

## What is a dental assistant?

Dental assistants assist a range of dental practitioners such as dentists, dental specialists, oral health therapists and dental therapists. Dental assistants provide assistance in the delivery of oral health services to patients of all ages. Dental assistants work as a member of a dental team and can also work in management, health promotion and policy development roles.

## Is this you?

- able to establish rapport with patients
- good communication skills
- able to multi task
- good organisational skills
- able to work as part of a team.

“The team I work with are so supportive and you really get a sense that you’re doing good things in the community”.

*Jonathan, dental assistant*

## What does a dental assistant do?

Dental assistants may:

- Liaise with patients
- Facilitate administrative tasks and coordinate patient appointments
- Prepare the dental chair and treatment area for dental procedures
- Record information as requested by the clinician on patient records during dental examinations
- Assist clinicians during dental procedures including preparation of dental materials and operation of the evacuation unit
- Prepare and reprocess dental instruments, including sterilisation and disinfection procedures
- Develop x-rays
- Order dental materials and manage dental stock and supplies
- Assist in the smooth running of the dental facility.

## Where can dental assistants 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 correctional centres and aged care facilities.

Ongoing learning and professional development are important to the organisation and development programs, in-service training and participation in projects are actively encouraged.

## How do you become a dental assistant?

Many dental assistants choose to complete formal studies prior to working in a clinical environment. In Queensland, the preferred qualification is the Certificate III in Dental Assisting.

### Certificate Program

Southbank Institute of Technology – Southbank Campus

- Certificate III in Dental Assisting, 1 semester (6 months) fulltime including 120 hours vocational placement in a dental health care facility.

Australian Dental Association – Bowen Hills Campus or by Distance Mode

- Certificate III in Dental Assisting, 1 year full-time.

### Registration

Dental assistants working in Queensland are not required to be registered.

## Interested in other oral health careers?

Visit the Queensland Health website [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au) and search for Dental to find more career factsheets:

- dental technician
- dentist
- oral health therapist
- dental prosthetist.

## Where can I find out more info?

Australian Dental Association (QLD)

- Phone: (07) 3251 2160
- Website: [www.adaq.com.au](http://www.adaq.com.au)

Southbank Institute of TAFE

- Phone: 13 72 48

**To find out more about the exciting career opportunities in Queensland Health visit [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au).**