

DENTAL ASSISTANT

Dental Assisting Mission Statement

It is our mission to promote the educational advancement of dental assistants and the dental assisting profession. The program aims to enhance quality dental health care delivery to our diverse community through credentialing and professional activities. The program seeks to provide dental assisting students with the most recent advances in technology, materials, techniques, and equipment to be prepared when entering or being employed in the workforce system as dental assistants.

Goals

Goal 1:

Prepare students to successfully challenge the Dental Assisting National Board Radiation Health and Safety Examination

Goal 2:

Prepare students to successfully challenge the New Mexico Board of Dental Health Care (NMBODHC) Radiology Certification.

Goal 3:

Provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to gain employment in the dental assisting field within 6 months of graduation.

Certificate of Completion

Dental assisting is a rewarding profession. Dental assistants like helping others and enjoy working closely with patients and other dental team members. Dental assistants are frequently relied on as the dentist's "other set of hands." Thus constantly challenging the dental assistant to expand and grow their knowledge and skill sets.

There is no lack of variety in the types of tasks that dental assistants perform. Some of the skills dental assistants perform include:

- prepare equipment, materials, and instruments for patient care;
- perform sterilization and disinfection procedures;
- provide patients with instructions both before and after dental procedures ;
- create temporary crowns, bleaching trays, custom trays, & custom fitted sport mouth guards;
- provide coronal polishing and fluoride treatments
- place pit & fissure sealants;
- take impressions of teeth;
- take patient vital signs, record or review medical histories and medications;
- provide individualized oral hygiene instruction for patients and/or parents:
- create study casts (molds);
- expose, develop, and mount dental radiographs;
- anticipate dental provider needs for patient procedure
- perform a variety of other duties surrounding patient care, infection control, and radiology

They may also be responsible for administrative tasks, such as billing, patient verification, scheduling various treatment appointments, ordering, and material inventory.

Assistants may work in a general practice office where a dentist provides multiple types of treatment, including restorative/operative work (fillings), prosthetics (crowns, bridges, and dentures), and perhaps some surgery. They may want to specialize in assisting periodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, endodontics, pedodontics, or orthodontics.

In the state of New Mexico, dental assistants can become certified to perform the following expanded duties:

- radiology (taking x-rays),
- coronal polishing (polishing of teeth and removal of stains),
- fluoride treatments (the act of placing fluoride on a patient's teeth) and
- sealant placement (used to prevent decay).

These certifications are obtained through the State Dental Board and are part of the Dental Assisting National Board Certification Exam.

Important Facts About This Certificate Program

Course Fees

In addition to tuition, a course fee of \$250 is charged for DAST 1123 (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/search/?P=DAS%20115>) Dental Radiology.

Effective July 1, 2024, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) does not accredit this program.

Students who graduate from this program can apply for licensure in the State of New Mexico after completing the program and completing their DANB or New Mexico Board Approved Radiation Health and Safety Exam. For additional details regarding licensure in New Mexico, students must contact the New Mexico Board of Dental Health Care (<https://www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/dental-health-care/>)

Students must check the licensure requirements in other states.

Required Skills and Abilities

- Students will need to demonstrate good oral expression (speech clarity) and written comprehension in English, critical thinking skills, near vision, and physical stamina (e.g., the ability to stand for long periods of time).
- Students must be able to manipulate dental/medical equipment, move/lift patients and equipment up to 60 pounds without assistance, and perform patient care procedures with manual dexterity.
- Successful applicants usually have a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Must be able to operate dental X-ray units to expose radiographs.
- Must be able to participate in program-required events, including student club activities, community service learning, meetings, etc.
- Must understand and be aware of potential exposure to blood-borne pathogens in the dental environment and be aware that immunizations against blood-borne pathogens are highly recommended and or required for all dental professionals due to the risk of exposure.
- Must be able to assist with, and or perform CPR as needed.

- Must be able to participate in classroom, clinical, laboratory, and practicum activities according to program guidelines and requirements.
- Must adhere to all program guidelines and policies at all times.

Program Admission Special Requirements

The Dental Assistant program is a limited-entry, special-application program. When a candidate is considered for acceptance into the program, the following factors are taken into account:

- High school and/or college transcripts and a minimum GPA of 2.8; however, most admitted candidates have a 3.0 or higher.
- Proof of county residency
- Essay (following rubric and instructions included in the online application)
- Copy of current healthcare provider CPR card and proof of current immunizations
- Completing all program admission requirements as outlined in the program application.
- Complete the program application (submitted by deadline).
- Must participate in all program-required activities for admitted students.

Website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/index.html> (<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>)

Dental Assistant - Certificate of Completion (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/dona-ana/academic-career-programs/dental-assistant/dental-assistant-certificate-completion/>)

Dental Assisting

DAST 1111. Dental Materials 2 Credits (2)

Covers the composition, properties, classifications, uses, and manipulation of materials commonly used in dentistry. Topics also include legal, ethical, and safety issues related to the use of dental materials. May be repeated up to 2 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the properties, composition, handling, storage, dispensing and disposal of dental materials used chairside and in the laboratory.
2. Describe the legal and ethical considerations for using dental materials in a safe and responsible manner.
3. Describe the role of the dental auxiliary in the selection, preparation, and placement of dental materials.

DAST 1111L. Dental Materials Laboratory 1 Credit (1P)

The laboratory emphasizes first-hand observations and hands-on performance of skill competencies that support the concepts taught in the theory course.

Prerequisite: DAST 1111.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the handling, storage, dispensing and disposal of dental materials used chairside and in the laboratory.
2. Demonstrate the role of the dental auxiliary in the legal, ethical, and safe use of dental materials.

DAST 1123. Dental Radiology 3 Credits (3)

This course focuses on the principles and techniques of dental radiography. Students will study radiation physics, hygiene, and safety protocols. Emphasis is placed on the fundamentals of intraoral and extraoral radiographic techniques, including exposure, quality assurance, and interpretation of radiographs. The course also covers patient selection criteria and explores other ancillary radiographic techniques.

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the principles of radiation physics in the production of x-rays.
2. Discuss the effects of ionizing radiation on living tissues and implement appropriate safety measures.
3. Recognize appropriate receptors and exposure factors.
4. Differentiate intraoral and extraoral radiographic techniques including landmarks and interpretation.
5. Explain infection control protocols during all radiographic procedures.
6. Recognize legal and ethical considerations related to dental radiography.
7. Develop communication strategies as related to dental radiology.

DAST 1123L. Dental Radiology Laboratory 1 Credit (1P)

The laboratory emphasizes first-hand observations and hands-on performance of skill competencies that support the concepts taught in the theory course.

Corequisite: DAST 1123.

Learning Outcomes

1. Produce high-quality dental radiographs in a safe, legal and ethical manner.
2. Effectively communicate with and manage patients during radiographic procedures.

DAST 1515. Bio-Dental Science III 4 Credits (4)

An introduction to biomedical and dental sciences with emphasis on head and neck anatomy and tooth morphology. Includes microbiology, general anatomy and physiology, histology and embryology of the oral cavity, pathology and pharmacology as they relate to dentistry.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the ability to express the history of dentistry, important contributions of historical figures to dentistry, and the importance of professional organizations.
2. Discuss how the study of microbiology relates to dentistry.
3. Utilize and demonstrate the ability to use basic anatomic terms to describe and identify structures of general human anatomy and physiology.
4. Identify and describe the structures associated with head and neck anatomy.
5. Identify, locate, and describe bones muscles, and major vessels of head and neck.
6. Summarize function and location of bones, muscles, and major vessels of the head and neck.
7. Differentiate between primary and permanent dentition by nomenclature, development, eruption patterns, and crown/root morphology.
8. Explain location, function, and dysfunctions of major salivary glands.
9. Summarize normal and abnormal actions of the temporomandibular joint. 1
10. Identify major areas and function of lymph nodes in the head and neck region. 1
11. Differentiate extra oral and intra oral landmarks. 1

12. Describe normal prenatal, embryonic and histological development with emphasis on face, neck, oro-facial structures and dentition. 1
13. Demonstrate the ability to be able to distinguish between normal and pathological abnormalities of the oral structures. 1
14. Describe the use/effect of pharmacological agents in dentistry.

DAST 1519. Clinical Procedures I

3 Credits (3)

This foundational course introduces essential chairside assisting skills and knowledge including patient care, infection control, safety, legal and ethical considerations. May be repeated up to 5 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Describe essential chairside assisting skills.
2. Explain patient care procedures while considering infection control and safety protocols.
3. Outline the legal and ethical implications of expanded functions.
4. Interpret the ethical and professional standards of conduct.

DAST 1519L. Clinical Procedures I Laboratory

2 Credits (2P)

Application of essential chairside assisting skills and knowledge including patient care, infection control, safety, legal and ethical considerations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Perform essential chairside assisting skills.
2. Demonstrate patient care procedures while considering infection control and safety protocols.
3. Apply the legal and ethical implications of expanded functions.

DAST 2222. Community Dental Health

2 Credits (2)

This course introduces the principles and practices of dental public health. Students will explore epidemiology and biostatistics, disease prevention and control, health promotion, and healthcare delivery. May be repeated up to 2 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Define the purpose and scope of dental public health.
2. Discuss the epidemiology and biostatistics of oral diseases.
3. Identify and analyze factors influencing oral health within communities.
4. Develop and implement community-based oral health education programs.
5. Provide Oral Health Education and Counseling.
6. Analyze and apply principles of research as related to public health.

DAST 2990. Dental Assisting Practicum

6 Credits (2+4P)

This course is the clinical component of the program that combines general practice and experiences in the work place. Seminar topics focus on the practicum experiences and critique of performance. May be repeated up to 6 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Assist the dentist chairside in general and specialty practices with procedures such as oral evacuation, instrument transfer, dental material preparation, various infection control procedures, and charting.
2. Perform various chairside, lab, and front office duties.
3. Work independently, but with direct supervision from licensed/certified dental assistant, hygienist or dentist in placement of rubber

- dam, coronal polishing, pit and fissure sealants, and topical fluoride and receive dental/medical information and take vital signs.
4. Expose, process, and duplicate radiographs in accordance with New Mexico Dental Regulations.
5. Educate patients about dental disease, plaque control, oral hygiene and the role of proper nutrition in managing dental disease and organize and participate a community project included in this objective.
6. Identify and manage medical emergencies in the dental environment.
7. Create study models, temporary crowns, custom trays, and mix a wide variety of dental materials.
8. Maintain aseptic and safe environment through proper disinfection and sterilization techniques with adherence to safety and OSHA guidelines.
9. Recognize and Adhere to HIPAA. 1
10. Manage the business/financial aspects of a dental practice (preparing insurance forms, appointment scheduling, answering telephone, bookkeeping, and inventory control). 1
11. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in the clinical setting. 1
12. Demonstrate competency in skills needed to function as a dental assistant, to include confidence in patient management, positive attitude about self, members of the dental team, and the dental profession. 1
13. Display professional dependability and ability to promote teamwork. 1
14. Demonstrate ethical decision making processes. 1
15. Define oral pathology and identify the dental assistant's role in this specialty.

Admissions information can be found on our webpage

Website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/index.html> (<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>)

Admission questions must be directed to the following e-mail: dentalprogramsadmissions@dacc.nmsu.edu

Department Chair Contact Information:

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