Examination are due no later than December 1 of the year before the candidate intends to take the examination.

- F. Notification of eligibility to take the Qualifying Examination is sent to candidates on or about February 1 of the year of the examination.

Note: Please be aware of the timelines and check with the Executive Director with any questions. After the Executive Director's notification that a candidate is eligible to take the examination, the candidate has only about a week before the Executive Director must receive the Project Reports. Thus, candidates should complete most of the final format of the Project Reports before applying for the examination on August 15. Candidates who receive notification from the Executive Director that there are problems with one or both Project Reports should reply immediately. If deadlines are missed, the candidate will not be able to take the examination that year.

### **Conflict of Interest:**

Many ABDPH Directors are currently or have been Residency Directors or have supervised Dental Public Health residents' projects. When a Director evaluates a candidate's application, the Director can be objective and "vote" for Board eligibility under most circumstances. The ABDPH takes into consideration potential conflicts of interest when Directors have to provide a score for a candidate who has been their resident, student, or mentee. In such cases, the Director will not be assigned as a grader of the written Project Reports or serve on the examination panel for the oral examination of the Project Reports.

### **American Board of Dental Public Health Policies on Testing**

#### ***Fairness in Testing***

Standardization of examinations and administration conditions helps to ensure that all candidates are given a comparable opportunity to demonstrate what they know, and how they can perform in the areas being examined.

Fairness assures that every candidate has an opportunity to prepare for the examination and is informed about the general nature and content of the examination, as appropriate to the purpose of the exam. Fairness also extends to the accurate and timely reporting of individual and group examination results.

The ABDPH strives for fairness through the design, development, administration, and scoring of the examinations, and likewise, seeks to be fair, objective, and consistent with all examinees. The commitment to fairness includes reducing or eliminating bias in test questions and the administration of the examination, and equitable treatment of all examinees in the administration and scoring of the examination.

#### ***Testing Individuals with Disabilities***

The ABDPH is committed to providing certification examinations that are fair to candidates regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, linguistic background, or other personal characteristics. The ABDPH will provide reasonable procedures for accommodating candidates with disabilities who need special accommodations. The ABDPH will provide information to candidates on examination formats, including information on the use of any

needed materials and equipment.

### ***Rights of Test Takers***

As a test taker, you have the right to:

1. Be informed of your rights and responsibilities as a test taker.
2. Be treated with courtesy, respect, and impartiality, regardless of your age, disability, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics.
3. Be tested with measures that meet professional standards and that are appropriate.
4. Receive a brief oral or written explanation prior to testing about the kind(s) of tests to be used.
5. If you have a disability, you have the right to inquire and receive information about testing accommodations.
6. Know in advance of testing when the test will be administered, when test results will be available to you, and if there is a fee for testing services that you are expected to pay.
7. Have your test administered and your test results interpreted by appropriately trained individuals who follow professional codes of ethics.
8. Receive a written or oral explanation of your test results within a reasonable amount of time after testing and in commonly understood terms.
9. Have your test results kept confidential to the extent allowed by law.
10. Present concerns about the testing process or your results and receive information about procedures that will be used to address such concerns.

### ***Responsibilities of Test Takers***

As a test taker, you have the responsibility to:

1. Read and/or listen to your rights and responsibilities as a test taker.
2. Treat others with courtesy and respect during the testing process.
3. Ask questions prior to testing if you are uncertain about why the test is being given, how it will be given, what you will be asked to do, and what will be done with the results.
4. Read or listen to descriptive information in advance of testing and listen carefully to all test instructions.
5. You should inform an examiner in advance of testing if you wish to receive a testing accommodation or if you have a physical condition or illness that may interfere with your performance on the test. If you have difficulty comprehending the language of the test, it is your responsibility to inform an examiner.
6. Know when and where the test will be given, pay for the test if required, appear on time with any required materials, and be ready to be tested.
7. Follow the test instructions you are given and represent yourself honestly during the testing.

8. Be familiar with and accept the consequences of not taking the test, should you choose not to take the test.
9. Inform appropriate person(s), as specified to you by the organization responsible for testing, if you believe that testing conditions affected your results.
10. Ask about the confidentiality of your test results if this aspect concerns you.
11. Present concerns about the testing process or results in a timely, respectful way, if you have any.

### ***Testing Individuals of Diverse Linguistic Backgrounds***

The ABDPH examination is offered only in English language and translation to other languages is not available at this point. This information is available to all potential candidates in the Candidate Guide documents. As is required by the Requirements for Recognition of Dental Specialties, "Each board shall require, for eligibility for certification as a diplomate, the successful completion of an advanced education program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of two or more academic years in length, as specified by the Commission." All prospective candidates including internationals will have completed at least 12 months of specialty training conducted in English language in the U.S. or Canada before taking the examination. Further, International candidates are required as a condition to acceptance to a US or Canadian program to demonstrate their competency in the English language by taking a test for English as a foreign language.

#### Citations:

A modification of the American Psychological Association (APA Online) Test Taker Rights and Responsibilities, August 1998.

ABP Policy on Rights and Responsibilities of Test Takers. 2019.