

NDEB STRATEGIC PLAN



The 2019-2024 strategic plan identifies the NDEB's key result areas (KRAs) for the next five years.

The plan will strengthen NDEB's role in contributing to oral health in Canada, and how it can best evaluate the competence of dentists now and in the future.



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Approach

The 2019-2024 strategic plan was developed in collaboration with multiple stakeholders. Interviews with external stakeholders¹ regarding the environment and implications for the direction of the NDEB were instrumental in the development of the plan. Key findings and implications that were identified through the interview process are summarized in Appendix I.

The results of the environmental scan were presented at three planning sessions with the NDEB Executive Committee, Board, and senior management. During the first planning session, the Executive Committee considered the results of the interviews to revise the organization's mission and developed key result areas (KRAs) with a view to achieving the mission. During the subsequent planning sessions, the KRAs were presented to the Board and senior management for discussion and modification. The refined strategy includes four KRAs and goals that will shape the direction of the organization and drive change over the next five years.

The Board and senior management also developed corporate values to support the strategic goals. The values will influence the culture and behaviors that are critical to achieving the strategy.

Following development of the strategic goals, the management team took a deeper dive into each goal, identifying objectives and performance indicators. Implications for human resources and financial needs to successfully achieve the strategic plan and to operationalize ongoing components have also been considered.

The Plan

Mission

Contributing to the oral health of Canadians by providing a fair, valid and reliable evaluation of competence for the certification of dentists in Canada.

Values

- Be accessible
- Have integrity
- Embrace diversity
- Work collaboratively

¹ Interviews were conducted with the following stakeholders: CDRAF, ACFD, CDA, CDAC, DRAs, FCDSA, NDEB staff

Strategic Outcomes

The four key result areas and activities necessary to achieve the mission are :

Transition to electronic exam delivery

The NDEB will transition all examinations that are currently delivered in a paper and pencil format to an electronic format by 2024 in accordance with an established roll-out plan. This will allow for strengthened security relating to examination development and administration, more efficient and secure delivery, and greater access for examinees.

Review the Equivalency Process Blueprint

The NDEB must ensure the fairness, job relatedness, and defensibility of its examinations. Through incorporation of domain skills and alternative assessment techniques, the Equivalency Process will continue to be enhanced to ensure that the desired outcomes are being met.

The Equivalency Process Blueprint will be reviewed considering the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA's) required for initial licensure as a general dentist in Canada. The review will also look at ways to address important competencies which ultimately affect the quality of services offered by dentists in Canada.

Strengthen communication with stakeholders

Relationships with stakeholders will be strengthened through open communication and collaboration. The NDEB is seeking to be more accessible to its stakeholders, to ensure its processes are well understood, and to work in more collaborative ways with regulators and partners. It will consider ways to disseminate relevant information and a consistent message to key stakeholders, to extend its expertise to other jurisdictions, and to provide advice and assistance where appropriate.

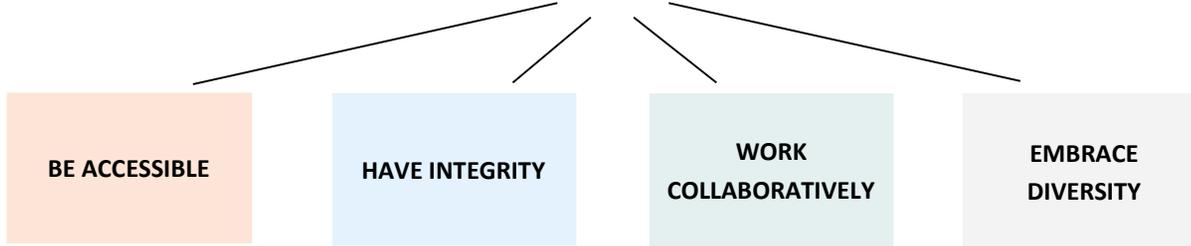
Manage Risks

The NDEB will develop and implement a risk management program to strengthen governance and management of the organization. It will identify and prioritize risks and establish preventative and mitigating strategies as appropriate. A key target area includes potential legal risks as the costs of defending challenges and appeals are very high.



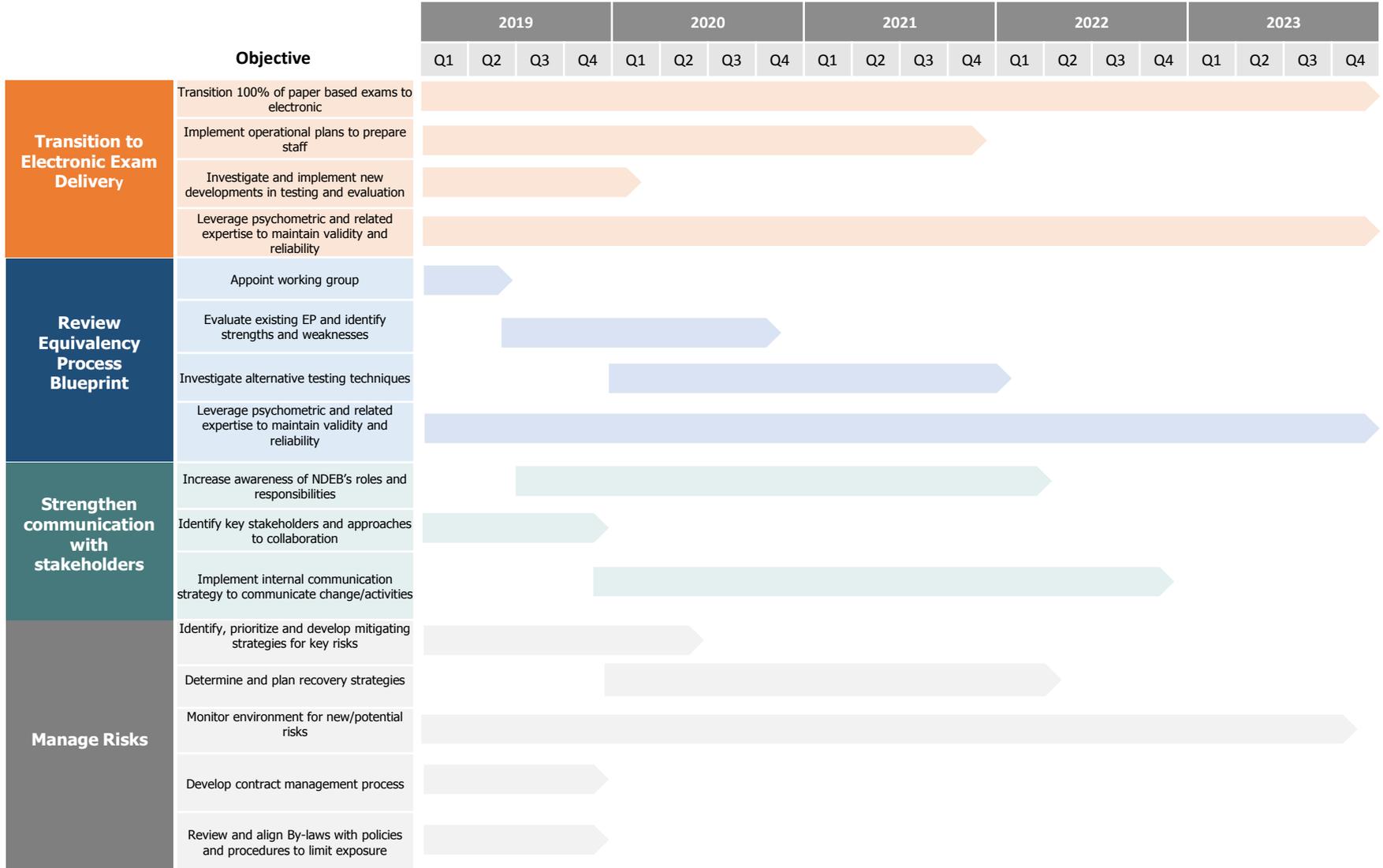
MISSION: Contributing to oral health in Canada by providing a fair, valid, and reliable evaluation of competence for the certification of dentists in Canada.

VALUES



| | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|---|---|
| KRAS | Transition to electronic exam delivery  | Review the Equivalency Process Blueprint  | Strengthen communication with stakeholders  | Manage Risks  |
| GOAL | Transition all of paper-based tests to electronic delivery with a view to enhancing relevancy, reliability, security, efficiency, consistency, and accessibility. | Evaluate/review the existing Equivalency Process and establish recommendations for improvement. | Relationships with stakeholders characterized by open communication and collaboration. | Implement a risk management program to strengthen the governance and management of the organization. |
| OBJECTIVES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition 100% of paper based exams to electronic format • Implement operational plans to prepare staff for transition • Investigate and implement new developments in testing and evaluation • Leverage psychometric and related expertise to maintain validity and reliability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint working group representative of stakeholders to lead review process • Evaluate existing Equivalency Process and identify strengths and weaknesses • Investigate alternative testing techniques • Leverage psychometric and related expertise to maintain validity and reliability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of NDEB's roles and responsibilities among stakeholders • Identify key stakeholders and approaches to collaboration • Implement internal communication strategy to communicate change and activities to staff, Board members and committee members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, prioritize, and develop mitigating strategies for key risks in the areas of operations, legal, financial, governance, and internal and external succession planning • Determine and plan recovery strategies • Monitor environment for new and potential risks annually • Develop contract management process • Review and align By-laws with policies and procedures to limit exposure |
| KPIs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of exams transitioned • Cost savings related to transition • Examinee and staff feedback • Stats from electronic delivery show consistent reliability and validity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative pass rates between successful Equivalency Process participants and graduates of accredited programs. • Blueprint reflects requirements of a graduate of accredited dental programs. • Examinees and DRA feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in electronic traffic • Implementation of new communication tools • Stakeholder collaboration and consultation • Knowledge and awareness of NDEB's activities, roles, and responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and nature of risks identified and addressed • Establish and implement a risk register for annual review by the Board |

High-Level Strategic Plan Roadmap



Summary of Environmental Scan

Key Trends and Change Drivers

| Trend | Underlying Change Drivers |
|---|--|
| <p>Increasing number of international applications</p> | <p>There are a number of factors which suggest that applications coming from non-accredited graduates can be expected to increase over the next few years. As the digital exam platform is implemented, it will be significantly more affordable for an individual to take the exam from their own location rather than travel to a testing site. In addition, in the case of the United States, immigration laws have and are becoming more inflexible making Canada a more viable alternative for many. A continued trend toward greater global mobility suggests that the demand for individuals looking to practice dentistry in Canada will increase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to its excellent scalability, the digital platform will easily facilitate an increased number of examinees. • The increased number of applications should have a positive revenue effect for the NDEB. |
| <p>Continued evolution of assessment methodologies</p> | <p>The science of psychometrics and assessment continues to evolve as new testing approaches are implemented for evaluating competencies in the health professions. Competency-based assessment, in-career assessment, compensatory versus conjunctive, and adaptive testing are examples of where the science of assessment is evolving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a core competency, the NDEB needs to maintain its position as an expert in the evaluation of competence for the dental profession |
| <p>Increased use of digital platforms to administer examinations</p> | <p>Providing examinations at physical locations globally is very cost intensive and professions are seeking ways to enhance delivery and cut costs. Most have moved toward digital platforms to deliver their assessments. Using technology as a means to test and score allows for greater scalability and reach. With the increasing demands for accommodation, technology platforms offer greater flexibility in meeting unique needs since most are built with accessibility capabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDEB's continued investment in digital assessment platforms is consistent with the trend to greater efficiency and effectiveness through IT investment. |
| <p>The distribution of dentists in Canada is skewed toward urban areas</p> | <p>The dental profession in Canada is concerned about the growing population and concentration of dentists in Canada's urban areas. In many rural and northern areas of the country, there are actually shortages. This does not directly impact the NDEB in that its mandate is centred on the assessment of new dentists rather than their distribution. Distribution issues are the domain of the provincial/territorial regulators. However, there are misperceptions about what role the NDEB plays in allowing internationally trained dentists to practice in Canada.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among its direct stakeholders, the NDEB's role is clear, however, among the dental community, there is still misperception of the NDEB's role regarding internationally trained dentists. |
| <p>Increase in cybersecurity risk</p> | <p>The NDEB maintains its question banks on secure software. It also collects and retains personal data on behalf of examinees using electronic platforms and databases with online capability. The increase in cybercrime, specifically, database hacking and ransomware have become more common among large and notable companies worldwide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management practices that include a focus on cybercrime, are becoming standard practice for organizations that collect and hold confidential information. |



Challenges and Opportunities

High costs of Judicial Reviews and appeals

Defending challenges and appeals are very costly for the NDEB and there is a limit to the number that can be addressed in any one year without additional cash infusion. To this point in time, the number of challenges has been few; however, it is seen as a risk that these challenges could increase as application numbers increase.

Increasing investment and reliance on information technology

The NDEB has already invested heavily in information technology to deliver its services. The NDEB must build and maintain a continued capacity in information technology and systems as it moves away from traditional paper-based approaches to its work and services.

Addressing issues of language competency and professionalism

The NDEB does not currently address issues of language or professionalism in its examinations/assessments. From the perspective of regulators however, these and other competencies need to be addressed. The NDEB needs to find alternative ways to address competencies which ultimately affect the quality of services offered by dentists in Canada.

Sharing expertise

The NDEB already has experience in helping dental faculties in Canada with assessment expertise. The Board also provides assessment capacity to the dental regulator in New Zealand. With these precedents already established, it is a natural evolution to extend these offerings to other jurisdictions such as the United States.

Maintaining continuity in exam development

The NDEB leverages the participation of experts from each dental faculty in Canada to develop the questions for the exam banks. This participation ensures a high quality and relevant examination. It is a challenge for the NDEB to ensure that it has access to these experts over time since many of the same faculty members have been contributing for years and are nearing retirement age.

Ensuring continuity and succession at the NDEB

The organizational structure at the NDEB is considered to be flat with few layers of reporting. The broader span provides for significant flexibility to deliver the work; however, has little built-in redundancy or succession planning. There are some roles which are considered critical to daily operations and should have plans for succession.