

DENTAL ASSISTANT

Certificate of Completion

Dental assisting is a rewarding profession. Dental assistants are people who like helping others, 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.

The Dental Assistant program at DACC is nationally accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Program Accreditation. It is also recognized by the New Mexico State Board of Dentistry as a continuing-education provider.

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.

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), as well as the ability to manipulate dental/medical equipment, move/lift patients and equipment up to 50 pounds without assistance, and perform patient care procedures with manual dexterity.

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 or resume assignment submission (in accordance with rubric and instructions included in packet)
- Copy of current healthcare provider CPR card and proof of current immunizations
- Completion of English, communication, and biology courses with a C- or better, prior to applying to the program.
- Acknowledgment of physical capabilities required of a dental assistant
- Completion of program application (submitted by deadline)

Website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>

Dental Assistant - Certificate of Completion (<http://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 (3+3P)

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.

Corequisite(s): DAS 113, DAS 115, and DAS 117.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): PSYC 1110G, PHLS 1110G, and NUTR 2110. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G). Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

DAS 113. Dental Assisting I**4 Credits (2+6P)**

Introduction to chair side assisting procedures, instrumentation, infection control, equipment safety and maintenance, dental office emergencies, and management of pain and anxieties.

Corequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 115, and DAS 117.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): PSYC 1110G, PHLS 1110G, and NUTR 2110. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G). Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

DAS 115. Dental Radiology**3 Credits (2+3P)**

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.

Corequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, and DAS 117.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): PSYC 1110G, PHLS 1110G, and NUTR 2110. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G). Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

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

Composition, chemical and physical properties, manipulation and uses of dental materials. Laboratory experiences include the application and manipulation of various materials used in dentistry.

Corequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, and DAS 115.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): PSYC 1110G, PHLS 1110G, and NUTR 2110. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 1110G, BIOL 1130, and (COMM 1130G or COMM 1115G). Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

DAS 123. Dental Assisting Practicum**6 Credits (1+15P)**

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. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

Prerequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, DAS 115, and DAS 117.

Corequisite(s): DAS 125, DAS 127, and DAS 129.

DAS 125. Professional Concepts**3 Credits (3)**

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. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

Prerequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, DAS 115, and DAS 117.

Corequisite(s): DAS 123, DAS 127, and DAS 129.

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. Restricted to: OEDA majors. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

Prerequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, DAS 115, and DAS 117.

Corequisite(s): DAS 123, DAS 125, and DAS 129.

DAS 129. Preventive Dentistry**2 Credits (2)**

Prevention of dental diseases, oral hygiene instruction, fluoride, community dental health, and nutrition. Development, implementation and evaluation of a community dental health project. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

Prerequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, DAS 115, and DAS 117.

Corequisite(s): DAS 123, DAS 125, and DAS 127.

DAS 130. Dental Assisting II**4 Credits (2+6P)**

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. Restricted to Alamogordo, Carlsbad and Dona Ana campuses.

Prerequisite(s): DAS 111, DAS 113, DAS 115, DAS 117, DAS 123, DAS 125, DAS 127, and DAS 129.

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.

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