

# Dental Assisting



## What is the Dental Assisting Program?

The Dental Assisting Program provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become an integral and qualified member of the dental team. This program also prepares students to sit for the Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam, the Maryland General Dental Assisting Expanded Functions (MDG) exam, and the Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam, all administered by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB).

## What does a dental assistant do?

- Performs a variety of tasks in patient care, as well as office and laboratory duties
- Works closely with and under direct supervision of a dentist
- Places sealants and fluoride, polishes teeth, and monitors Nitrous Oxide.
- Sterilizes and disinfects instruments, as well as prepares operatories for procedures
- Obtains and updates patient medical and dental history
- Obtains and processes dental radiographic surveys
- Prepares and manipulates various dental materials
- Assists the dentist in handling instruments and materials

## Where do dental assistants work?

A dental assistant can work in a variety of places, but the majority of dental assistants work in private dental offices. Other locations include specialty offices, hospitals, employment services, consulting services, research facilities, federally or government-owned facilities, and colleges, universities, and professional schools.

## Why should I choose HCC's Dental Assisting Program?

- CODA accredited program
- The dental assisting faculty are knowledgeable and well-versed in the subject matter
- Students get hands-on experience in HCC's dental lab, which is well equipped for pre-clinical education
- HCC's program is recognized by the Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners



## Should I complete the Dental Assisting program before starting the Dental Hygiene Program?

By completing the Dental Assisting Program first, students learn the fundamentals of dental education, such as tooth numbering and tooth anatomy, before starting the dental hygiene program. Additionally, by becoming a CDA before the dental hygiene program, students will accumulate more points toward the dental hygiene program and save time and money.

HCC offers a bridge program between the Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene programs allowing students to complete both programs without having to repeat courses.

## Is state licensing required for a dental assistant?

Many states require a state license in order to work as a dental assistant in a health care facility, including Maryland. Upon completion of HCC's Dental Assisting Program, students are eligible to sit for the Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam and/or the Maryland General Dental Assisting Expanded Functions (MDG) exam.

After taking Dental Radiology (DEN-104), students are also eligible to sit for the Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam. All exams (CDA, MDG, and RHS) are administered by the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB).

Upon program completion, students who are considering employment in Pennsylvania should visit [www.dos.state.pa.us/dent](http://www.dos.state.pa.us/dent) for specific state requirements.

## PROGRAM OPTIONS

 Certificate, Dental Assisting

## CAREER OUTLOOK

### MEDIAN SALARY

**\$64K**

for Certified  
Dental Assistants

### EMPLOYMENT



330,200 jobs in U.S.  
11% growth in next  
10 years

Ongoing research linking oral health and general health will continue to increase demand for preventive dental services. Dentists will continue to hire dental assistants to complete routine tasks, allowing dentists to work more efficiently. As dental practices grow, more dental assistants will be needed.

(source: [www.bls.gov/ooh](http://www.bls.gov/ooh))

## What are the admission requirements?

Admission to HCC does not guarantee admission to the Dental Assisting Program. The requirements below must be completed and submitted to the Office of Admissions, Records, and Registration before the first day of class.

- A High School Diploma or GED
- Students must have completed RDG 095 or be eligible for college level English and must have completed MAT 090, MAT 095, or be eligible for college level Math.
- As a cohort program, students will be admitted to the dental assisting program each fall. The dental assisting program is limited to 24 students. This limit is based upon available lab space and externship sites.
- An orientation session will be held prior to the beginning of the first semester of the dental assisting program. Attendance is mandatory.

## What are the program requirements?

All dental assisting students must:

1. Receive a minimum grade of 75 percent in all dental assisting courses, as well as all exams.
2. Meet program competency requirements for both the dental lab and externship experiences.

Students who receive a final mark of unsatisfactory in the dental laboratory or externship experience, despite a passing theory grade, will not be permitted

to progress in the dental assisting program and will receive a final grade of “F” for the course.

Students who do not meet program or course standards that result from termination from the dental assisting program by the college, are not eligible for readmission. This includes students who cannot meet safety standards, and students who violate the college’s Honor Code and Standards of Conduct, the dental assisting program’s Standards of Conduct, and the American Dental Association’s Principle of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct.

An orientation session will be held prior to the beginning of the first semester of the dental assisting program. Attendance is mandatory.

Health requirements for the clinical/externship component of the Dental Assisting Program (DEN 130 and DEN 230) include satisfactory completion of a health form and immunizations, drug screen, criminal background check, and submitting a valid American Heart Association Healthcare Provider (CPR) certification card.

What is involved in the clinical externship courses?

During the last semester of the Dental Assisting program, the student is assigned to an actual dental office to demonstrate the skills and knowledge learned during the program and to gain exposure to the complete dental office environment. This experience is comprised of the 3-credit DEN 130 externship course and the 4-credit DEN 230 externship course; both of which are conducted during the spring semester of the program. During DEN 130, the student will complete a total of 120 uncompensated hours in a dental office; and then during DEN 230, the student will complete a total of 180 uncompensated hours. The work schedule is typically during daytime hours of the work week, but may involve early evening hours as well. All prerequisite courses and preregistration requirements must be completed prior to the start of the first externship course. Student placement at the dental externship sites is determined by the Division of Health Sciences. Externship sites are located throughout the tristate area (Maryland, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania), and are not limited to Washington County, Maryland. The externship experience prepares students to sit for the certification exams and is a good stepping stone towards employment.

Certificate  
Dental Assisting

Program Requirements		37 credits
BIO 116	Human Anatomy and Physiology for Allied Health.....	4
COM 103	Public Speaking.....	3
or		
COM 108	Introduction to Human Communication.....	3
DEN 101	Dental Assisting I.....	4
DEN 104	Dental Radiology.....	3
DEN 107	Dental Materials.....	3
DEN 108	Head, Neck, and Oral Anatomy .....	4
DEN 110	Dental Assisting II.....	5
DEN 115	Dental Office Management.....	2
DEN 120	Dental Specialties.....	3
DEN 130	Dental Assisting Externship I.....	3
DEN 230	Dental Assisting Externship II.....	4

Dental Assisting Program courses will begin in the fall semester, continue through the spring semester, and conclude at the end of the following summer semester.

Certificate Requirement .....37

**Selection Criteria:** Students will be admitted to the dental assisting program each summer. The dental assisting program is limited to 24 students. This limit is based upon available lab space and externship sites. If more than 24 students apply to the dental assisting program within one academic year, selection will be based on previous course completions.

Please be aware that prior criminal records may prohibit you from program externship and employment opportunities.

Additional information on program requirements including final acceptance, criminal background checks, and drug screening can be found at [www.hagerstowncc.edu/dental](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/dental).

Pathways:

**Pathway I**—Student who has no dental background; completes all dental assisting required courses; receives HCC certificate at completion of program; can take the Maryland General Dental Assisting Expanded Functions (MDG) exam, the Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam, and the Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) exam.

**Pathway II**—Student who is currently working in a dental office and wants to be certified as a Qualified Dental Assistant (expanded functions in Maryland); student must prove at least 1 year full-time or two years part-time dental assisting experience in a dental office (letter from current employer); completes Dental Assisting II (DEN 110) course only; can take the Maryland General Dental Assisting Expanded Functions (MDG) exam. Student may be accepted if there is an open seat in the DEN110 course.

**Pathway III**—Student who is currently working in a dental office and wants to become certified as a Dental Radiation Technologist; student must prove at least one year employment at a dental office (letter from current employer); completes Dental Radiology (DEN 104) course only; can take the DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam. Student may be accepted if there is an open seat in the DEN 104 course.

Technical Standards

There are technical standards and skill requirements which students are expected to possess and demonstrate in order to be successful in this program. More information on these standards can be found at [www.hagerstowncc.edu/dental](http://www.hagerstowncc.edu/dental).

Vaccine Requirements

Several immunizations are required as part of your health documentation, including: HEP B 3 vaccine series AND Positive immunity titer, Tetanus (Tdap) within last 10 years, Varicella

2 vaccine series AND positive immunity titer, MMR 2 vaccine series AND positive immunity titer, and the Flu vaccine (fall and spring), and the COVID-19 vaccine.

Since many individuals fail to maintain immunity over time, you may be required to repeat vaccination series/ receive a booster in order to demonstrate positive immunity. Positive immunity titers are required to proceed with Clinical or Externship rotations in all Health Sciences Programs. It is the student’s responsibility to verify immunity prior to the start of the program and take the necessary steps to ensure positive immunity by the health documentation deadline provided to each cohort.

Other Requirements

An American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support is required for healthcare providers (the AHA version is required for your licensure exams).

Contact Information:

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Recommended Professional Resources:

American Dental Association (ADA):  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)  
  
Dental Assisting National Board (DANB):  
[www.danb.org](http://www.danb.org)

