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Introduction

Over the last several months, the NDEB continues to work on the electronic delivery of examinations and assessments and creating the new Virtual OSCE, intended to replace the Written Examination and OSCE. Improvements to program services is underway, automating DSCKE applications and registrations, and withdrawals through NDEB’s registration portals. Since January 2016, the NDEB has invested resources towards revising and planning the implementation of policies such as, the special accommodations policy to be compliant with accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

The following is an update on the NDEB’s activities since January 2016.

Governance

The NDEB Board held a successful inaugural Intern Board Meeting on April 9, 2016. The meeting was established to keep Board Members informed of ongoing activities on a regular basis and to review the financial position and determine the need for any fee increases. The Board will continue to meet biannually, in April/May and October.

Strategic Plan

NDEB implemented its new strategic plan in January 2016. Senior staff maintains a Strategic Plan Progress Report to verify that NDEB’s actions are in line with its strategic initiatives. The Board reviews this report biannually.

Elections

There was a vacancy on the NDEB’s By-laws Committee and the Finance and Audit Committee. The President called an election at the Interim Board Meeting in April. Dr. Sneha Abhyankar was elected as a member of the By-laws Committee for a term ending October 22, 2016. Dr. James Richardson was elected to the Finance and Audit Committee for the terms ending in October 2016.
Finance & Legal

Finance

The Finance and Audit Committee have reviewed the financial statements for the eight-month period ending February 29, 2016. The financial statements show that the operating revenue and expenses are projected to be close to the budget by year-end.

Communications

NDEB’s new Strategic Plan calls for enhanced transparency; increased communications between members, Chief Examiners, and staff; improved communications with applicants, participants and candidates; increased security for and improved efficiency of all examination and assessment processes; strengthened relationships with CDRAF, DRAs, ACFD, CDAC, FCDSA, CDA, and RCDC; increased dialogue with provincial and federal governments; and, heightened visibility of the NDEB internationally. Development of a communication strategy aligned with these strategic initiatives is underway.

E-Blasts

In an effort to increase communications with stakeholders, the NDEB implemented a news bulletin in the form of an E-Blast called the NDEBulletin. Subscription to the NDEBulletin is optional and accessible via the new NDEB website. With over 700 subscribers, the NDEBulletin will communicate news items and announcements that are also available on the website and will serve as a tool to direct traffic to the NDEB website. The NDEB will circulate a website usability survey to all subscribers through the NDEBulletin.

Examinations & Assessments

Certification Process

In March 2016, the Written Examination and OSCE were administered in 14 centres across Canada, the US, and Ireland. A total of 818 candidates took the Written Examination and 812 candidates took the OSCE. The pass rates for the March administration and the overall pass rates (Table 1) remain consistent with previous administrations.
### Overall Pass Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Written # of candidates</th>
<th>Written % pass</th>
<th>OSCE # of candidates</th>
<th>OSCE % pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1209</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1165</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016*</td>
<td>818</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*March administration only

### Equivalency Process

The Assessment of Fundamental Knowledge (AFK) was held on February 6, 2016. A total of 647 participants took the Assessment in 8 different locations, including England. The number of participants taking the AFK in February decreased again this year. This could be due to the availability of multiple administrations annually. The pass rates for the February AFK administration and the overall pass rates (Table 2) remain consistent with previous administrations.

The next Assessment of Clinical Judgment (ACJ) and Assessment of Clinical Skills (ACS) will be held in June at Faculties of Dentistry across the country. There are currently 382 participants registered for the June 3rd ACJ and 401 participants registered for the June 4th and 5th ACS. The number of ACJ participants is down from the 2015 administrations, also potentially due to multiple administrations annually.

### Equivalency Process Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AFK # of participants</th>
<th>AFK % pass</th>
<th>ACS # of participants</th>
<th>ACS % pass</th>
<th>ACJ # of participants</th>
<th>ACJ % pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1277</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>709</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>647*</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* February administration only
Dental Specialty Core Knowledge Examination

As of January 2016, the Dental Specialty Core Knowledge Examination (DSCKE) is administered at the NDEB office annually in February and September. The DSCKE has been administered three times in its revised format (Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialty</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Endodontics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Medicine/Oral Pathology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Radiology</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Surgery</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodontics</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatrics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodontics</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosthodontics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Public Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*February administration only

Table 3

Examination and Assessment Delivery

Last year, Dr. Marie Dagenais assumed the new role of Director of Examinations. Along with Staff and examiners, she has been working on new technical manuals, the electronic delivery of examinations and assessments, and creating a new Virtual OSCE, which will replace the Written Examination and OSCE. In December, the Integrated Examination Committee was dissolved as the Board approved in principle the development and funding of the Virtual OSCE. Dr. Peter Chauvin was appointed Chief Examiner of the Virtual OSCE. The first project milestone was met in January 2016, with the creation of a mini prototype of the Virtual OSCE to demonstrate the various functionalities of the new examination platform. In addition, examiners approved the user interface of the examination.
Program Services

Equivalency Process applications and credential verification

Applications for the Equivalency Process rose slightly this past year (Table 4).

The NDEB continues to review and revise its credential verification process and document requirements using current best practice and research into the issuing of documents internationally. The NDEB released revised Guidelines for Required Documents for application to the Equivalency Process and Dental Specialty Core Knowledge in March 2016.

| Equivalency Process applicants by year |
|---|---|
| 2010 | 1378 |
| 2011 | 1289 |
| 2012 | 1223 |
| 2013 | 1116 |
| 2014 | 1018 |
| 2015 | 1086 |

Program Services

The NDEB is in the final stages of developing its new online portal for applicants to the DSCKE. This portal will accept applications, registrations, and payments by credit card. Similarly, to the Equivalency Process, applicants must submit the required documents, which are subject to the NDEB’s credential verification process. This portal is expected to launch in the fall of 2016.

The NDEB is also in the beginning stages of automating withdrawals through the Equivalency Process and Certification Process portals. This enhancement will improve efficiency, decrease withdrawal processing times, and increase accuracy.

Special Accommodations

In May 2016, the NDEB is revising its special accommodation policy. Individuals can request a special accommodation for an assessment or examination due to a documented disability, medical diagnosis, or for a religious reason. Requests for special accommodation are confidential. Special accommodations are granted on an individual basis and are dependent on the nature and extent of the request, documentation provided, and requirements of the assessment or examination.
Appeals

Starting with the November meeting, the Appeal Committee members received the appeal files electronically using basecamp™ which has proved to be more efficient.

There has been one Appeals Committee meetings since January 2016. In March, 53 appeals were heard and 14 where upheld. The Committee is scheduled to meet in April and May.

On recommendation of the Appeals Committee, there was a change to the Assessment of Clinical Skills Appeals process. Beginning in June 2016, the Rubber Dam requirement evaluation process has been modified to include revised documentation by the examiners. Photographs of rubber dams will no longer be taken.

Research

Research Committee Meeting

The Research Committee cancelled its meeting scheduled on April 14 and 15, 2016 but will meet in April 2017. The Research Committee will continue to work on projects, including the concurrent validity study, the post examination survey, and articles for publication.

Dr. Jack Gerrow and Dr. Chad Buckendahl wrote an article titled Evaluating the Impact of Releasing An Item Pool On A Test’s Empirical Characteristics. The article was accepted for publication in the Journal of Dental Education on March 8, 2016.

Integration into Practice

In 2014, a database called the Practice Tracker was developed which tracks certified candidates by province of licensure as well as the stream they went through to become certified in Canada. As of March 2016, candidates certified between 2011 and 2015 have been entered into the Practice Tracker. For research purposes, candidates are categorized in one of four groups; graduates of US and Australian programs, graduates of Canadian programs, graduates of Canadian Qualifying or Degree Completion Programs, and candidates who successfully completed the NDEB Equivalency Process. By searching information available from the Dental Regulatory Authorities, it is possible to verify if and where each certified candidate has obtained a license in Canada. This information is valuable for use in several areas of research and will be tracked annually.
Human Resources

In March 2016, Brian Mitchell and Christine Desbiens who are on contract with the Business Sherpa Group joined the NDEB. They are working with staff in areas of Finance and Human resources respectively, while the NDEB transitions through its recent restructuring. In addition, the NDEB hired Laura Aliaga as Coordinator, joining Judy Banke’s team working on the Written Examination and OSCE.