Radiation Health and Safety (RHS®)

Exam Outline and Suggested References

The RHS® exam is a component of the National Entry Level Dental Assistant (NELDA®) and Certified Dental Assistant™ (CDA®) certification programs.

**NELDA component exams**

Anatomy, Morphology and Physiology (AMP)
Radiation Health and Safety (RHS)
Infection Control (ICE®)

**CDA component exams**

Radiation Health and Safety (RHS)
Infection Control (ICE)
General Chairside Assisting (GC)

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RHS

Exam Outline Overview

RHS Exam Weighting by Domain

I. Expose and Evaluate (26%)
II. Quality Assurance and Radiology Regulations (21%)
III. Radiation Safety for Patients and Operators (31%)
IV. Infection Control (22%)

RHS Exam Administration

- Number of Questions: 100
- Time for Exam: 75 minutes
- Tutorial Time: 5 minutes
- Comment Time: 5 minutes

DANB uses computer adaptive testing (CAT) to present questions to candidates. Each candidate starts with a question at or around the pass point. If the candidate gets a question correct, the next question will be slightly harder. If the question is incorrectly answered, the next question will be slightly easier. Question selection takes into account the content of the question, as each candidate is presented with the same percentage of questions from each domain on the exam outline. Using this method of testing, DANB can more accurately pinpoint a candidate’s ability level. The average candidate will get around 50% of the questions correct and around 50% of the questions incorrect. The candidate’s score is based on the difficulty of the questions that were answered correctly.
RHS Exam Outline

DANB exams are created using the exam outline, which is annually reviewed by subject matter experts (e.g., Certified Dental Assistant™ [CDA®] certificants and dentists). The outline is developed using a Content Validation Study (CVS), which includes a job analysis survey where practicing CDA certificants are surveyed about how often tasks are performed and how important competent performance of tasks is to the health and safety of the public. This study is conducted every five to seven years to ensure the outline is consistent with current clinical practices. DANB’s Board of Directors approves all updates to DANB exam outlines. The RHS exam measures a candidate’s knowledge of national radiographic imaging practices.

NOTE: DANB uses “image receptor” to refer to conventional film or sensors used for digital imaging.

Domain I: Expose and Evaluate (26%)

A. Assessment and Preparation

1. Describe patient preparation for radiographic exposures (e.g., inspect the patient’s head and neck for removable appliances and foreign objects).

2. Select radiographic technique.
   a. Describe use and purpose of intraoral and extraoral radiographic images, including but not limited to:
      i. periapical.
      ii. bitewing.
      iii. occlusal.
      iv. panoramic.
      v. cephalometric and other extraoral views.
   b. Select radiographic survey to examine or view conditions, teeth or landmarks.
   c. Describe technique modifications based on anatomical variations.

3. Select equipment for radiographic technique.
   a. Describe purpose or advantage of accessories.
   b. Select image receptor size.
   c. Describe purpose and advantage of double (dual) film packets.
B. Acquire

1. Describe how to acquire radiographic images using various techniques.
   a. Define radiographic exposure concepts.
   b. Intraoral
      i. Define factors that influence quality of the radiographic image.
      ii. Compare paralleling and bisecting angle techniques (e.g., advantages, disadvantages).
      iii. Describe the parts and functions of radiographic film packets and digital image receptors.
   c. Extraoral
      i. Identify function and maintenance of film cassettes and intensifying screens.
      ii. Describe exposure technique (i.e., patient positioning).
         a) Panoramic radiography.
         b) Cephalometric radiography.
      iii. Demonstrate basic understanding of CBCT (cone-beam computed tomography).

2. Demonstrate basic knowledge of digital radiography.
   a. Advantages/disadvantages.
   b. Handling errors.
   c. Image receptors.

3. Demonstrate basic knowledge of conventional film processing.
   a. Functions of processing solutions.
   c. Procedures for processing films.

C. Evaluate

1. Evaluate radiographic images for diagnostic value.
   a. Describe features of a diagnostically acceptable radiographic image.
   b. Identify and describe how to correct errors related to acquiring intraoral radiographic images.
   c. Identify and correct radiographic processing errors.
   d. Identify and describe how to correct improper film handling errors.
   e. Identify and describe how to correct errors related to acquiring panoramic radiographic images.

2. Mount and label radiographic images.
   a. Describe how to mount radiographic images using facial (buccal and labial) view.
      i. Identify anatomical landmarks that aid in mounting.
ii. Match tooth views to tooth mount windows.

iii. Demonstrate understanding of radiographic image viewing techniques.

b. Identify anatomical structures, dental materials and patient information observed on radiographic images (e.g., differentiating between radiolucent and radiopaque areas).

D. Patient Management

1. Describe techniques for patient management before, during and after radiographic exposure (e.g., patients with special needs).
2. Describe techniques for patients with a severe gag reflex.

Domain II: Quality Assurance and Radiology Regulations (21%)

A. Quality Assurance

1. Evaluate film storage areas.
2. Identify and describe how to correct errors related to improperly storing radiographic film.
3. Describe how to prepare, maintain and replenish automatic processor solutions.
4. Identify conditions required for film processing.
5. Describe how to implement quality assurance procedures.

B. Radiology Regulations

1. Describe how to prepare radiographic images for legal requirements, viewing, duplication and transfer.
2. Describe how to store chemical agents used in dental radiography procedures according to regulatory agencies, in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard.
3. Describe how to dispose of chemical agents and other materials used in dental radiography procedures.

Domain III: Radiation Safety for Patients and Operators (31%)

A. Identify current American Dental Association (ADA) guidelines for patient selection and limiting radiation exposure.

B. Apply the principles of radiation protection and hazards in the operation of radiographic equipment.
1. Factors affecting x-ray production (e.g., kVp, mA, exposure time).
2. X-radiation characteristics.
3. X-ray machine factors that influence radiation safety (e.g., filtration, shielding, collimation, PID [cone] length).
   a. Primary radiation.
   b. Scatter (secondary) radiation.

C. Demonstrate knowledge of patient safety measures to provide protection from x-radiation.
   1. Major causes of unnecessary x-radiation exposure.
   2. X-radiation biology:
      a. short- and long-term effects of x-radiation on cells and tissues.
      b. concepts of x-radiation dose and effective dose.
   3. Reduce x-radiation exposure to patients (ALARA).

D. Address patient radiation concerns (e.g., informed consent, patient refusal).

E. Identify operator safety measures to provide protection from x-radiation.
   1. Sources of x-radiation to operators/other staff while exposing image receptors.
   2. Safety measures to reduce operator x-radiation exposure.
   3. X-radiation physics and biology pertaining to operator exposure.

F. Describe techniques for monitoring individual x-radiation exposure.
   1. ALARA principle as related to operator safety.
   2. Function of a personal monitoring device.

Domain IV: Infection Control (22%)

A. Standard Precautions for Equipment
   1. Demonstrate understanding of infection control techniques used to minimize cross-contamination during radiographic procedures according to ADA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and OSHA guidelines for conventional and digital radiography.
   2. Demonstrate understanding of barriers used to minimize cross-contamination during radiographic procedures according to ADA, CDC and OSHA guidelines for conventional and digital radiography.
B. **Standard Precautions for Patients and Operators**

1. Demonstrate understanding of infection control for radiographic procedures according to ADA, CDC and OSHA guidelines for conventional and digital radiography.

2. Describe infection control techniques used during radiographic processing, following ADA, CDC and OSHA guidelines.
RHS Exam Suggested References

DANB exam committees use the following textbooks and reference materials to develop this exam. This list does not include all the available textbooks and materials for studying for this exam; these are simply the resources that exam committee subject matter experts have determined provide the most up-to-date information needed to meet or surpass a determined level of competency for this exam. Any one reference will likely not include all the material required to study to take and pass the exam.

This list is intended to help prepare for this exam. It is not intended to be an endorsement of any of the publications listed. You should prepare for DANB certification and component exams using as many different study materials as possible.

Textbook References

Organizational References
   - *Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental Health-Care Settings — 2003* (MMWR, Vol. 52, RR 17)
   - *Bloodborne Pathogens Standard* (1910.1030)
   - *An Introduction to Basic Concepts in Dental Radiography* (Course #715)
   • *DANB RHS Review*
   • *Conventional Dental Radiography Review*
   • *DANB RHS Practice Test*
   • *Glossary of Dental Terms*
State Regulations

Each state’s dental board implements regulations and establishes rules for delegating legally allowable duties to dental assistants. Passing one or more of the DANB component exams or earning DANB certification only conveys authority to perform these duties in those states that recognize these exams or this certification as meeting state dental assisting requirements. This information is available at www.danb.org.