

**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
REGARDING
DENTAL ASSISTING**

Dental Assistants perform a variety of functions. The extent of these functions depends upon the individual's background and credentials. The dental assisting program offered at UMDNJ-SHRP prepares the student for Certification in Dental Assisting (CDA), licensure as a Registered Dental Assistant (RDA), and Licensure as a Dental Radiologic Technologist (LRT(D)).

As such, the individual may perform the following functions:

- Assist the dentist in all phases of patient treatment
- Sterilize instruments
- Prepare treatment rooms
- Provide patient education and nutritional counseling
- Arrange and confirm appointments
- Prepare dental insurance claims
- Expose, process, and mount radiographs
- Perform a variety of intraoral expanded functions
- Work as members of the dental health team
- Perform basic laboratory procedures
- Select and transfer instruments to the dentist

Where do Dental Assistants work?

- Private dental offices
- Group practices
- Hospitals
- Dental clinics
- Insurance companies
- Dental suppliers
- Dental manufacturing companies
- Armed services
- Educational institutions
- Public health offices
- International employment

What is the employment forecast for dental assistants?

The current job market is stable and future projections indicate a continued high demand for assisting services.

Are there opportunities for career advancement for dental assistants?

Yes. Dental assistants have become office managers, research associates, dental sales representatives, educators, dental laboratory technologist, dental hygienists, and dentists. There are also educational opportunities available for dental assistants who wish to obtain degree beyond the certificate level. Credits from the Dental Assisting Program transfer into the Bachelor of Science in Health Science on-line degree program with UMDNJ and Thomas Edison State College (TESC).

What are desirable characteristics of dental assistants?

- Interest in science
- Understanding of the human body in health and disease
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Manual dexterity
- Desire for continual learning
- Ability to utilize problem-solving skills
- Concern for others
- Team player

What are the advantages of a career in dental assisting?

- Opportunities for career advancement
- Gainful employment
- Good hourly wages
- Good working environment
- Flexible hours
- Health care delivery team member
- Ability to help others

What is the average salary for dental assistants?

Most certified(CDA) and registered dental assistants (RDA) with an x-ray license (LRT(D)) may command a minimum hourly wage of \$18.00 upon graduation. Most employers offer uniform allowances, reimbursement for continuing education and professional dues, health benefits, and pension plans.

Where are the dental assisting classes offered?

General education classes are offered by Brookdale Community College, Essex County College, Raritan Valley Community College and Union County College. Professional coursework is offered on both the Scotch Plains and Newark campuses of the University of Medicine and Dentistry, School of Health Related Professions and New Jersey Dental School (NJDS) facilities.

In addition to tuition and laboratory fees, are there other student expenses?

All students are required to purchase uniforms and textbooks, and lease instruments and supplies. Students are also responsible for fees for parking, professional meetings and licensing examinations. It is also strongly recommended that students apply for membership in their professional association.

