

DANB REPORTS EXAM PERFORMANCE RESULTS

To maintain DANB's high standards, meet accreditation standards established by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and meet certifying board recognition criteria established by the American Dental Association (ADA), DANB regularly reviews the performance of its exams. On Oct. 15, 2020, DANB submitted its Annual Report with recent certification and exam counts and pass rates to ADA's Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL).

As of Aug. 31, 2020, DANB has 36,555 Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certificants; 1,269 Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA) certificants; 243 Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA) certificants; 119 Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant (CRFDA) certificants; 120 National Entry Level Dental Assistant (NELDA) certificants; 183 Certified Dental Practice Management Administrator (CDPMA) certificants; and 103 Certified Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Assistant (COMSA) certificants, for a total of 38,592 DANB certifications, held by 37,686 DANB certificants. (Note: DANB discontinued administering the COMSA exam in 2000 and the CDPMA exam in 2008.)

To date (from June 1993, when DANB first began to collect this information), to Aug. 31, 2020, a total of 204,856 individuals have passed DANB's Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam, and 123,9174 have passed DANB's Infection Control (ICE) exam.

Pathway pass rates review

Each year, DANB applies inferential statistics to passing rates of candidates who take the General Chairside Assisting (GC) component of the CDA exam through exam eligibility Pathway I (graduates of CODA-accredited dental assisting programs) and Pathway II (candidates who are on-the-job trained, with at least 3,500 hours of dental assisting work experience acquired over a 24- to 48-month period).

At the DANB Board's February 2020 meeting, Directors reviewed passing rate comparison results for these two GC exam eligibility pathways. Performance data have been compared each year since 1998. Since 2007, CDA/GC Pathway I candidates (graduates from CODA-accredited programs) pass at a rate that is statistically significantly higher than CDA/GC Pathway II candidates (non-CODA graduates or on-the-job-trained assistants). DANB will continue to monitor GC pass rates by eligibility pathway and will report to CDEL again in fall 2021.

Please note that the pass/fail results for DANB national exams are shared by exam component, and not by how the exam was administered. For example, if a candidate took DANB's CDA exam, the results for each component exam (RHS, ICE and GC) would be reported separately for each component exam. This helps to ensure that the data is interpreted correctly. DANB made this reporting change in 2019. Previously, DANB reported exam results by exam (e.g., CDA exam, RHS/ICE exam). However, this data could be misinterpreted: If the CDA exam was reported as a fail, for example, it would not be clear if the candidate failed the RHS, ICE and/or GC exams.

Pass/fail results for DANB national exams

RHS	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	AMP	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	12,642	9,170	Total candidates	323	255
Pass	8,651	6,284	Pass	220	133
Fail	3,991	2,886	Fail	103	122
Pass rate	69%	69%	Pass rate	68%	52%

ICE	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	IM	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	6,976	4,495	Total candidates	16	21
Pass	5,286	3,755	Pass	15	18
Fail	1,690	1,190	Fail	1	3
Pass rate	76%	76%	Pass rate	94%	86%

GC	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	TMP	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	3,797	2,732	Total candidates	101	70
Pass	3,216	2,220	Pass	84	51
Fail	581	512	Fail	17	19
Pass rate	85%	81%	Pass rate	83%	73%

OA	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	RF	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	87	81	Total candidates	96	58
Pass	62	45	Pass	75	46
Fail	25	36	Fail	21	12
Pass rate	71%	56%	Pass rate	78%	79%

CP	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	504	399
Pass	313	251
Fail	191	148
Pass rate	62%	63%

The total number of DANB national exams administered in FY 19-20 was 17,831.

SE	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	72	61
Pass	40	41
Fail	32	20
Pass rate	56%	67%

TF	FY 18-19	FY 19-20
Total candidates	40	39
Pass	22	15
Fail	18	24
Pass rate	55%	38%