

April 10, 2020

Dear Deans of WREB Host Site Schools,

Like all of you, we find ourselves responding daily to a rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation. As an examining agency, our primary concern over the last few weeks has been communicating with host sites and candidates to reschedule as many exams as possible and as soon as it's safely possible based on current information. Dental examinations, as they are rescheduled, must be conducted in a format that is safe for patients, candidates, dental school personnel, WREB staff and examiners.

It is WREB's mission to serve the needs of our member states, as well as host sites, by providing licensure examinations in reliable and valid formats, that are implemented with attention to detail and administrative consistency that has been our standard for over 40 years. We want you to know that we have been in communication with state boards to understand their concerns regarding possible modifications of existing state dental rules and statutes, emergency options that may be available to them and other procedural decisions related to licensure testing for the dental schools graduating Class of 2020.

To that end, in an effort to be responsive to this situation and all constituencies, particularly state boards who rely on examination results to inform licensing decisions, WREB has developed, field tested, and validated a simulation that could be required in lieu of WREB's traditional patient-based Operative Section. In simulation, each candidate is required to successfully perform the preparation and finish restoration of a conventional Class II on a molar and a Class III on a central incisor. All procedures are performed, like the Endodontics and Prosthodontics sections, in full simulation and with rubber-dam isolation. Results are assessed using established Operative Section criteria and the passing cut-point is unchanged.

Essentially, WREB will be offering, in addition to our traditional patient-based examination, a mannikin based alternative for 2020 dental graduates. The mannikin option will be available to our candidates and with each Dean's approval, may be administered at their school. Your individual state's decisions on acceptance of a mannikin based clinical testing format for 2020 will need to be considered in order to address applicants concerns for initial licensure and portability.

WREB intends for this exam to be used for one year only and to resume our patient-based exam for the 2021 exam season, unless there are states who have decided to permanently move in this direction.

For the 2020 exams, each host site school will be given the choice of the traditional WREB exam or the mannikin exam. Whichever exam is chosen, it will be administered using the appropriate protocols developed and implemented at each site in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you and be well!

Beth Cole, CEO  
Western Regional Examining Board