

Oral Health Therapist

A career in health fact sheet series

Is this you?

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

What is an Oral Health Therapist?

Oral Health Therapists are dental professionals who are dual qualified in dental therapy and dental hygiene. Oral Health Therapists provide a wide range of dental care in a variety of settings to children, adolescents and adults. Oral Health Therapists work as a multiskilled member of a dental team. Oral Health Therapists provide dental therapy services to children and adolescents and dental hygiene services to people of all ages. Oral Health Therapists can also work in health promotion, education, research, management and policy development roles.



“Working in the dental van, my work is literally always on the move. This job has given me opportunities to work and travel all over Queensland, and I enjoy meeting new patients every day. Work can be challenging and rewarding; from the day to day management of a mobile dental facility to the personal satisfaction of patient care.”

Leanne Shannon, Oral Health Therapist

What does an Oral Health Therapist do?

Oral Health Therapists can provide the following dental therapy services to children and adolescents:

- Conduct dental examinations and diagnosis, and develop care plans
- Take X-rays of teeth and jaws
- Prepare cavities and restore teeth with fillings
- Extract deciduous teeth under local anaesthetic when required
- Conduct nutritional counselling and oral health education and promotion.

Oral Health Therapists also provide dental hygiene services for people of all ages. Dental hygiene services include the use of preventative, educational and therapeutic methods for controlling oral diseases.

Where can Oral Health Therapists work in Queensland Health?

Queensland Health Oral Health Services offer differing work environments including mobile dental vans and school, community and hospital clinics. Oral Health Therapists generally work in a particular geographical area and are responsible for visiting a number of local schools, as well as provide hygienist services in adult dental clinics.

Queensland Health encourages contemporary minimally invasive dentistry with a strong focus on prevention. The majority of your time will be spent in a clinical setting with clients, however opportunities are available to become involved in oral health education and promotion initiatives. Ongoing learning and professional development are important to the organisation and development programs, in-service training and participation in research projects are actively encouraged.

How do you become an Oral Health Therapist?

To become an Oral Health Therapist you will need to complete a Bachelor level course at university. Courses provide training in dental therapy, dental hygiene and health promotion. Entry into the courses below normally require a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE). Prerequisite subjects, or assumed knowledge, in one or more of English, mathematics B, biological science, chemistry and physics are also normally required. Contact the universities you are interested in for more information as requirements may change.

Degree courses

Griffith University – Gold Coast Campus

- Bachelor of Oral Health in Oral Health Therapy, 3 years full time

University of Queensland – Brisbane

- Bachelor of Oral Health, 3 years full time

Registration

In Queensland, Oral Health Therapists must be registered with the Dental Board of Queensland.

Interested in other Oral health careers?

Visit the Queensland Health Work For Us website

www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus for more **Careers in health** fact sheets – Oral health series:

- Dental Technician
- Dentist
- Prosthetist.

Where can I find out more info?

Griffith University

Phone: (07) 5678 0793

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

The University of Queensland

Phone: (07) 3365 8071

Website: www.uq.edu.au/dentistry

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

To find out more about the exciting career opportunities Queensland Health can offer you go to www.health.qld.gov.au/workforus

Do great things every day

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