

MICHIGAN DENTIST LICENSING GUIDE

1. [How the Profession Is Organized in Michigan](#)
2. [Eligibility for Licensing](#)
3. [Tests](#)
4. [Other Careers and Credentials](#)
5. [Beyond Licensing](#)
6. [Important Links](#)

1. HOW THE PROFESSION IS ORGANIZED IN MICHIGAN

OVERVIEW

This guide details what a foreign-educated dentist must do to become eligible for licensing as a dentist in Michigan. At the same time, it includes some background and tips to give you an idea of the variety of opportunities available as you work to build your career.

REGULATION OF DENTISTS IN MICHIGAN

As a dentist, you must be licensed to practice dentistry in the State of Michigan. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) regulates the profession. LARA issues Michigan licenses to first time licensees and to dentists who are eligible to practice in other states (by endorsement).

The North East Regional Board (NERB) or American Dental Licensing Examination (ADEX) is the qualifying simulated clinical written and clinical examination for a Michigan dental license. However, this is the last step in a longer process of education and examinations that international dentists must complete to practice in the state.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR LICENSING

This section explains 5 important steps that you need to complete before you can be licensed to practice dentistry in Michigan. The steps to licensing are as follows:

I. FOREIGN DEGREE EVALUATION AND NBDE PART I

ECE Evaluation Report: Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc. (ECE) is the only credentialing organization accepted for foreign degrees in dentistry. ECE requires official dental school transcripts, plus translations submitted according to special instructions available on their application.

You should begin the ECE process before applying for the National Board Dental Exam NBDE Part I. ECE will send an Evaluation Report. You are allowed to take the NBDE Part I only after the ECE evaluation is approved.

National Board of Dental Examination Part I: The application for the NBDE Part I exam is an online registration and payment process. You will not be approved to sit for the exam until your ECE Evaluation Report has been approved.

We discuss the test format and content in the next topic, *Tests*.

Once you have passed the exam you are eligible to apply for a 2-year Advanced Standing program for international dentists.

II. 2-YEAR ADVANCED STANDING PROGRAM OR DENTAL SPECIALTY PROGRAM

The state of Michigan requires foreign graduates of dental programs not approved by the American Dental Association to take an additional 2-year course in a U.S. or Canadian-accredited dental program or a dental specialty program approved by the board. The two year degree program is commonly referred to as an Advanced Standing Program. You will earn a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) degree. Michigan's two schools of dentistry offer such a program:

- [University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry's Accelerated Dental Program](#)
- [University of Michigan School of Dentistry's Internationally Trained Dentist Program](#)

Alternatively, you may seek a 2 year master's degree or obtain a certificate in one of the dental specialty areas recognized in Michigan: endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, oral pathology or oral and maxillofacial pathology, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, prosthodontics.

III. PASS THE ADEX THROUGH THE NORTHEAST REGIONAL BOARD

The ADEX, which is offered through the North East Regional Board, is your last test before being eligible for licensure. It involves clinical practice and observation. We discuss the test format and content in the next topic.

IV. APPLICATION FOR LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION

Michigan has a detailed application package available online. Some of the documentation it requires includes:

- Application Form which includes information about your education, examinations taken, explanations to any “yes” answers on the application regarding criminal record, and other history
- Verification of fingerprint submission
- Certification of 2 years' training at an approved U.S. or Canadian dental program
- Receipt of NBDE exam results from the testing agencies directly
- Completion of NERB simulated clinical written and clinical examination

You mail the completed application package to LARA for processing.

3. TESTS

NATIONAL BOARD DENTAL EXAMINATION PART I

The NBDE Part I is a computer-based exam available year-round through the testing company Prometric.

The 8 1/2-hour test consists of multiple choice questions broken into 4 basic content areas.

- Anatomic Sciences
- Biochemistry and Physiology
- Microbiology Pathology
- Dental Anatomy and Occlusion

If you fail any part of the NBDE Part I you can retake it separately for additional fees.

NATIONAL BOARD DENTAL EXAMINATION PART II

The application process is similar to NBDE Part I and can be completed online. The examination is administered by Prometric.

NBDE Part II is a multiple choice test that lasts over 12 hours and is taken over 2 consecutive days.

Day 1 has questions from 9 discipline areas:

1. Endodontics
2. Operative dentistry
3. Oral and maxillofacial surgery/pain control
4. Oral diagnosis
5. Orthodontics/pediatric dentistry
6. Patient management

7. Periodontics
8. Pharmacology
9. Prosthodontics

Day 2 consists of questions based on case simulations. The tester will review a variety of case materials presented on the screen and answer several questions about one patient at a time.

AMERICAN DENTAL LICENSING EXAMINATION (ADEX)

The American Dental Examination, or ADEX, is a test that combines a computer-based exam with clinical practice on both real patients and life-size models called Manikins.

The examination is offered through the North East Regional Board (NERB). You will need to apply online at the CDCA website to schedule the exam. You may have to travel to a test site.

THE ADEX HAS 5 PARTS:

1. Computer-based Diagnostic Skill Exam
2. Endodontics Exam (on Manikin)
3. Prosthodontic Exam (on Manikin)
4. Periodontal Examination (on patient)
5. Restorative Examination (on patient)

You must pass each of the 5 Parts with a score of 75 or higher to complete this step. A passing grade on all parts gives you "NERB Status" and makes you eligible to apply to the state of Michigan for your dental license. If you fail any of the 5 parts, you will need to take that part(s) again.

4. OTHER CAREERS AND CREDENTIALS

LOWER-LEVEL JOB OPPORTUNITIES

You may want to consider whether taking a lower-level job in a dental practice in the short term can help you meet longer-term goals of licensing as a DDS. Working in your field in a different capacity and with fewer responsibilities may offer you some advantages:

- More energy to focus on studying and saving money for an Advanced Standing DDS program
- A chance to adapt to the US healthcare system and workplace culture in a lower-pressure environment

If you choose any of these positions as a step towards licensing, be sure to explain your long-term plans to your employer. You may find that some employers offer benefits such as tuition reimbursement or schedule flexibility that can support your goals.

DENTAL HYGIENIST

The state of Michigan also regulates and licenses dental hygienists in the state. Dental hygienists must complete a 2 or 4 year ADA-approved dental hygiene training program and pass the Dental Hygiene examination (written and clinical parts) from the National Board of Dental Hygiene Examiners before being licensed. Dental hygienists must also pass the NERB simulated clinical written and clinical examinations for dental hygiene. Preventive dental treatment is the main responsibility of a dental hygienist: in the U.S. it is unusual for a dentist to perform routine cleanings of patients' teeth. Hygienists are even able to administer nitrous oxide to patients if they complete a short training. Hygienists who work for smaller practices may work part-time or work in more than one office. A part-time hygienist earning an hourly wage may not have full medical benefits but will often receive inexpensive or free dental care. Many International Dentists decide to become Dental Hygienists as a permanent career change instead of returning to dental practice; others use it as a first step towards re-establishing themselves as dentists in the U.S.

DENTAL LAB TECHNICIAN

Dental lab technicians do not need a license to work. They create and repair dental prosthetics and other accessories used by dentists. On-the-job training is the norm for this position, so if you developed this skill through dental practice, you may find it easy to qualify for this position immediately.

REGISTERED DENTAL ASSISTANT

A registered dental assistant works in a dental office assisting in the clinical practice of dentistry. Registered dental assistants must complete a one year ADA-approved dental assisting training program and pass the state licensing examination (written and clinical parts).

UNREGULATED DENTAL ASSISTANT

A dental assistant works in a dental office helping with non-medical parts of dental procedures like preparing patients, and taking x rays. Dental assistants work under the supervision of a licensed dentist and are not licensed by the Department.

5. BEYOND LICENSING

MAINTAINING LICENSURE

Your Michigan Dentistry License must be renewed every three years through the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing on behalf of the Michigan Board of Dentistry. Your license will expire on August 31. You are responsible for renewing your license even if you do not receive a notice from the Department on behalf of the Michigan Board of Dentistry. You will have sixty days after the expiration date in which you may continue to practice without a lapse in your license as long as you renew within that sixty day grace period. If you do not renew during that grace period, the expiration date of your license will revert to August 31. Be careful: if you continue to practice after your license has expired (lapsed), you could have disciplinary action taken against you. If your license does expire, you will be required to apply for relicensure to reactivate your license.

Every time you renew your license you must state that you have met a 60-hour Continuing Education requirement or CE. You need to keep the information on file in case you are audited. There are many opportunities to earn these hours, but special rules apply. You should check the Dentistry Board website for details, or consider joining a professional association that offers CE opportunities to members.

LICENSING MOBILITY (RECIPROCITY)

The state of Michigan grants licensing to dentists through Examination (the process described in this topic), or by Endorsement. A dentist licensed in another state, who wants to practice in Michigan, must independently meet all Michigan requirements for licensing. If you become licensed in Michigan and want to practice dentistry in another state, you will need to research the legal requirements for that state.

6. IMPORTANT LINKS

LICENSING AND REGULATION:

- The [Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs \(LARA\)](#) issues licenses for dentists, dental specialists, dental hygienists and registered dental

assistants. Application packets (both by Examination and by Endorsement) can be downloaded on the homepage.

- The main page for the licensing of any health profession is www.michigan.gov/healthlicense. The page that specifically concerns dentistry is http://www.michigan.gov/lara/0,4601,7-154-35299_63294_27529_27533---,00.html and it includes information regarding the boards, applications and frequently asked questions.
- Contact information: Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Bureau of Professional Licensing, PO Box 30670, Lansing MI 48909
- Telephone Number 517-373-8068; Fax: 517-335-2044 Email: BPLHelp@michigan.gov
- The law that regulates licensing for all health professions for can be read at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-15>;
- The law that regulates controlled substances can be read at: <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-368-1978-7>

CREDENTIALING ORGANIZATIONS:

- [Educational Credential Evaluators, Inc.](#) (ECE); Phone: 414-289-3400

TESTING:

- [National Board Dental Examination \(NBDE\) Part I](#)
- [National Board Dental Examination \(NBDE\) Part II](#)
- [ADEX Exam manual](#)
- The ADEX administrator for Michigan is the [North East Regional Board of Dental Examiners, Inc.](#) (NERB). You can register online. Phone: 301-563-3300