

DANB REPORTS EXAM PERFORMANCE RESULTS

To maintain the validity and reliability of its certification programs, meet accreditation standards established by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), recognition by the International Accreditation Services (IAS) to the ANSI 17024 standards for personnel certification bodies, and meet certifying board recognition criteria established by the American Dental Association (ADA), DANB regularly reviews the performance of its exams. On Oct. 15, 2021, DANB submitted its Annual Report with recent certification and exam counts and pass rates to ADA's Council on Dental Education and Licensure (CDEL).

The table below shows the number of DANB certificants as of Aug. 31, 2021.

Certification	Count
National Entry Level Dental Assistant (NELDA)	207
Certified Dental Assistant (CDA)	34,915
Certified Orthodontic Assistant (COA)	1,149
Certified Preventive Functions Dental Assistant (CPFDA)	243
Certified Restorative Functions Dental Assistant (CRFDA)	137
Certified Dental Practice Management Administrator (CDPMA)*	165
Certified Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Assistant (COMSA)*	86
TOTAL	36,902

*DANB discontinued administering the COMSA exam in 2000 and the CDPMA exam in 2008.

Pathway pass rates review

Each year, DANB applies inferential statistics to passing rates of candidates who take the General Chairside Assisting (GC) component exam of the Certified Dental Assistant (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 2021 meeting, directors reviewed passing rate comparison results for these two GC exam eligibility pathways. Performance data have been compared each year since 1998. From 4/1/07 through 12/31/2020 (time periods reviewed separately because each year DANB publishes an updated item bank for computerized adaptive test administration of its national exams), there have been statistically significant differences between pass rates of CDA/GC pathway I and CDA/GC pathway II candidates.

Though not as expected (that is, ideally, there would be no statistically significant difference in passing rates between pathway I and pathway II candidates), because the overall passing rate has remained stable during the time the difference has been evident, evaluation results support continuation of the requirement of 3,500 hours of work experience for those assistants who are not graduates of CODA-accredited dental assisting programs (that is, neither increasing this work experience requirement to more than two years, nor decreasing it to fewer than two years).

DANB Exam Results

DANB will continue to monitor GC pass rates by eligibility pathway at its Winter Board meetings and will discuss what, if any, actions to take, and will once again report to CDEL in Fall 2022.

Pass/fail results for DANB national exams

Pass/Fail results for DANB national exams administered from 9/1/20 – 8/31/21

GC	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	2,732	3,990
Pass	2,220	3,085
Fail	512	905
Pass rate	81%	77%

RHS	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	9,246	12,648
Pass	6,361	7,972
Fail	2,885	4,676
Pass rate	69%	63%

ICE	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	5,025	6,481
Pass	3,835	4,595
Fail	1,190	1,886
Pass rate	76%	71%

OA	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	80	95
Pass	44	59
Fail	36	36
Pass rate	55%	62%

CP	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	398	442
Pass	250	307
Fail	148	135
Pass rate	63%	69%

SE	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	61	90
Pass	41	56
Fail	20	34
Pass rate	67%	62%

DANB Exam Results

Pass/Fail results for DANB national exams administered from 9/1/20 – 8/31/21, continued

TF	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	39	50
Pass	15	26
Fail	24	24
Pass rate	38%	52%

AMP	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	341	423
Pass	218	207
Fail	123	216
Pass rate	64%	49%

IM	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	21	29
Pass	18	23
Fail	3	6
Pass rate	86%	79%

TMP	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	68	96
Pass	49	53
Fail	19	43
Pass rate	72%	55%

RF	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
Total candidates	58	60
Pass	46	53
Fail	12	7
Pass rate	79%	88%