

## **REGISTERED DENTAL ASSISTANT (RDA) EXAMINATION INSTRUCTIONS – QUALIFICATION THROUGH GRADUATION FROM BOARD-APPROVED RDA PROGRAMS**

Completed applications containing all required documents and fees must be postmarked by the final filing date. Applications received after the final filing date may be returned. You must provide a written explanation for all affirmative answers. Failure to do so will result in this application being deemed incomplete.

Applicants for Registered Dental Assistant licensure in California must pass the RDA written examination, the Law and Ethics written examination, and undergo a criminal history investigation prior to receiving a license. Temporary permits are not issued and licensure in another state or country is not recognized.

### **GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS B&P Code Section 1752.1**

To qualify for examination and licensure on or after January 1, 2010, you must either:

- A) Be a graduate of a Board-approved Registered Dental Assisting program; ***OR***
- B) Complete 15-months and 1280 hours of satisfactory work experience as a dental assistant for a dentist licensed in the United States by the date of application.

Applicants who have graduated from a dental assisting program in a postsecondary institution approved by the Department of Education or in a secondary institution, regional occupational center, or regional occupational program that is ***not approved by the board***, shall be granted credit toward the 15-months work experience requirement. The credit shall equal the total weeks spent in classroom training and internship on a week-for-week basis. Verification of hours completed and used toward the 15-month work experience requirement must be demonstrated and certified on the “Certification of Non-Approved Dental Assisting Program” form completed by the educational facility.

*NOTE: All applicants are required to provide evidence of having completed an 8-hour Board-approved course in Infection Control and a 2-hour Board-approved course in the Dental Practice Act. Certificates must be dated within five years from the date your application is received by the Board. You are also required to submit evidence of completing a course in basic life support (BLS) offered by the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association. This evidence is required to be a copy of the front and back of the card that is issued to you from the course provider*

**Make checks payable to the Dental Board of California. Mail applications with payment to:**

Dental Board of California  
2005 Evergreen Street, Suite 1550  
Sacramento, California 95815

## **FIRST-TIME APPLICANTS**

First-time applicants must send the completed Application for RDA Examination and Licensure to the address above, **INCLUDING the fee of \$120.00**. You will pay an additional \$43 fee for the RDA written examination and \$23 for the Law and Ethics examination when scheduling your test with Psychological Services Inc. (PSI), the contracted testing agency handling the examinations for the Board. Once you have been approved to sit for the practical examination, a Candidate Handbook will be mailed to you by PSI with information regarding how to pay for and when to schedule your written examinations.

If you want verification that your application documents have arrived at the Board offices, you must include a self-addressed and stamped postcard or send your application with a delivery confirmation. Address the post card to yourself, place postage on the card and return with your completed application. The card will be used to notify you that the Board has received your application for the Registered Dental Assistant examination and it is in the process of being evaluated. When you receive the card back in the mail, it only means that we have received your application, not that you have been accepted or scheduled for an examination.

## **FINGERPRINTS, LOCATIONS AND FEES**

***You are required to submit fingerprints*** upon initial application. ***Live Scan*** is available only in California, for either residents or visitors, is more efficient than the Ink-on-Cards method, and is ***required for all California applicants***. The Live Scan form is attached to this application or can be downloaded from the Dental Board website at [www.dbc.ca.gov](http://www.dbc.ca.gov). ***Make sure you print or copy the form in triplicate (three copies)***.

The agency data for the Dental Board has been completed on the form for you. Applicants need to provide personal data on the form and contact the Live Scan location in your area (see authorized Live Scan locations on the website at <http://www.caag.state.ca.us/fingerprints/publications/contact.htm>). At your fingerprinting appointment, present ***three (3) copies*** of the form to the Live Scan vendor. Upon completion of the fingerprinting process, the vendor site will retain one copy and ***you will receive one copy to submit to the Dental Board as part of this application filing process***. The remaining copy should be retained by you for your records.

Your fingerprints will be scanned electronically, without ink, and transmitted to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for processing. The DOJ will send their report to the Dental Board. Usually the report is received within seven days. There is a low rate of rejections with the Live Scan method.

The Live Scan service location will require you to pay a fee. Fees vary depending on location and are posted on the vendor location website indicated above. California applicants using Live Scan are not required to submit the \$49 fingerprint card fee to the Dental Board as part of this application. ***Your Live Scan fees will be paid separately to the vendor location at the time of service.***

Out-of-State applicants using the Ink-on-Cards method of fingerprinting will be required to submit a \$49 finger card fee to the Board upon submission of this application. Further instructions regarding ink fingerprinting for Out-of-State applicants can be found on page 7.

**FIRST-TIME APPLICANT CHECKLIST**

Based on the graduation date of your California Board-approved RDA program, be sure to complete or provide evidence of having completed the following:

Education Pathway – Board-approved program completion <u>on or after</u> 7/1/2009	Education Pathway – Board-approved program completion <u>prior to</u> 7/1/2009
Completion of the RDA Examination Application, signed and dated	Completion of the RDA Examination Application, signed and dated
Attach copy of the school diploma or certificate of program completion <u>or</u> have your school certify graduation will occur within 30 days of examination (page 2 of application)	Attach copy of the school diploma or certificate of program completion. Date of program completion may not be more than three (3) years immediately preceding date of application.
Attach copy of current Basic Life Support – CPR (AHA/ARC)	Attach copies of certificates of course completion in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infection Control (8-hours)</li> <li>• California Dental Practice Act (2-hours)</li> <li>• Basic Life Support – CPR (AHA/ARC)</li> <li>• Optional: Pit &amp; Fissure Sealants (must be completed by first renewal requiring continuing education)</li> </ul>

**EXPLANATION OF DOCUMENTS FOR APPLICATION WHEN QUALIFYING BY GRADUATION FROM A BOARD-APPROVED RDA PROGRAM**

In April 2009, all Board-approved RDA dental assisting programs were required to verify by affidavit the statutory requirement to be inclusive of all curricula dictated by law, including the application of pit and fissure sealants, coronal polishing, radiation safety, infection control, and California Dental Practice Act (CDPA). Certificates of program completion dated on or after 7/1/2009 are, therefore, considered all-inclusive of the educational requirements and do not require the applicant who graduated after 7/1/2009 to have to submit separate certificates for each area of certification.

For candidates graduating prior to July 1, 2009, the content of the program is not considered all-inclusive and, therefore, separate documents or certificates in the identified areas except radiation safety and coronal polishing (considered inclusive of all RDA programs since July 1, 2002) is required.

For those graduating prior to July 1, 2009 but did not test and obtain licensure until after January 1, 2010, evidence of pit and fissure sealant certification may either be submitted at the time of application or at the first renewal requiring continuing education of the RDA license.

*Per B&P Code Section 1752.6: A registered dental assistant licensed on and after January 1, 2010, shall provide evidence of successful completion of a board-approved course in the application of pit and fissure sealants prior to the first expiration of his or her license that requires the completion of continuing education as a condition of renewal. The license of a registered dental assistant who does not provide evidence of successful completion of that course shall not be renewed until evidence of course completion is provided.*

### **OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANTS**

Applicants located outside of California must submit two completed fingerprint cards **supplied by the Board at the time of application** and an additional fee of \$49 for processing of the fingerprint cards (a total fee of \$169). You will pay an additional \$43 fee for the RDA written examination and \$23 for the Law and Ethics examination when you schedule your test with Psychological Services Inc. (PSI). Once you have been accepted for examination, a Candidate Handbook will be mailed to you by PSI with information regarding how to pay for and when to schedule your written examinations.

### **OUT-OF-STATE APPLICANT CHECKLIST**

Applicants graduating from a qualified program outside California must show evidence of having successfully completed the following California Dental Board-approved courses in the following subject areas at the time of application:

- Infection Control (8-hours)
- California Dental Practice Act (2-hours)
- Basic Life Support – CPR - American Heart Association (AHA)/American Red Cross (ARC)
- Radiation Safety Certificate (32-hours)
- Coronal Polishing Certificate (16-hours)

### **PREVIOUSLY-QUALIFIED APPLICANTS/ RE-EXAMINATION**

If, **within** the last two years, you qualified for and took the Written or Law and Ethics exam and failed, you must submit a completed Application for Re-Examination for the Written or Law and Ethics. ***Do not use this application form for re-examination.***

**If it has been more than two years since you last took either exam**, you must re-apply for both exams as a **first-time applicant**, even if you passed one of the exams in the past. Passing scores are only valid for two years from your last exam.

## **COMPLETING THE APPLICATION**

Many applications are rejected because they are incomplete or completed incorrectly - read all of the materials sent to you and complete **ALL** parts of the application fully, truthfully, and accurately. You must provide all of the information requested. Be sure to **clearly print** or type all data.

If you have not graduated by the final filing date, the school may certify on the application that you will complete by a specified date.

**However, it is your responsibility to make sure that the school certifies, that you did in fact successfully complete program.** If the Board does not receive proof of actual completion and graduation by this date, you will **not** be allowed to take the exams and you will have to re-apply as a first-time applicant during a later exam cycle. All certifications must contain original signatures and be submitted with your application.

Before submission of your application packet, check the following:

- ✓ Are checks for all the required fees included in your application packet?
- ✓ Has the school information been completed and verified by your Program Director or school administrator on the “Certification of Board-Approved Dental Assisting Program” form?
- ✓ Have you completely answered all questions and signed the application on Page 3?
- ✓ Did you clearly print or type in all the required areas of the application? Check for any missed areas.
- ✓ Have you included all the required certifications? Go through the checklist to make sure you have submitted all the certificates required for this application pathway.
- ✓ Have you self-addressed and stamped the application postcard and included it with your application package?
- ✓ Have you completed the Live Scan fingerprinting form, contacted the vendor and completed the fingerprinting process **prior to submission** of this application?

## **WHAT HAPPENS AFTER APPLICATION?**

If you are **not qualified**, you will be mailed a deficiency letter. If you have not been notified after 4 – 6 weeks from the filing of your application, you should contact the Board offices.

If you are **qualified**, you will be sent notification and a Candidate Handbook from PSI advising you of how to apply for and schedule your written examinations. Your Candidate Handbook will provide more detailed information about the content of the exams, important information about the examination process, suggestions for the examination day and other important testing information.

Approximately 30 days after you submitted your application, you will be sent a letter informing you of your application status.

## **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you have a disability and require special accommodations, call the Board to request a special accommodations packet. Completed special accommodation packets **MUST** be submitted **WITH** your application. It is not possible to make special arrangements for certain applicants to be scheduled together.

### **GENERAL NATURE OF THE EXAMINATIONS**

**The Written Exam** is a three-hour, computer based, 155-question multiple-choice exam. It is administered in a computerized test center at various sites in California. If you qualify and your application is accepted, you will be sent information about how to register for this exam.

**The Law and Ethics Exam** is a one-hour, computer based, multiple-choice exam. It is administered in a computerized test center at various sites in California. If you qualify and your application is accepted, you will be sent information about how to register for this exam.

**Once your application has been accepted, you will be sent specific information concerning the content of the examinations. Be sure to read it carefully.**

### **REFUND OF FEES**

**Fees are non-refundable.** If your application is rejected for any reason, the application fee cannot be refunded.

### **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

A \$25 fee will be charged for all returned checks.

### **ALLOWABLE DA AND RDA DUTIES**

*It is a criminal offense to practice as a registered dental assisting (RDA) without first receiving a license.* Therefore, be sure to become familiar with the duties that the unlicensed dental assistant and the Registered Dental Assistant is allowed to perform in California, as contained in the following laws and regulations.

### **AUTHORIZED DUTIES - DENTAL ASSISTANT**

*(Business & Professions Code §1750)*

A dental assistant is an individual who, without a license, may perform basic supportive dental procedures, as authorized by law and by regulations adopted by the Dental Board, under the supervision of a licensed dentist. "Basic supportive dental procedures" are those procedures that have technically elementary

characteristics, are completely reversible, and are unlikely to precipitate potentially hazardous conditions for the patient being treated.

### **GENERAL SUPERVISION DUTIES (DA)**

*(Business & Professions Code §1750.1(a))*

A dental assistant may perform the following duties under the general supervision of a supervising licensed dentist:

1. Extra-oral duties or procedures specified by the supervising licensed dentist provided that these duties or procedures meet the definition of a basic supportive procedure.
2. Operate dental radiography equipment for the purpose of oral radiography if the dental assistant has completed an approved radiation safety course or passed a radiation safety exam.
3. Perform intraoral and extraoral photography.

### **DIRECT SUPERVISION DUTIES (DA)**

*(Business & Professions Code §1750.1(b))*

A dental assistant may perform the following duties under the direct supervision of a supervising licensed dentist:

1. Apply nonaerosol and noncaustic topical agents.
2. Apply topical fluoride.<sup>1</sup>
3. Take intraoral impressions for all non-prosthetic appliances.
4. Take facebow transfers and bite registrations.
5. Place and remove rubber dams or other isolation devices.
6. Place, wedge, and remove matrices for restorative procedures.
7. Remove post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist.
8. Perform measurements for the purposes of orthodontic treatment.
9. Cure restorative or orthodontic materials in operative site with a light-curing device.
10. Examine orthodontic appliances.
11. Place and remove orthodontic separators.
12. Remove ligature ties and archwires.
13. After adjustment by the dentist, examine and seat removable orthodontic appliances and deliver care instructions to the patient.
14. Remove periodontal dressings.
15. Remove sutures after inspection of the site by the dentist.

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<sup>1</sup> Effective January 10, 2010, when operating in a school-based setting or a public health program created or administered by a federal, state, county, or local governmental entity pursuant to Sections 104762 and 104830 of the Health and Safety Code, a dental assistant may apply topical fluoride under the general direction of a licensed dentist or physician (B&P Code, §1750.1(c)).

16. Place patient monitoring sensors.
17. Monitor patient sedation, limited to reading and transmitting information from the monitor display during the intraoperative phase of surgery for electrocardiogram waveform, carbon dioxide and end tidal carbon dioxide concentrations, respiratory cycle data, continuous noninvasive blood pressure data, or pulse arterial oxygen saturation measurements, for the purpose of interpretation and evaluation by a supervising licensed dentist who shall be at the patient's chairside during this procedure.
18. Assist in the administration of nitrous oxide when used for analgesia or sedation. A dental assistant shall not start the administration of the gases and shall not adjust the flow of the gases unless instructed to do so by the supervising licensed dentist who shall be present at the patient's chairside during the implementation of these instructions.

### **AUTHORIZED DUTIES - REGISTERED DENTAL ASSISTANT**

*(Business & Professions Code §1752.4)*

A registered dental assistant may perform all of the following duties:<sup>2</sup>

1. All duties that a dental assistant is allowed to perform.
2. Mouth-mirror inspections of the oral cavity, to include charting of obvious lesions, existing restorations, and missing teeth.
3. Apply and activate bleaching agents using a nonlaser light-curing device.
4. Use of automated caries detection devices and materials to gather information for diagnosis by the dentist.
5. Obtain intraoral images for computer-aided design (CAD), milled restorations.
6. Pulp vitality testing and recording of findings.
7. Place bases, liners, and bonding agents.
8. Chemically prepare teeth for bonding *(for restorative only)*.
9. Place, adjust, and finish direct provisional restorations.
10. Fabricate, adjust, cement, and remove indirect provisional restorations, including stainless steel crowns when used as a provisional restoration.
11. Place post-extraction dressings after inspection of the surgical site by the supervising licensed dentist.
12. Place periodontal dressings.
13. Dry endodontically treated canals using absorbent paper points.
14. Adjust dentures extra-orally.
15. Remove excess cement from surfaces of teeth with a hand instrument.
16. Polish coronal surfaces of the teeth.
17. Place ligature ties and archwires.
18. Remove orthodontic bands.
19. All duties that the board may prescribe by regulation.

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<sup>2</sup> *Except as provided in Business and Professions Code section 1777, the supervising dentist determines whether each procedure is performed under general or direct supervision.*



A registered dental assistant may only perform the following additional duties if he or she has completed a board-approved educational program in those duties:

1. Remove excess cement with an ultrasonic scaler from supragingival surfaces of teeth undergoing orthodontic treatment.
2. The allowable duties of an orthodontic assistant permit-holder. A registered dental assistant shall not be required to complete further instruction in the duties of placing ligature ties and archwires, removing orthodontic bands, and removing excess cement from tooth surfaces with a hand instrument.
3. The allowable duties of a dental sedation assistant permit-holder.
4. The application of pit and fissure sealants.