



Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.
Measuring Dental Assisting Excellence®

CDA®

Certified Dental Assistant™ Certification Program Overview

The Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB) administers the national Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification. DANB's CDA certification and its component exams are recognized or required to perform specified dental assisting duties in 38 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Air Force. DANB's CDA certification is developed in accordance with nationally accepted test development standards and is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

Component Exams

The DANB® CDA exam consists of three component exams:

- ▶ General Chairside Assisting (GC) exam — 120 questions
- ▶ Radiation Health and Safety (RHS®) exam — 100 questions
- ▶ Infection Control (ICE®) exam — 100 questions

Candidates may take all three components in one administration (the full CDA exam) or may take each component exam separately. Candidates also have the option of taking the RHS and ICE exams together in a combined administration. A candidate must pass all three component exams within a five-year period to earn DANB's CDA certification.



There are more than 35,000 DANB CDA certificants nationwide who annually maintain their certification. DANB's CDA exam is recognized or required for dental assistants to meet state regulations or as a prerequisite to performing expanded functions or radiography procedures in 31 U.S. states.

Eligibility Requirements

A candidate must meet one of three eligibility pathways to qualify to sit for the full CDA exam or the GC component exam. All pathways require holding current DANB-accepted, hands-on CPR, BLS, or ACLS certification.

- Pathway I** Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)-accredited dental assisting or dental hygiene program graduate
- Pathway II** High school graduate or equivalent AND minimum of 3,500 hours of approved work experience
- Pathway III** Former CDA or graduate of a CODA-accredited D.D.S. or D.M.D. program or dental degree program outside the U.S. or Canada

DANB established pathway requirements after careful research and statistical analysis. In particular, Pathway II eligibility criteria were based on the results of a three-year study (completed in 1986) that compared the CDA exam performance of on-the-job-trained dental assistants to the performance of CODA-accredited dental assisting program graduates. The study revealed that on-the-job-trained assistants who had at least two years (3,500 hours) of dental assisting work experience passed the CDA exam at a rate statistically equivalent to graduates of CODA-accredited dental assisting programs.

Certificates of Knowledge-Based Competency

Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) Exam

DANB's RHS exam, a component of the CDA exam, can be administered as a stand-alone exam. The RHS exam is designed to discern proficiency in radiation health and safety by evaluating a candidate's minimum level of knowledge-based competency. Earning a certificate of knowledge-based competency in RHS demonstrates that the individual meets the national standard for knowledge in dental radiography concepts.

DANB's RHS exam is recognized or required for dental assistants to perform radiography procedures in 21 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. Beginning in September 2009, the U.S. Air Force Dental Service (AFDS) incorporated the RHS exam into its dental assisting curriculum.

Infection Control (ICE) Exam

DANB's ICE exam is a component of the CDA exam and the Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA[®]) exam. It may also be taken as a stand-alone exam. DANB's ICE exam is designed to evaluate a candidate's minimum level of knowledge-based competency and to discern knowledge-based proficiency in infection control, including OSHA requirements, recommendations from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the ADA for personnel performing procedures in the dental office. Earning an ICE certificate of knowledge-based competency demonstrates that the individual meets the national standard for knowledge.

In addition to the 31 states that recognize or require the ICE exam as a component of the CDA exam, Iowa, New York and North Dakota recognize or require the ICE exam as a stand-alone exam to meet a portion of their regulatory requirements for dental assistants. The AFDS began incorporating the ICE exam into its dental assisting curriculum in September 2008.

Exam Administration

DANB's CDA exam and its component exams are administered six days a week at more than 250 secure, proctored computerized testing centers nationwide.

Renewal

DANB CDA certification is valid for one year and must be renewed annually. To renew certification, certificants must:

- ▶ Annually complete 12 Continuing Dental Education credits meeting DANB requirements
- ▶ Maintain DANB-accepted CPR, BLS or ACLS certification
- ▶ Submit renewal fee (currently \$60)

Former CDA certificants who do not renew their certification are no longer authorized to represent that they hold DANB's CDA certification and may not use the certification mark "CDA" following their names.

About DANB

DANB is recognized by the American Dental Association as the national certification board for dental assistants. DANB's mission is to promote the public good by providing credentialing services to the dental community. For those dental assistants who meet the eligibility and exam requirements, DANB certification may be earned in the areas of Certified Dental Assistant (CDA), Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA), Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA[®]) and Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant (CRFDA[®]). DANB will introduce a new entry-level certification, National Entry Level Dental Assistant (NELDA[™]), in early 2015. In addition to these national certifications, DANB offers certificates of knowledge-based competency in Radiation Health and Safety (RHS); Infection Control (ICE); Coronal Polish (CP); Sealants (SE); Topical Anesthetic (TA); Topical Fluoride (TF); Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP); Impressions (IM); Temporaries (TMP); and Isolation (IS).



DANB's CDA and COA certification programs are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies. Currently, there are more than 36,000 DANB certificants nationwide, and DANB certifications and certificates of knowledge-based competency are recognized or required in 38 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Air Force and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Passing DANB's exams demonstrates a dental assistant's knowledge-based competency in areas that are important to the health and safety of oral healthcare workers and patients alike.