

What is a dentist?

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

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

Is this you?

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

'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

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 patients to dental specialists for complex treatment.

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 a 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.

Interested in other oral health careers?

Visit the Queensland Health website www.health.qld.gov.au and search for Dental to find more career factsheets:

- Dental assistant

- Dental prosthetist
- Dental technician
- Oral health therapist.

Where can I find out more info?

Griffith University

- Phone: (07) 5678 0793
- Website: www.griffith.edu.au/health/school-dentistry-oral-health

James Cook University

- Phone: (07) 4781 6232
- Website: www.jcu.edu.au/smd

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. Visit www.qtac.edu.au

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