



California Dental Licensure Options

October 2022

Licensure by Clinical Exam

- Graduate from a dental school that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) or is approved by the Dental Board of California.
- Take and pass the National Board Dental examinations.
- Take and pass the California Law and Ethics examination.
- Take and pass the Western Regional Examining Board (WREB) or American Board of Dental Examiners (ADEX) manikin-based examinations.

Licensure by Residency

- Graduate from a CODA-accredited or board-approved dental school.
- Complete one year of a CODA-accredited general practice residency or advanced education program in general dentistry. Applicants must have the residency program director complete the Certification of Clinical Residency Completion (Residency 1) form, found at dbc.ca.gov. Program and certification completion must be within two years prior to license application.
- Take and pass the National Board Dental examinations.
- Take and pass the California Law and Ethics examination.
- Not have failed the WREB examination within the last five years of application.
- Not have failed the ADEX examination after November 15, 2019.
- Some CODA-accredited residency programs not affiliated with a dental school, due to possible federal standards or their own policies, require residents to obtain a license either at the start of a residency program or during the program. This policy has been identified in VA programs and residency programs in other states. Therefore, it is critical that students ask this question before applying to a residency program.

Licensure by Portfolio

- Graduate from a board-approved dental school.
- Submit a completed portfolio to the board within 90 days of graduation.
- Take and pass the National Board Dental examinations.
- Take and pass the California Law and Ethics Examination.

Licensure by Credential

- Must possess current license from another U.S. state that is not revoked, suspended or otherwise restricted.

- Have proof of having been in clinical practice, or been a full-time faculty member, in the U.S. for a minimum of 5,000 hours in five of the seven consecutive years prior to application; a maximum of two of the five years of this requirement can come from a CODA-accredited residency program. The clinical practice requirement may be fulfilled if the applicant provides proof of a full-time two-year contract to teach at a board-approved dental education program or to practice dentistry in specified settings.
- Not have failed the WREB exam within the last five years of application or the ADEX exam after Nov. 15, 2019.
- Completed 50 units of continuing education credit within the last two years of application, including mandatory courses required by the board.