



Dental Career Feature

Dental Assistant Jobs for the Avid Scholar

The dental industry offers a lot of opportunities to the avid scholars at the entry level. Among the available entry-level dental jobs include dental office work such as dental assisting jobs and dental technician jobs, which require less education than dentists. These positions also require some on-the-job training, making them the best jobs for avid scholars.

Nature of the Work and Responsibilities

Dental assistants work under the supervision of dentists. They perform a variety of office and laboratory duties and patient care. The difference between a dental assistant and a dental hygienist is that dental hygienists are licensed to perform certain clinical tasks.

Dental assistants disinfect and sterilize equipment and instruments, obtain the dental records of patients, and lay out and prepare the materials required by the dentists. They prepare the patients for dental treatment and make them comfortable in the dental chair. During the procedure, they provide assistance and work alongside the dentist. They are responsible for handing materials and instruments to the dentist and for keeping the mouth of the patient clear and dry using suction machines and similar devices. They also instruct patients regarding general oral health care and postoperative healthcare.

Moreover, [dental assistants](#) can process x-ray films and take dental x-rays as directed by a dentist. Other procedures that they can do include removing sutures, removing excess cement used during the filling process, applying topical anesthetics to the cavity or gums, and placing rubber dams on the teeth. If they are assigned to do office work, their responsibilities could include sending bills, ordering dental materials and supplies, receiving patients, scheduling and confirming appointments, keeping treatment records, and receiving payments. In rare cases, they are assigned to the laboratory to polish and clean removable appliances, make casts of mouth and teeth from impressions, and make temporary crowns.

On the other hand, the job of dental technicians is to fill prescriptions from the dentists for bridges, dentures, crowns, and other dental prosthetics. Along with a mold or impression of the patient's teeth or mouth, the dentist sends to the dental technician the exact specifications of the items to be

manufactured. Out of the mold or impression, the dental technician creates a model of the patient's mouth. This is done by pouring plaster into the mold and allowing it to set. They then place that model in equipment that mimics the bite and movement of the jaw. These models serve as the basis of the prosthetic device and the dental technician examines them, noting the shape and the size of the adjacent teeth and the gaps within the gum line. Dental technicians shape and build a wax-teeth model using wax carvers and wax spatulas based upon the dentist's specifications and observations.

In some laboratories, the function of the dental technicians is to perform all stages of the work. Dental technicians can specialize in areas such as crowns and bridges, orthodontic appliances, ceramics, partial dentures, or complete dentures.

Work Environment

Dental assistants usually work near the dental chair to arrange materials, instruments, and medications and to hand them to the dentists during operations. They follow safety procedures like wearing of protective masks and dealing with x-ray machines. Dental technicians, on the other hand, work in well-lighted and clean laboratories and have limited contact with the patients.

A Quick Glance at the Job Outlook

Employment in [dental assisting jobs](#) is expected to rise faster than it has been and is expected to grow about 30% from the years 2006 to 2016. The increase in focus on preventive dental measures for the younger population, the population growth, and the higher population of older and middle-aged people fuels the demand for the services offered by the dental industry.

As for the employment of [dental technician jobs](#), a slower-than-average growth is expected, at about 4%. Since few people seek these types of positions job opportunities are



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favorable. The demand has arisen during the past few years due to the increase in the aging public who are in need of cosmetic prostheses. However, the growth of dental technician jobs will be limited. This is due to the improvement of the population's overall dental health because of great emphasis on preventive measures and dental care and fluoridation of drinking water, which has decreased the incidences of dental problems and cavities. As a result, most people will need only crowns or bridges and full dentures will become less common.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are quite a lot of establishments and clinics in the major and

minor areas of the U.S. and all over the world that are offering dental assisting jobs and dental technician jobs. For dental assisting jobs, the estimated earning is between \$11.94 and \$17.44 per hour and \$11.34 and \$19.65 per hour for the dental technician.

The dental industry will always be growing and flourishing since people always have occasional issues with their teeth. It is a great idea to start a career in the dental industry either as a dental assistant or a dental technician.

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