

Dentist

A career in health fact sheet series

What is a dentist?

Dentists treat teeth, gums and soft tissues of the mouth to improve both the oral and general health of clients.

Dentists work as a multiskilled member of a dental team. Dentists provide a wide range of oral health services to clients of all ages. Dentists can also work in education and research, management and policy development roles.

What does a dentist do?

Dentists may:

- conduct dental examinations and diagnosis, and develop care plans
- take x-rays of the teeth and jaws
- clean teeth
- provide preventive care
- restore decayed or broken teeth with filling materials
- extract teeth
- administer local anaesthetics when required
- perform oral surgical procedures
- design, construct and fit dentures, crowns and bridges
- refer clients to dental specialists for complex treatment.

'I truly believe that the mouth is the doorway to good health. Dentistry is a career with terrific opportunities for travel, life experience and career development, but the most rewarding thing for me is seeing the happy smiles of the patients.' Dr Naushad Rizwan, Dentist

Is this you?

- able to build rapport with clients
- good communication skills
- good hand-eye coordination
- able to do precise and detailed work
- able to work as part of a team.



Where can dentists work in Queensland Health?

Queensland Health Oral Health Services offer differing work environments including hospital, school and community-based clinics. Outreach services are also provided to hospitals, correctional centres and aged care facilities.

Queensland Health encourages contemporary minimally invasive dentistry with a strong focus on prevention. Ongoing learning and professional development are important to our organisation. Development programs, in-service training and participation in research projects are actively encouraged.

Can a dentist specialise?

With experience and further study, a dentist can specialise in a range of areas including:

- endodontics
- oral and maxillofacial surgery
- orthodontics
- paediatrics
- periodontics
- prosthodontics
- special needs dentistry.

How do you become a dentist?

To become a dentist you will need to complete a university degree in dental science or dental surgery.

Degree courses

Griffith University – Gold Coast Campus

- Bachelor of Oral Health in Dental Science
Three years full-time followed by Graduate Diploma of Dentistry, two years full-time.

James Cook University – Cairns Campus

- Bachelor of Dental Surgery
Five years full-time (four years full-time followed by one year full-time clinical placement within public and private dental clinics).

University of Queensland – St Lucia Campus

- Bachelor of Dental Science
Five years full-time (one year full-time introduction to oral health, three years full-time of applied dental science and one year full-time of extramural clinical practice).

Registration

In Australia, dentists must be registered with the Dental Board of Australia.

What scholarships are available?

Information regarding university scholarships and financial assistance is available from individual university websites.

Also available is the Queensland Health Rural Scholarships Scheme. For further information visit www.health.qld.gov.au/orh/scholarships/ah/allied.asp

Interested in other oral health careers?

For more fact sheets about oral health careers and other careers in health visit the Queensland Health Work For Us website

www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus.

Oral health fact sheets include:

- Dental Assistant
- Dental Prosthetist
- Dental Technician
- Oral Health Therapist.

Where can I find out more info?

Griffith University

Phone: (07) 5678 0793

Web: www.griffith.edu.au/health/school-dentistry-oral-health

James Cook University

Phone: (07) 4781 6232

Web: www.jcu.edu.au/smd

The University of Queensland

Phone: (07) 3365 8071

Web: www.uq.edu.au/dentistry

The QTAC website has a list of universities and tertiary institutions with links to universities and courses offered. Visit www.qtac.edu.au

To find out more about the exciting career opportunities in Queensland Health visit
www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus

Do great things every day