

Registered Dental Assistant General / Law and Ethics Exam to Launch in May 2018

At its December 2016 meeting, the Dental Board of California (Board) and the Dental Assisting Council (Council) agreed to combine both the Registered Dental Assistant (RDA) Written and the RDA Law and Ethics examinations into one examination. The Board worked with the Department of Consumer Affairs' (DCA) Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) to implement the combined test plan based on the results of the 2016 RDA Occupational Analysis (OA) to ensure that the combined examination is legally defensible and meets the requirements of Business and Professions Code Section 139. The examination plan for the combined RDA Written and Law and Ethics Examination was posted on the Board's web site in November 2017 and minor revisions were made to the document in January 2018. The examination plan is posted on the Board's web site at: http://www.dbc.ca.gov/formspubs/rda_law_ethics_combined.pdf.

At its February 2018 meeting, the Board received a request from dental assisting educators to delay the implementation of the examination so the dental assisting programs would have an opportunity to prepare their students for the new examination. Additionally, those dental assisting educators were concerned that the examination plan posted on the Board's web site did not include references to specific textbooks used for the development of examination questions. Additionally, they were concerned the Psychological Services Incorporated (PSI) Candidate Handbook was not yet available for their students to begin reviewing in preparation for the anticipated May 2018 launch of the combined examination. In response to these concerns, the Board requested staff consult with the OPES to see if delaying the implementation of the examination was feasible.

The OPES advised that a delay would not be warranted and that sufficient notice has been provided regarding the examination format changes because this is the combination of two existing examinations and not the development of an entirely new examination. The question pool will be very much the same. All study guide references remain the same, with the exception that references to the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) have been removed. As a result of the findings of the OPES, the Board will continue to move forward with the launch of the combined examination in May 2018.

The implementation of the combined RDA Written and Law and Ethics Examination is anticipated to occur on Thursday, May 24, 2018. **To prepare for the conversion to the singular exam, PSI will not administer the separate RDA Law and Ethics and the RDA Written Examinations from Tuesday, May 15 through Wednesday, May 23.** Current applicants may schedule their RDA Law and Ethics and the RDA Written Examinations with PSI through Monday, May 14. If a candidate does not successfully pass both the RDA Law and Ethics and the RDA Written Examinations by Monday, May 14, the candidate will be required to take the combined RDA Written and Law and Ethics examination once it becomes available on May 24.

The combined RDA Written and Law and Ethics Examination will consist of one-hundred-fifty (150) questions. The fee for the examination will be \$38.50. The PSI Candidate Handbook will be available on the Board's web site no later than March 30, 2018.

Comparable to any new examination, there will be a slight delay in providing results due to the Board performing a quality assurance assessment on examination items. Candidates will receive a letter of participation, after completing their examination, that will explain that their exam results are being held for a period of four to six (4-6) weeks and that they will receive their examination scores by mail. Once the assessment has been completed, immediate release of examination results will resume.

Please note that the implementation of the combined RDA Written and Law and Ethics Examination is contingent upon the DCA BreZE system. Issues related to the DCA BreZE conversion are outside the Board's control and delayed implementation of the combined examination is possible. If in the event, the implementation is delayed the Board will provide notification on its web site as well as send out an email to all subscribers. The Board encourages you to subscribe to its email communications.

The Board will continue to do its best to make this transition as smooth as possible and will provide notification of any implementation issues or delays. Please feel free to contact the Board with any questions by telephone at (916) 263-2300 or by email at da.program@dca.ca.gov.