

HAGERSTOWN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DENTAL ASSISTING PROGRAM
Technical Standards

Students enrolled in the Dental Assisting Program must meet the following requirements to perform effectively in the educational activities of the program and in the dental assisting profession.

Determination is made on an individual basis as to whether or not accommodations or modifications can be reasonably made.

Students who have special needs are encouraged to identify themselves to the Coordinator of Disability Support Services as early as possible. Reasonable accommodations based on current documentation are provided to qualified students.

ISSUE	STANDARD	EXAMPLES OF REQUIRED ACTIVITIES (Not all inclusive)
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking abilities sufficient for safe and appropriate clinical judgment and situational awareness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the patient’s needs or conditions. • Methodically question patients or dental staff to gain information. • Analyze patient comments or questions, and respond with appropriate information.
Interpersonal, Behavioral, and Social Skills	Interpersonal abilities to interact effectively with patients, families, and the dental care team from diverse cultural, social, emotional, and intellectual backgrounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rapport with patients, families, and colleagues. • Maintain mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and fellow workers (interpersonal skills). • Tolerate physically demanding workload. • Function effectively under stress. • Adaptability to changing environments (flexible schedules, emergency situations). • Display compassion, professionalism, empathy, integrity, concern for others, and interest and motivation. • Work collaboratively with the dentist.
Communication	Communication abilities to perform required written and verbal functions in the program and the dental care environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively use communication to gather patient history, instruct the patient, relieve patient anxiety, gain patient cooperation, accomplish the procedure, and manage emergency situations. • Correctly read the patient’s dental chart and follow the dentist’s objectives.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain pertinent patient history, and legibly write information on the patient's chart. • Document treatment performed and patient responses as indicated. • Be able to listen and verbally communicate by telephone. • Effectively communicate with the dental staff in regards to the patient's needs and treatment.
Mobility	Physical and motor abilities sufficient to safely move the patient and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist all patients, according to individual needs and abilities, in moving, turning, and transferring in to the dental chair. • Be able to push, pull, and lift 25 pounds. • Maneuver around the dental chair and dental equipment within small spaces.
Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer and maneuver dental instruments with one and/or both hands. • Correctly perform aseptic procedures, such as disinfection of a dental operatory, sterilization of dental instruments, proper management of sharps, and maintaining proper protocol for management of bloodborne pathogens. • Stand for period of time as long as 1 hour while holding suction equipment. • Sit for period of time as long as 2 hours while holding suction equipment. • Maneuver instruments in and out of a patient's mouth, including dental x-ray equipment and specific dental instruments. • Operate the proper dental instruments utilizing the pen grasp method. • Recognize and assist the dentist in the administration of emergency care, including CPR.
Hearing	Auditory abilities sufficient to monitor and assess patient needs, and provide a safe environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear patients and staff talk in a normal tone from a distance of 10 feet. • Hear an individual speaking through a telephone receiver and respond appropriately.
Visual	Visual abilities sufficient for observation and assessment, for safe operation of equipment, and patient care management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish the proper tray set-up for the dental procedure. • Visually differentiate dental instruments.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice subtle changes in the patient’s facial expression. • Differentiate shade patterns on tooth structures. • Differentiate between unsterile and sterilization monitor strips. • Visualize x-ray collimator center while taking dental radiographs. • Observe the patient to assess patient’s condition and/or needs from a distance of 10 feet. • Read expiration dates on dental materials.
Tactile	Tactile ability sufficient to perform required patient assessment and equipment operation functions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform palpation, tactile assessment, and manipulation in a patient’s mouth. • Actuate various dental equipment. • Manipulate various dental instruments. • Manipulate various dental materials. • Manipulate dials, buttons, and switches of various sizes.
Mental	Intellectual and emotional abilities sufficient for patient assessment, safe operation of equipment, performance of duties, and care of patients.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to mentally concentrate and focus attention, thoughts, and efforts on patients and equipment to competently perform patient care and dental treatment procedures. • Be able to respond effectively to patient and dental conditions and/or situations.
Environmental Requirements	Physical and mental health sufficient enough to tolerate the rigors of the program and the health care environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to tolerate risks and discomforts in the clinical setting that require special safety precautions, additional safety education, and health risk monitoring (i.e. bloodborne pathogens, darkroom chemicals; working with sharps, chemicals, and infectious disease). • Be able to wear protective clothing, or gear such as masks, goggles, and gloves.

Adapted from Hagerstown Community College Medical Imaging Program

Applicants with allergies and sensitivities, especially to latex and nitrile products, put themselves at risk of reaction in the health care environment. Students with allergies and sensitivities must have permission from their physician and follow physician and college guidelines to participate in the Dental Assisting program.

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Please list allergies and sensitivities:

The student must notify the Program Coordinator if there is any change in his/her ability to meet the above physical requirements while enrolled in the Dental Assisting Program.

I, _____, have read and understand the requirements
(print name)
listed on this form.

Signature: _____

Date: _____