



DENTAL ASSISTING/ASSISTANT CIP Code 51.0601

This document is a program of study for Dental Assisting/Assistant programs at the secondary level. This program of study is considered a framework, not a curriculum. From this framework educators may use this as a tool to provide structure for developing learning modules, unit plans, or daily lesson plans that meet the tasks or standards within the program of study. This program of study is based on research, experience and many resources. The goal is to train a workforce that is skilled, knowledgeable and able to meet the needs of the industry today and well into the future.

Dental assistants carry out a wide variety of jobs within a private dental office, clinic or hospital setting. During dental procedures, assistants work alongside the dentist to provide a second pair of hands while giving comfort to the patient. Some of these jobs include, but are not limited to, greeting patients, preparing procedure trays, mixing required dental materials, evacuation of fluids and the transfer of instruments and instrument sterilization. They also give oral hygiene instructions along with pre- and post-operative instructions and nutrition counseling.

Dental assistants are also certified by the State to expose and process dental X-rays as directed by a dentist. They may also remove sutures, apply topical anesthetics to tissues and remove excess cement after final placement of crowns and bridges. Dental assistants may also carry out laboratory duties, such as taking impressions, pouring models, trimming casts, constructing bleaching trays and making temporary crowns. As a dental receptionist, one can schedule and confirm appointments, receive patients, maintain and file dental records, handle accounts receivable and order dental supplies.

Generally, dental assistants in Pennsylvania receive training by developing and demonstrating competencies as a student in a career and technical education Dental Assisting program or developing and demonstrating competencies as a postsecondary student in an adult Dental Assisting program. Career pathways include certified dental assistant (CDA), certified expanded function dental assistant (EFDA) and certified dental practice management assistant (CDPMA).

Assumptions of This Program of Study

Graduates of this program of study must to receive high quality training in order to meet the needs of business and industry. In addition, the skills taught should include the seamless integration of academic concepts with technical competencies, providing the linkage from conceptual to contextual learning. Furthermore, the skills taught should offer the requisite aptitudes for job advancement, security and portability. The following advantages are enjoyed by those employed in the dental field.

- Personal satisfaction – One of the most enjoyable aspects of a career in dental assisting is working with people. Personal fulfillment comes from providing a valuable health care service while establishing trusting relationships with patients.
- Prestige – As a result of their education and clinical training in a highly skilled discipline, dental assistants are respected as valued members of the oral health care team.

- Variety – Dental assisting is a challenging and rewarding career, demanding versatility and a willingness to assume responsibility for many different tasks. Dental assistants use a variety of interpersonal and clinical skills to meet the oral health needs of many different patients each day. They may also provide oral health instruction in primary and secondary schools and other settings.
- Creativity – Because dental assistants interact with such diverse population groups, they must be creative in their approach to patient management and oral health education.
- Flexibility – The flexibility offered by full and part-time employment options and availability of evening and weekend hours enable dental assistants to balance their career and lifestyle needs. Assistants also have opportunities to work in a wide variety of settings including private dental practices, educational and community institutions, research teams and dental corporations.
- Security – The services that dental assistants provide are needed and valued by a large percentage of the population. There is currently a great demand for dental assistants. Employment opportunities will be excellent well into the future. Due to the success of preventive dentistry in reducing the incidence of oral disease, the expanding older population will retain their teeth longer and will be even more aware of the importance of regular dental care. With the emphasis on preventive care, dentists will need to employ more dental assistants than ever before to meet the increased demand for dental services.
- Excellent working conditions – Dental offices are interesting, pleasant, people-oriented environments in which to work.

Dental auxiliary personnel provide services under several descriptive job titles in a variety of dental office settings, including general practice, clinics and dental specialty offices. Names of job titles and duties may overlap and interchange with each other. For the purposes of this document the following may apply.

- Chairside Dental Assistant
- Clinical Assistant
- Dental receptionist/secretary
- Dental Claims Processor
- Dental Lab Technician Assistant
- Dental Radiology (X-ray) Technician
- Dental Sales Representative
- Expanded Function Dental Assistant (EFDA) (with additional training)

The Pennsylvania State Board of Dentistry ensures competency by the licensure of dentists and the certification of expanded function dental assistants (EFDA). All dental assistants and expanded function dental assistants are required to work under the direct or general supervision of a licensed dentist. See the Pennsylvania Code – Chapter 33.State Board of Dentistry.

High-quality programs should meet the following standards:

- Promote **positive working relationships**
- Implement a **curriculum** that fosters all areas of skill development
- Use **appropriate** and **effective teaching approaches**
- Provide **ongoing assessments** of student progress
- Employ and support qualified **teaching staff**
- Establish and maintain relationships and use resources of the **community**
- Provide a safe and healthy learning **environment**
- Implement strong program organization and supervision policies that result in **high-quality teaching and learning**
- Integrate academic skills and aptitudes necessary for postsecondary education, gainful employment and a foundation of **lifelong learning**

Academic Rigor

Research shows that career success requires the same level of college-prep courses as postsecondary success requires. The Department of Education's focus is to ensure that every student graduates prepared for college and a career. In order to be successful in this program of study, students should follow the academic sequence as determined by Pennsylvania's high school reform efforts.

Resources Used for This Program of Study

- MAVCC (Multistate Academic Vocational Curriculum Consortium)
<http://www.mavcc.org/>
- NOCTI (National Occupational Competency Testing Institute <http://www.nocti.org/>)
- O*NET <http://online.onetcenter.org/>
- Pennsylvania Approved Certifications for Industry-Recognized Certifications for Career and Technical Education Programs
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/instructional_resources/7392/industry-recognized_certifications_for_career_and_technical_education_programs/507887
- Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry High Priority Occupations
http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/high_priority_occupations/12910
- VTECS (A Consortium of Innovative Career and Workforce Development Resources)
<http://www.vtecs.org/>

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An instructional program that prepares individuals to function effectively as an integral member of the dental health team. The practitioner will perform chair-side assisting, related office duties and selected dental office laboratory procedures and dental radiography under the supervision of a licensed dentist. The planned courses should include instruction in standard precautions, OSHA regulations, communications skills, computer literacy, anatomy and physiology, along

with microbiology and sterilization. Dental Science instruction shall include content in dental materials, dental radiography, oral anatomy, histology, oral embryology, oral pathology and therapeutics. Clinical science should emphasize the principles and application of office management, chair-side assisting, dental emergencies and legal/ethical aspects of dental practice. Clinical practice is an integral part of the program designed to perfect students' competence in performing dental assisting functions. The program must include concurrent theoretical and practical application of content areas.

Integrate Academic Career Education and Work Standards for Student Success

As students participate in career exploration activities and rigorous studies from elementary grades through graduation, they learn to appreciate the relationship between their classroom learning and the skills needed within the workplace. The academic and workplace skills within the Academic Standards for Career Education and Work are expected to be addressed within classrooms and achieved by all students throughout Pennsylvania. No student should leave secondary education without a solid foundation in these Standards.

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_board_of_education/8830/state_academic_standards/529102

CEW Standards Tool Kit for teachers to implement CEW Standards
www.pacareerstandards.com

Pennsylvania Approved Certifications

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/instructional_resources/7392/industry-recognized_certifications_for_career_and_technical_education_programs/507887

The Program of Study Documents

- Crosswalk Template for Task Alignment (excel) – Dental Assisting/Assistant – Instructions: Indicate the number code(s) of your school's program competency or competencies aligned to each program of study competency.
- Crosswalk Template for Task Alignment (pdf) – Dental Assisting/Assistant – Instructions: Indicate the number code(s) of your school's program competency or competencies aligned to each program of study competency.
- Scope and Sequence Template (word) – Enter secondary technical Program of Study courses. Postsecondary courses will be determined when the Statewide Articulation Agreement for this Program of Study is complete.
- Scope and Sequence Template (pdf) – Enter secondary technical Program of Study courses. Postsecondary courses will be determined when the Statewide Articulation Agreement for this Program of Study is complete.
- PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content Alignment to Dental Assisting/Assistant Task List (excel) – Crosswalk of PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL), Math, and Science aligned to Program of Study Secondary Competency List. (coming soon)

- PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content Alignment to Dental Assisting/Assistant Task List (pdf) – Crosswalk of PA Academic Standards/Eligible Content for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (RWSL), Math, and Science aligned to Program of Study Secondary Competency List. (coming soon)

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