

# Dental Assistant



## What do they do?

Dental Assistants typically work under the supervision of Dentists. They work alongside Dentists to assist in providing patients with dental procedures. Dental Assistants can be responsible for taking, developing and viewing x-rays, for instructing patients on proper dental care and for clerical or administrative duties.

## Where do they work?

Dental Assistants mainly work in dental offices. Some Dental Assistants work for hospitals on inpatient units.

## Pay:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average yearly income for a Dental Assistant is \$41,180.

## Education:

There are multiple educational pathways to become a Dental Assistant. Depending on state regulations Dental Assistants may need to take a 1-2 year Dental Assistant Training program and pass the Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) Exam. Wisconsin does not require Dental Assistants to be certified and many employers will provide on-the-job training. Even though certification is not required, it can be beneficial to take a Dental Assistant certificate program and the CDA exam.

## Dental Assistant Training in Wisconsin:

Blackhawk Technical College: [www.blackhawk.edu](http://www.blackhawk.edu)

Gateway Technical College: [www.gtc.edu](http://www.gtc.edu)

High School students interested in becoming a Dental Assistant should take courses in biology, chemistry and anatomy.

## Accreditation:

Education programs for Dental Assistants are accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

<http://www.ada.org/en/coda>



## Professional Association:

Once certified, Dental Assistants can join the American Dental Assistant Association. You can learn more here:

<https://www.adausa.org/>



## Certification:

After completion of a Dental Assistant program, some states require students to pass a state-specific Dental Assistant exam. These exams are administered by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB).

[www.danb.org/en/Meet-State-Requirements](http://www.danb.org/en/Meet-State-Requirements)



Students who want to become Certified Dental Assistants must also take and pass the CDA exam. This exam consists of three parts, RHS (Radiation Health and Safety), ICE (Infection Control) and GC (General Chairside Assisting). The exams are computer based exams administered by the DANB at local test taking sites.

[www.danb.org/en/Become-Certified](http://www.danb.org/en/Become-Certified)

## Potential for Advancement:

Dental Assistants have lots of opportunities to grow in their career. With additional training, certification or education, there are various advancement opportunities in dental care.

- Become an Expanded Function Dental Assistant  
[www.danb.org/en/Become-Certified/Exams-and-Certifications.aspx](http://www.danb.org/en/Become-Certified/Exams-and-Certifications.aspx)
- Become a Dental Hygienist  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)
- Become a Dentist  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

## Job Outlook:

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment for Dental Assistants is expected to grow 11 percent between 2020-2030, which is much faster than the average across all occupations.

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2017-18 Edition, Dental Assistants, [www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm) (visited September 08, 2021).

