

Dental Assistant

Nature of the Profession

Dental assistants work at chair-side as dentists examine and treat patients. They make patients as comfortable as possible in the dental chair, prepare them for treatment, and obtain dental records. Assistants hand dentists instruments and materials and keep the patient's mouth dry and clear by using suction or other devices.

APTITUDES

- Ability to learn basic practices and procedures of dentistry
- Average verbal and numerical abilities
- Ability to follow instructions carefully and work according to set standards
- Average eye-hand coordination and use of hands and fingers
- Ability to work with people who may be under stress and to work as a member of a team

EDUCATION

Most employers require applicants to have completed a one-year diploma or certificate program, or a two-year associate degree program. Some assistants are trained on the job or through an apprenticeship program.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA

- Central Community College – Hastings (A, P)
- Metropolitan Community College – Omaha (C)
- Mid-Plains Community College – North Platte (A, P)
- Southeast Community College – Lincoln (P)

LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

Although it is not required, a person may be certified by graduating from an accredited program in dental assisting and passing an exam by the Dental Assisting National Board.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

American Dental Association Department of Guidance

Web Address: www.ada.org

Dental Assisting National Board, Inc.

Web Address: www.dentalassisting.com

Nebraska Dental Association

Web Address: www.nedental.org