

# Dental practice licensing examination in Mainland China

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## Introduction

According to the Mainland China and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, permanent residents of Hong Kong, who are registered as dentists with the Dental Council of Hong Kong, can apply for a dental practicing license in the Mainland through a dental practice licensing examination.

The examination consists of a clinical skill practical examination and a written examination (Table). A candidate must first pass the clinical skill practical examination before he/she applies for the written examination. All examinations are conducted in Putonghua (oral) and answers must be written in simplified Chinese characters.

## Clinical skill practical examination

The clinical skill practical examination will usually be carried out during a morning or an afternoon session. It takes about 2.5 hours and comprises two main sections. The first section focuses on basic and investigation skills and the second section on oral diagnosis and treatment planning.

### Basic and investigation skills

In the basic and investigation skills section, a candidate will be tested on three aspects: clinical oral examination, operative skills assessment, and special investigations.

**Table** Dental practice licensing examination

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clinical skill practical examination (2.5 hours)               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Basic and investigation skills                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clinical oral examination</li> <li>• Operative skills assessment</li> <li>• Special investigations</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) Oral diagnosis and treatment planning</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Written examination (four sections, 2.5 hours for each)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About 600 multiple choice questions</li> </ul> </li> </ol> |
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During the clinical oral examination, candidates will be paired up randomly and asked to examine one another. Candidates' performances will be evaluated on the method, sequence, and content of the clinical oral examination. In addition, collection and presentation of data such as the chief complaint, history of the present illness, and relevant medical and dental history will be assessed. The principles of formulating a diagnosis and a differential diagnosis, together with analysis of relevant special investigations such as radiographic examination and pulp testing will also be appraised. A clinical record written in simplified Chinese characters will be submitted and evaluated.

Regarding the operative skills assessment, several operative skills will be assessed such as hand scrubbing, oral mucosal disinfection, Class II cavity preparation (usually on an extracted premolar or molar), supragingival scaling (usually on a sextant of a model), techniques for performing local anesthesia on upper or lower teeth (usually on a skull model), and taking alginate impressions for study casts (usually on the partner candidate). In addition, knowledge and skills in basic life support techniques will also be assessed. A candidate should be able to perform rescue breathing (usually with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation on a model), delivery of oxygen with an oxygen tank (usually involving demonstration of methods of assembling the equipment), external cardiac compression on a model, and blood pressure measure-

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ment (usually using a mercury sphygmomanometer).

Special investigations may include pulp vitality testing with an electric pulp tester or thermal (hot and cold) pulp testing; knowledge of radiological assessment of bitewings, periapical and panoramic radiographs are essential. A candidate should be able to identify both normal and abnormal anatomical features in the radiographs. In addition, he/she should have knowledge of a standard laboratory report of blood, urine, and stool tests, and recognize the normal values for basic biochemistry of blood such as serum potassium, sodium and chloride levels, blood glucose levels, and a normal erythrocyte sedimentation rate, etc. A candidate is also expected to understand an analytical report of liver and kidney function tests.

### **Oral diagnosis and treatment planning**

In the oral diagnosis and treatment planning section, a candidate should understand the diagnosis and principles of treatment regarding:

1. Caries, including deep caries and rampant caries.
2. Acute and chronic pulpitis, the sequel to pulp death.
3. Periapical lesions such as acute suppurating periapical periodontitis, a chronic apical granuloma, and cystic lesions.
4. Periodontal disease including gingivitis, periodontitis, and periodontal-endodontic lesions.
5. Recurrent oral ulceration, infectious oral mucosal diseases, and white lesions.
6. Tooth trauma, pericoronitis, and osteomyelitis.
7. Developmental abnormalities and defects of dentition.

In addition, a candidate should be familiar with the indications and contra-indications for dental extraction, differential diagnoses of a 'toothache', and the chronology of tooth development and eruption.

This year, the clinical skill practical examination for candidates from Hong Kong was held at 1:30 p.m. at the Shenzhen No. 2 People's Hospital (深圳市第二人民医院) on July 11, 2006. Candidates had to report to the examination center by 1 p.m. They were instructed to bring their own personal protective equipment (disposable head cap, protective glasses, mask, gown, etc.) for that occasion.

### **Written examination**

After a candidate passes the clinical skill practical examination, he/she can sit for the written examination. The examination is usually held on 2 consecutive days. It consists of four sections and each section takes 2.5 hours. The examination comprises about 600 multiple choice questions on the following aspects: biochemistry; pharmacology; immunology; microbiology; general medicine; general surgery; oral anatomy and oral physiology; oral histology and pathology; oral medicine; oral and maxillofacial surgery; operative dentistry; preventive dentistry; medical psychology; preventive medicine; medical jurisprudence, and medical ethics.

### **Enrolment**

Any interested Hong Kong candidate has to apply through the Dental Council of Hong Kong to the National Medical Examination Center for this examination. In April 2006, the Dental Council of Hong Kong processed the first ever application for the Mainland China dental practice licensing examination. Candidates have to submit, through the Dental Council of Hong Kong, an application fee (RMB280) together with the following documents:

1. Hong Kong Identity Card with 3 photocopies.
2. 2006 Annual Practicing Certificate with 3 photocopies.
3. Relevant certificates of all dental qualifications with 3 photocopies.
4. Fourteen copies of 1.5" x 1" recent photographs taken within 6 months.
5. Three copies of dental practice licensing examination application form.
6. Three copies of dental practice experience assessment form.

The application forms in items no. 5 and 6 must be completed in simplified Chinese characters.

### **Online information**

Candidates can contact the Dental Council of Hong Kong <<http://www.dchk.org.hk>> and the National Medical Examination Center <<http://www.nmec.org.cn/Public-File/openItem.aspx?id=19>>. Useful information is also available at the following commercial websites: <<http://www.examda.com/yishi/Oral/>> and <<http://www.cnx-uexi.com/kaoshi/zige/zhiyeyishi/index.html>>.