

## **Western Regional Examining Board**

### **Position Statement on Crown Preparation**

The Western Regional Examining Board (WREB) is a non-profit testing agency that strives to provide state dental licensing bodies with reliable assessments of candidate competency. The WREB clinical dental licensure examination utilizes a combination of assessments involving treatment procedures performed on patients and procedures completed on simulators. At this time patient-based procedures provide the most authentic examination of the full range of a candidate's clinical skills. Logistical limitations imposed by a 2½ day clinical examination as well as the complexity of some clinical procedures necessarily restrict the scope of clinical examinations. Simulated clinical procedures (or selected components of procedures) are used to augment the patient based procedures. The use of manikin or typodont procedures can provide additional measures of candidate skills in selected areas, but provide lower fidelity than measures from patient based procedures.

A practice analysis conducted by WREB in 2007 ([www.wreb.org](http://www.wreb.org) listed under publications) identified the single crown as a procedure of high frequency and importance in general dentistry. WREB conducted a multi-level study to evaluate the possible inclusion of testing related to crown procedures.

WREB designed a clinical testing concept for assessing dental students' capacity to complete a single crown preparation in a format known as a Curriculum Integrated Patient Crown Procedure (CIPCP). This concept was field tested for implementation at 9 dental schools throughout the country. In the CIPCP field-test, dental students completed crown preparations on patients of record as a component of a faculty-approved and sequenced treatment plan. The additional candidate assessment information obtained with the CIPCP was outweighed by the added logistical challenges and increased resources and costs required of candidates, patients and dental school examination sites.

WREB also developed and tested multiple simulation exercises on a typodont, mounted into mannequin, to assess the preparation phase of the crown procedure. Outcomes from these exercises indicated that when this assessment format is used for clinical licensure testing, it did not provide an evaluation of discrete clinical skills and critical components unique to a complete crown restoration.

Modification of the clinical dental examination requires consideration of logistical complexity and increased resources weighed against the potential gain from additional measures of candidate competency. A committee of state board members, testing specialists and dental educators with subject matter expertise was convened in October 2009 to review the content of

and validity provided by the current WREB dental clinical examination. They also evaluated the results of the CIPCP Field Tests and the outcomes from the typodont exercises. A limiting factor for use of either the CIPCP or the typodont procedure was the completion of only the preparation phase of the crown procedure. The current WREB dental clinical exam already offers a patient based restorative option that allows for completion of all components (selection, preparation, impression and cementation) of an indirect restoration.

Following analysis and study including extensive field testing of clinical and simulated clinical crown preparation procedures, WREB has concluded that a crown preparation procedure will not be added to the dental clinical examination. The current examination provides a comprehensive, authentic and reliable assessment of candidates' technical and cognitive skills related to tooth preparation. The additional logistical challenges and increased resource needs to implement a crown preparation testing element would not be balanced by a commensurate increase in the reliability of the overall assessment of candidate competence.

WREB continuously evaluates all sections of the examination to provide state licensing bodies with the highest fidelity and most reliable assessment of candidate competency. WREB reviews practice patterns in general dentistry and advancements in the authenticity of clinical simulations to evaluate potential changes in the examination process and format. WREB is committed to a responsive and responsible approach to clinical examination on behalf of state licensing bodies, candidates, and patients.