

Career Focus on...

# Dental Assisting

## Introduction

- Are you interested in beginning a career in one of the most prominent medical fields?
- Do you have good communication skills, a friendly manner, good organizational skills, and a desire to work in a fast-paced setting?
- Would you like a career in one of the fastest growing occupations in Massachusetts, with a projected 23% growth by 2014?

If you answered “yes” to these questions, you may want to consider a career in Dental Assisting.

## Did You Know...?

- Dental Assistants perform a vital role in a dentist’s practice. They gather information from patients, help keep the patients comfortable, take radiographs and tooth impressions, and perform administrative tasks.
- Quinsigamond’s Dental Assisting Certificate includes both classroom and clinical experience. Students in the Dental Assisting program will do some of their work in QCC’s state-of-the-art on-site dental clinic. Plus, students will work and network with professionals already working in Worcester-area dentistry.
- Working as a Dental Assistant is a flexible career. There are many full-time jobs with benefits, but there are also opportunities for part-time employment.
- The Dental Assisting Certificate is designed to help its students get a fast start in the world of dentistry, but students with a certificate will also be prepared to continue their studies in Dental Hygiene or Allied Dental Services.

## Dental Assisting @ QCC

The Dental Assisting program at QCC prepares students to take the Dental Assisting National Board exam and begin work as a dental assistant. Graduates will have spent time in clinics and the laboratory, in addition to completing courses on such topics as Dental Pathology, Dental Science, Dental Radiology, and Practice Management.

The Dental Assisting Certificate program runs through the Fall and Spring semesters, with a Clinical Practicum in the Intersession between the two semesters. After finishing the Dental Assisting program, students may opt to apply to “bridge” to the Dental Hygiene Associate’s program. In each Dental Hygiene class, two spots are reserved for new Dental Assisting graduates.

Students wishing to enter the Dental Assisting Certificate course must pass the TEAS exam with a 45% composite score. Students must also submit to a CORI/SORI check and provide certain medical documentation.

## Career Options

### DENTAL ASSISTANT

Median Annual Salary: \$33,470

Recommended Education: Postsecondary non-degree award

[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm)

### MEDICAL ASSISTANT

Median Annual Salary: \$28,860

Recommended Education: H.S. diploma or equivalent

[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm)

### DENTAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Median Annual Salary: \$35,140

Recommended Education: H.S. diploma or equivalent

[www.bls.gov/ooh/production/dental-and-ophthalmic-laboratory-technicians-and-medical-appliance-technicians.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/production/dental-and-ophthalmic-laboratory-technicians-and-medical-appliance-technicians.htm)

### DENTAL HYGIENIST

Median Annual Salary: \$68,250

Recommended Education: Associate’s degree

[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm)

### DENTIST

Median Annual Salary: \$146,920

Recommended Education: Doctoral degree

[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm)

## Worcester Area Employers

- Local dentists, including many who participate in QCC externships
- Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center
- Aspen Dental
- Family Health Center of Worcester
- Framingham Community Health Center
- Gentle Dental
- Implant Dentistry Centre

## Next Steps

Wondering if Dental Assisting is right for you?

- Take a Career Assessment to match your interests with potential careers:  
[www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#careerassess](http://www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#careerassess)
- Research the web links on this *Career Focus* page, as well as links suggested online under Career Information: [www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#careerinfo](http://www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#careerinfo)
- Conduct an Informational Interview with someone employed in the field. For more information on how to do this, review the Informational Interview links online:  
[www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#infointerview](http://www.qcc.mass.edu/t3/ort/sites.html#infointerview)
- Attend a Career Planning Session. For more information, and the current schedule, visit Career Academic Personal Success (CAPS) online:  
[www.QCC.edu/services/academic-advising/career-academic-personal-success](http://www.QCC.edu/services/academic-advising/career-academic-personal-success)
- Speak with an Advisor:  
[www2.qcc.mass.edu/advising/](http://www2.qcc.mass.edu/advising/)
- Speak with QCC Faculty who teach Dental Assisting courses.

## Sources Used

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2012-13 Edition*:

- Dental Assistants:  
[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm)
- Dental Hygienists:  
[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm)
- Dental Laboratory Technicians:  
[www.bls.gov/ooh/production/dental-and-ophthalmic-laboratory-technicians-and-medical-appliance-technicians.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/production/dental-and-ophthalmic-laboratory-technicians-and-medical-appliance-technicians.htm)
- Dentists:  
[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm)
- Medical Assistants:  
[www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm)

Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, "Fastest Growing Occupations Through 2014."

Quinsigamond Community College, Online Course Catalog

- Dental Assisting Certificate:  
[www.qcc.edu/academics/health-care/dental-assisting](http://www.qcc.edu/academics/health-care/dental-assisting)

## Professional Associations

- American Dental Assistants Organization:  
[www.dentalassistant.org](http://www.dentalassistant.org)
- Dental Assisting National Board: [www.danb.org](http://www.danb.org)
- Massachusetts Dental Assistants Association:  
[www.massdentalassistants.org](http://www.massdentalassistants.org)
- Organization for Safety, Prevention and Asepsis:  
[www.osap.org](http://www.osap.org)
- The Dale Foundation for Dental Assistants:  
[www.dalefoundation.org](http://www.dalefoundation.org)

## Positions Entered by QCC Graduates

- Dental Assistant

## Employment, Co-op, Internship, or Service Learning Opportunities

Contact the Career Placement Office:  
[www.qcc.edu/pages/Career\\_Placement.html](http://www.qcc.edu/pages/Career_Placement.html)

## Possible Transfer Schools

- Middlesex County College
- Bristol Community College
- Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (Boston Campus and Online)
- Springfield Technical Community College
- Mt. Ida College
- Cape Cod Community College
- UMass Amherst
- Worcester State University

## Specific Transfer Information

- Start at the QCC Transfer web site:  
[www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer](http://www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer)
- Make an appointment online with the Transfer Advisor: [www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer/calendar](http://www.qcc.mass.edu/transfer/calendar)
- Email questions to:  
[transfer@qcc.mass.edu](mailto:transfer@qcc.mass.edu)