DENTAL ASSISTING
Diploma Program

What is Dental Assistant? A dental assistant works directly with a dentist to handle instruments, supplies and equipment, and to assist the dentist as needed. The DA provides direct patient care and is responsible for maintaining sterile and safe conditions during dental procedures. A DA may work in general dentistry, or in a specialty field such as orthodontics or oral surgery. Average salaries are $13-17 per hour. Learn more about the career at www.danb.org

Length of Program
3 semesters (not including prerequisite courses); Program courses must be taken in sequence within the prescribed time frame.

Semester Program Begins
Summer Semester; Full time; Day classes only

Application Process
1. Apply to Gwinnett Technical College at www.GwinnettTech.edu
2. Submit all transcripts from high school and previous college work, or take the COMPASS test if required
3. Applicants are initially accepted into the Healthcare Assistant Certificate program while completing the required prerequisite courses
4. Summer 2017 Program Application must be turned in by February 17th, 2017. Please download an application packet at: http://www.GwinnettTech.edu; go to forms and documents, scroll down to program applications; select Dental Assisting Diploma Application.

Prerequisite Courses
ENGL 1010 or ENGL 1101
MATH 1012 or MATH 1111
ALHS 1011* or (BIOL 2113/L* and BIOL 2114/L*)
FYES 1000
PSYC 1010 or PSYC 1101

Additional Required Course
AHLS 1040* required for completion of diploma, but is not a prerequisite. Recommended to be taken prior to acceptance; otherwise it must be taken summer semester after acceptance.

*Courses must be completed within five years of the competitive program File Completion deadline.

Program deadline
For Summer 2017 semester admission, all prerequisites must be completed by the end of Spring 2017 semester. Application must be turned in by February 17th, 2017.

Competitive Admissions
1. Interviews will be conducted after the deadline for all applicants who have completed prerequisites.
2. Obtain two recent professional letters of recommendation to bring with you to the interview.

Program Costs & Requirements
A student can expect to pay on top of tuition: approximately $950 for: uniforms; malpractice insurance; textbooks; other incidental costs. All costs are approximated and are subject to change.

Everyone is welcomed to attend our Information Sessions on the 1st Thursday of each month at 5 p.m. in Building 200, Room 324. Please call 678-226-6751 to reserve a seat for the next meeting.

For more information, contact: Cecilia Fuentes, Program Support Specialist 678-226-6966 cfuentes@GwinnettTech.edu Building 200, Room 212. For admission and enrollment, contact: Enrollment Support Center in Building 100 or at healthteam@GwinnettTech.edu

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5/5/2016
Nature of the Work

Dental assistants perform a variety of patient care, office, and laboratory duties. They sterilize and disinfect instruments and equipment, provide appropriate instruments and materials required to treat each patient, and obtain and update patients’ dental records. Assistants make patients comfortable in the dental chair and prepare them for treatment. During dental procedures, assistants work alongside the dentist to provide assistance. They hand instruments and materials to dentists and keep patients’ mouths dry and clear by using suction hoses or other devices. They also instruct patients on postoperative and general oral healthcare.

Dental assistants may prepare materials for impressions and restorations and process dental x-rays as directed by a dentist. They also may remove sutures, apply topical anesthetics to gums or cavity-preventive agents to teeth, remove excess cement used in the filling process, and place dental dams to isolate teeth for treatment. Dental assistants with laboratory duties make casts of the teeth and mouth from impressions, clean and polish removable appliances, and make temporary crowns. Those with office duties schedule and confirm appointments, receive patients, keep treatment records, send bills, receive payments, and order dental supplies and materials.

Work Environment

Dental assistants work in a well-lighted, clean environment. Their work area is usually near the dental chair so that they can arrange instruments, materials, and medication and hand them to the dentist when needed. Dental assistants wear personal protective equipment as recommended for infectious disease prevention and are trained in the CDC recommendations for sharps injury prevention, and radiology health and safety.

Almost half of dental assistants had a 35- to 40-hour workweek in 2008. More than one-third worked part time, or less than 35 hours per week, and many others have variable schedules. Depending on the hours of the dental office where they work, assistants may have to work on Saturdays or evenings.

Employment

The employment opportunities include general dentistry; group practice; specific dental specialties such as oral surgery, endodontics, orthodontics, prosthetics, periodontics, and pedodontics; dental school clinics; federal, state, and community clinics. Other opportunities include managing a dental business office, working in a major dental manufacturing or insurance company, serving in the armed forces, or teaching or working in research and development at a college or other agency.

Dental assistants held about 297,200 jobs nationally in 2010. About 93 percent of all jobs for dental assistants were in offices of dentists. Employment is expected to grow 31 percent from 2010 to 2020, which is much faster than the average for all occupations.

Earnings

Median annual wages nationally of dental assistants were $33,470 in May 2010. The lowest 10 percent earned less than $22,680, and the highest 10 percent earned more than $47,090. Benefits vary substantially by practice setting and may be contingent upon full-time employment.

Research the Career
