

DENTAL ASSISTANT

Dental Assisting Mission Statement

It is our mission to promote the educational advancement of dental assistants and the dental assisting profession. The program aims to enhance the delivery of quality dental health care to our diverse community through credentialing and professional activities. The program seeks to provide dental assistants with the most recent advances in technology, materials, techniques, and equipment to be prepared when entering or being employed in the workforce system.

Goals

Goal 1:

Prepare students to successfully challenge the Dental Assisting National Board Radiation Health and Safety Examination

Goal 2:

Prepare students to successfully challenge the New Mexico Board of Dental Health Care (NMBODHC) Radiology Certification.

Goal 3:

Provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to gain employment in the dental assisting field within 6 months of graduation.

Certificate of Completion

Dental assisting is a rewarding profession. Dental assistants are people who like helping others and enjoy working closely with patients and other members of the dental team. Dental assistants frequently are relied on as the dentist's "other set of hands." Thus constantly challenging the dental assistant to expand and grow their knowledge and skill sets.

There is no lack of variety in the types of tasks that dental assistants perform. Some of the skills dental assistants perform include:

- prepare equipment, materials, and instruments for patient care;
- perform sterilization and disinfection procedures;
- provide patients with instructions both before and after dental procedures ;
- create temporary crowns, bleaching trays, custom trays, & custom fitted sport mouth guards;
- provide coronal polishing and fluoride treatments
- place pit & fissure sealants;
- take impressions of teeth;
- take patient vital signs, record or review medical histories and medications;
- provide individualized oral hygiene instruction for patients and/or parents:
- create study casts (molds);
- expose, develop, and mount dental radiographs;
- anticipate dental provider needs for patient procedure
- perform a variety of other duties surrounding patient care, infection control, and radiology

They may also be responsible for administrative tasks, such as billing, patient verification, scheduling of various types of treatment appointments, ordering and material inventory.

Assistants may work in a general practice office where a dentist provides multiple types of treatment, including restorative/operative work (fillings), prosthetics (crowns, bridges, and dentures), and perhaps some surgery. They may want to specialize for work in periodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, endodontics, pedodontics, or orthodontics.

In the state of New Mexico, dental assistants can become certified to perform the following expanded duties:

- radiology (taking x-rays),
- coronal polishing (polishing of teeth and removal of stains),
- fluoride treatments (the act of placing fluoride on a patient's teeth), and
- sealant placement (used to prevent decay).

These certifications are obtained through the State Dental Board and are a portion of the Dental Assisting National Board Certification Exam.

Important Facts About This Certificate Program

Course Fees

In addition to tuition, a course fee of \$250 is charged for DAS 115 (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/search/?P=DAS%20115>) Dental Radiology.

Effective July 1, 2024, this program is not accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

Students who graduate from this program are eligible to apply for licensure in the State of New Mexico after completion of the program and successful completion of their DANB Radiation Health and Safety Exam. For additional details regarding licensure in New Mexico, students must contact the New Mexico Board of Dental Health Care (<https://www.rld.nm.gov/boards-and-commissions/individual-boards-and-commissions/dental-health-care/>)

Students must check about licensure requirements in other states.

Required Skills and Abilities

- Students will need to demonstrate good oral expression (speech clarity) and written comprehension in English, critical thinking skills, near vision, and physical stamina (e.g., the ability to stand for long periods of time).
- Students must be able to manipulate dental/medical equipment, move/lift patients and equipment up to 60 pounds without assistance, and perform patient care procedures with manual dexterity.
- Successful applicants usually have a GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Must be able to operate dental X-ray units to expose radiographs.
- Must be able to participate in program-required events, including student club activities, community service learning, meetings, etc.
- Must understand and be aware of potential exposure to blood-borne pathogens in the dental environment and be aware that immunizations against blood-borne pathogens are highly recommended and or required for all dental professionals due to the risk of exposure.
- Must be able to assist with, and or perform CPR as needed.

- Must be able to participate in classroom, clinical, laboratory, and practicum activities according to program guidelines and requirements.
- Must adhere to all program guidelines and policies at all times.

Program Admission Special Requirements

The Dental Assistant program is a limited-entry, special-application program. When a candidate is considered for acceptance into the program, the following factors are taken into account:

- High school and/or college transcripts and a minimum GPA of 2.8, however, most admitted candidates have a 3.0 or higher.
- Proof of county residency
- Essay (in accordance with rubric and instructions included in packet)
- Copy of current healthcare provider CPR card and proof of current immunizations
- Completion of all program admission requirements as outlined in the program application packet.
- Completion of program application (submitted by deadline).
- Must participate in all program-required activities for admitted students.

Website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/index.html> (<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>)

Dental Assistant - Certificate of Completion (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/dona-ana/academic-career-programs/dental-assistant/dental-assistant-certificate-completion/>)

DAS 101. Introduction to Dental Assisting 2 Credits (2)

An introduction to the duties and responsibilities of a dental assistant. Includes brief lessons on head and neck anatomy, chair side assisting, sterilization techniques, dental office emergencies, and dental office management. Restricted to: Community Colleges only.

DAS 111. Bio-Dental Science 4 Credits (4)

An introduction to biomedical and dental sciences with emphasis on head and neck anatomy and tooth morphology. Includes microbiology, general anatomy and physiology, histology and embryology of the oral cavity, pathology and pharmacology as they relate to dentistry. May be repeated up to 4 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate the ability to express the history of dentistry, important contributions of historical figures to dentistry, and the importance of professional organizations (also DAS 125).
2. Discuss how the study of microbiology relates to dentistry (also DAS 113).
3. Utilize and demonstrate the ability to use basic anatomic terms to describe and identify structures of general human anatomy and physiology (also DAS 113, 121, 130).
4. Identify and describe the structures associated with head and neck anatomy (also DAS 121, 130).
5. Identify, locate, and describe bones muscles, and major vessels of head and neck.
6. Summarize function and location of bones, muscles, and major vessels of the head and neck.

7. Differentiate between primary and permanent dentition by nomenclature, development, eruption patterns, and crown/root morphology (also DAS 129).
8. Explain location, function, and dysfunctions of major salivary glands .
9. Summarize normal and abnormal actions of the temporomandibular joint. 1
10. Identify major areas and function of lymph nodes in the head and neck region. 1
11. Differentiate extra oral and intra oral landmarks (also DAS 115). 1
12. Describe normal prenatal, embryonic and histological development with emphasis on face, neck, oro-facial structures and dentition. 1
13. Demonstrate the ability to be able to distinguish between normal and pathological abnormalities of the oral structures. 1
14. Describe the use/effect of pharmacological agents in dentistry (also DAS 113, 121, 129, 130).

DAS 113. Dental Assisting I 5 Credits (3+2P)

Introduction to chair side assisting procedures, instrumentation, infection control, equipment safety and maintenance, dental office emergencies, and management of pain and anxieties. Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo and Dona Ana campuses. May be repeated up to 5 credits.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G).

Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate their knowledge of four handed dental assisting through clinical application.
2. Demonstrate proper infection and hazard controls.
3. Identify principles and techniques of disinfection and sterilization.
4. List regulatory and advisory agencies related to dentistry, infection control, and materials.
5. Define biofilm and its importance in dentistry.
6. Demonstrate proper ergonomics for the dental assistant and proper adjustment of the assistant stool.
7. Apply proper procedures when seating and dismissing a patient.
8. State appropriate post op instructions for patients after a given procedure.
9. Recognize the importance of preventive education and oral hygiene instructions. 1
10. Recognize the need for continued care and maintenance. 1
11. State customized oral hygiene instructions for patients. 1
12. Demonstrate proper cleaning of removable appliances. 1
13. Demonstrate proper instrument transfer techniques in 4 handed and 6 handed dentistry. 1
14. Diagram the zones of operation and patient positioning.

DAS 115. Dental Radiology 4 Credits (3+1P)

Radiation physics, hygiene, and safety theories. Emphasis on the fundamentals of oral radiographic techniques and interpretation of radiographs. Includes exposure of intra-oral radiographs, quality assurance, radiographic interpretation, patient selection criteria, and other ancillary radiographic techniques. Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo and Dona Ana campuses.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G).

Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the basic principles and concepts of radiation in general and x-radiation in particular.
2. Identify the component parts and workings of the dental x-ray machine and the production of x-rays.
3. Discuss the effects of ionizing radiation on living tissues including protective and recommended health and safety factors.
4. Use appropriate procedures for selecting films and exposure factors and for processing and evaluating radiographs in the production of quality radiographs.
5. Recognize the characteristics of an acceptable x-ray image, the factors that influence the image, and the importance of quality assurance in imaging.
6. Analyze the legal issues related to dental radiography and the role of the dental radiographer in patient education and patient relations.
7. Demonstrate effective patient management techniques for intraoral and extraoral radiographs, panoramic and alternate imaging modalities utilized in dental radiography.
8. Demonstrate competency in radiographic interpretation including normal radiographic landmarks and radiographic pathology.
9. Demonstrate the radiographic techniques of interproximal, paralleling, bisection, panoramic and occlusal radiography which meet SJC standards for acceptable radiographs. 1
10. 1
11. Demonstrate acceptable radiographic processing, film duplication, evaluation of radiographs, and radiographic equipment maintenance utilizing radiation safety and infection control protocols.

DAS 117. Dental Materials**3 Credits (2+1P)**

Composition, chemical and physical properties, manipulation and uses of dental materials. Laboratory experiences include the application and manipulation of various materials used in dentistry. Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo and Dona Ana campuses. May be repeated up to 3 credits.

Prerequisite: ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G).

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize general rules for handling dental materials.
2. Recognize and identify materials science and dentistry.
3. Implement proper infection control and safety in the dental office.
4. Recognize the properties and uses of impression materials.
5. Demonstrate proper disinfection of impressions, dentures and other appliances and materials.
6. Understand the process and demonstrate the technique for taking of alginate impressions and elastomeric impressions.
7. Recognize the properties and demonstrate the use of gypsum materials.
8. Demonstrate the fabrication and trimming of study models.
9. Recognize the properties and demonstrate the use of Adhesive materials, Direct polymeric restorative materials, Amalgam and other direct metallic restorative materials, Polishing materials and abrasion, and Dental cements. 1
10. Demonstrate the steps for fabricating and delivery protocol of an oral appliance. 1
11. Recognize and apply the concepts of vital tooth whitening.

DAS 123. Dental Assisting Practicum**6 Credits (2+4P)**

This course is the clinical component of the program that combines general practice and experiences in the work place. Seminar topics focus on the practicum experiences and critique of performance. May be repeated up to 6 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Assist the dentist chairside in general and specialty practices with procedures such as oral evacuation, instrument transfer, dental material preparation, various infection control procedures, and charting.
2. Perform various chairside, lab, and front office duties.
3. Work independently, but with direct supervision from licensed/certified dental assistant, hygienist or dentist in placement of rubber dam, coronal polishing, pit and fissure sealants, and topical fluoride. Receive dental/medical information and take vital signs.
4. Expose, process, and duplicate radiographs in accordance with New Mexico Dental Regulations.
5. Educate patients about dental disease, plaque control, oral hygiene and the role of proper nutrition in managing dental disease. Organize and participate a community project included in this objective.
6. Identify and manage medical emergencies in the dental environment.
7. Create study models, temporary crowns, custom trays, and mix a wide variety of dental materials.
8. Maintain aseptic and safe environment through proper disinfection and sterilization techniques with adherence to safety and OSHA guidelines.
9. Recognize and Adhere to HIPAA. 1
10. Manage the business/financial aspects of a dental practice (i.e. preparing insurance forms, appointment scheduling, answering telephone, bookkeeping, and inventory control). 1
11. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior in the clinical setting. 1
12. Demonstrate competency in skills needed to function as a dental assistant. To include confidence in patient management, positive attitude about self, members of the dental team, and the dental profession. 1
13. Display professional dependability and ability to promote teamwork. 1
14. Demonstrate ethical decision making processes. 1
15. Define oral pathology and identify the dental assistant's role in this specialty.

DAS 125. Professional Concepts**2 Credits (2)**

Emphasis on the development of professionalism for the dental office. Includes oral communication, psychology, patient relations, problem-solving skills, stress management, and employability in addition to dental jurisprudence and ethics. May be repeated up to 2 credits.

Learning Outcomes

1. Recognize and discuss ethical and legal aspects of the delivery of dentistry as the relate to the practice of dentistry and to dental assisting.
2. Differentiate between verbal and non-verbal communication and discuss the role of communication in dentistry.
3. Utilize problem solving/critical thinking skill, psychology and stress management skills to improve patient and office relationships.
4. Develop strategies to find and secure employment, gain job satisfaction, stay physically fit, and meet career as well as life goals.

- Identify the value and benefits of membership in professional associations as related to dentistry.

DAS 127. Dental Office Management

2 Credits (2)

This capstone course is an introduction to business office procedures, including telephone management, appointment control, accounts payable, completion of third party reimbursement forms, inventory control data entry for charges and payments, management recall, basic dental computer software and operating basic business equipment. May be repeated up to 2 credits.

Learning Outcomes

- Identify the duties of the dental office manager and management staff.
- Compare and contrast manual and computerized systems to process dental information, including billing, payment, appointments, cancellations and clinical notes dealing with written and oral communication.
- Discuss and practice learned dental office management and communication skills and maintenance and retention of business records.
- Explain fundamental principles of financial management.
- Operate basic office equipment.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of hospitable customer service management of patient information
- Business ethics and jurisprudence
- Identify inventory systems and supply ordering
- To enable the student to possess skills and knowledge in order to secure employment as a dental office manager. 1
- Utilize computer and dental software.

DAS 129. Preventive Dentistry

3 Credits (2+1P)

Prevention of dental diseases, oral hygiene instruction, fluoride, community dental health, and nutrition. Development, implementation and evaluation of a community dental health project.

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the process of dental disease and demonstrate (both verbally and clinically) the oral hygiene methods essential to individual patient needs. Students will demonstrate preventive counseling techniques, behavioral management, and accommodations (where necessary) for children, adults, edentulous, infants, and special persons. Students will articulate the ability to adapt to these individuals' needs, abilities, and health concerns.
- Discuss the utilization of fluorides employed in the prevention of oral diseases.
- Demonstrate the ability to obtain, analyze, and evaluate a patient's diet with emphasis on advising the patients on proper nutritional needs and the dental benefits from a health diet.
- State indications and contraindications for coronal polishing and the objective of polishing. Demonstrate proper coronal polishing techniques on a manikin.
- Describe the characteristics of current community public health systems and their influence on community and public dental health.
- Plan, implement, and evaluate a community dental health project based on community needs.
- Review current literature- choose a topic dealing with dental health, prepare and present a classroom presentation.

DAS 130. Dental Assisting II

4 Credits (2+2P)

Continuation of chair side assisting skills and techniques with a major emphasis on four-handed dentistry. This capstone course includes specialties within dentistry and expanded chair side functions. May be repeated up to 4 credits.

Learning Outcomes

- Recognize and discuss ethical and legal aspects of the delivery of dentistry as they relate to the practice of dentistry and to dental assisting in New Mexico.
- Differentiate between verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Perform the duties of the dental auxiliary in patient education/relations.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills in relation to patient treatment.
- Demonstrate through self and clinical site evaluations progression in chair side assisting skills along with the ability to perform these skills with minimal supervision.
- Identify and pronounce head and neck anatomy terminology correctly during clinical procedures.
- Set up the correct armamentarium (including materials) for various dental procedures without assistance (clinical practicum).

DAS 131. Dental Office Management I

3 Credits (3)

Introduction to the field of dental office management with emphasis placed on professional verbal and written communication skills utilized within the dental office. Content includes dental terminology, charting, and back office experience as they relate to dental reception and management.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): DAS 101, AHS 120, and AHS 202.

Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1110G. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

DAS 133. Dental Office Management II

3 Credits (3)

Places emphasis on computer programs specifically designed for dental office management (Dentrix, Sof Dent, etc.) Expanded course content on oral communication and telephone skills, appointment scheduling, patient relations, stress management solutions, and comprehensive critical thinking/problem solving skills.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): AHS 202. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1110G, DAS 101, and AHS 120. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

DAS 155. Special Topics

1-6 Credits

Specific subjects to be announced in the Schedule of Classes. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 credits.

Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

Admissions information can be found on our webpage

Website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/index.html> (<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>)

Admission questions must be directed to the following e-mail: dentalprogramsadmissions@dacc.nmsu.edu

Department Chair Contact Information:

Name: Elmer E. Gonzalez, MBA, Ph.D., RDH, CDA.

Department Chair - Dental Programs

Office Location: DASH 84F

Phone: (575) 528-7216

E Mail: dentalprograms@dacc.nmsu.edu