

Career Focus on...

Dental Hygiene

Introduction

- Are you interested in an exciting, lucrative, and flexible career in the healthcare field?
- Do you have a friendly manner, good communication skills, and a professional outlook?
- Would you like a career in one of the fastest growing occupations in the US, with employment growing by 38% between 2010 and 2020?

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

Did You Know... ?

- Dental Hygienists work in a dentist’s office. They examine patients’ teeth and mouth, recognize and diagnose ailments, and clean teeth.
- Dental Hygienists spend much of their time working with patients. Not only do they clean teeth, they also perform x-ray exams and teach the basics of dental health to patients.
- A Dental Hygienist’s work can allow for flexible hours. Though 38% of Dental Hygienists work a forty-hour work week, the majority choose to work part-time.

Dental Hygiene @ QCC

The Dental Hygiene Associate’s program at QCC provides an intensive introduction for students who wish to begin or further their careers in Dental Hygiene. Graduates are qualified to work in dentist’s offices, clinics, and hospitals. QCC’s program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

The program offers extensive coursework, in addition to externships and hands-on experience in the dental clinic on QCC’s main campus. Dental Hygiene courses cover such diverse topics as Dental Anatomy, Oral Pathology, Local Anesthesia, Health Promotion, and Practice Management.

The Dental Hygiene program runs all year round, including summer and intersession courses. Students may also participate in clinical externships. Health and immunization records must be submitted as part of the course application.

Students wishing to enter the Dental Hygiene program must pass the TEAS exam at or above the following individual scores: English 53%, Reading 53%, Math 54%, and Science 40%. Students must also submit to a CORI/SORI check.

Career Options

DENTAL HYGIENIST

Median Annual Salary: \$68,250

Recommended Education: Associate’s degree
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm

MEDICAL ASSISTANT

Median Annual Salary: \$28,860

Recommended Education: H.S. diploma or equivalent
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm

DENTAL ASSISTANT

Median Annual Salary: \$33,470

Recommended Education: Postsecondary non-degree award
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-assistants.htm

DENTIST

Median Annual Salary: \$146,920

Recommended Education: Doctoral degree
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm

ORTHODONTIST

Median Annual Salary: \$166,400

Recommended Education: Doctoral degree
www.onetonline.org/link/summary/29-1023.00#WagesEmployment

Worcester Area Employers

- Local general practice dentists, including many who participate in QCC externships
- Local orthodontists, cosmetic dentists, and other specialty dentists
- Aspen Dental
- Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center
- Gentle Dental
- Family Health Center of Worcester
- Framingham Community Health Center
- Implant Dentistry Center

Next Steps

Wondering if Dental Hygiene is right for you?

- Take a Career Assessment to match your interests with potential careers:
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
- 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
- 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
- Speak with an Advisor:
www2.qcc.mass.edu/advising/
- Speak with QCC Faculty who teach Dental Hygiene 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
- Dental Hygienists:
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm
- Dentists:
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm
- Dentists (Orthodontist Pay Information):
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm#tab-5
- Medical Assistants:
www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/medical-assistants.htm

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

O*NET Online:

- Summary Report for: 29-1023.00 – Orthodontists:
www.onetonline.org/link/summary/29-1023.00

Quinsigamond Community College, Online Course Catalog:

- Dental Hygiene Associate Degree
www.qcc.edu/academics/health-care/dental-hygiene

Professional Associations

- American Dental Assistants Organization:
www.dentalassistant.org
- American Dental Hygienists' Association:
www.adha.org
- International Federation of Dental Hygienists:
www.ifdh.org
- Organization for Safety, Prevention and Asepsis:
www.osap.org

Positions Entered by QCC Graduates

- Dental Hygienist

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

Contact the Career Placement Office:
www.qcc.edu/pages/Career_Placement.html

Possible Transfer Schools

- Boston University
- Tufts University
- Fitchburg State University
- Northeastern University
- UMass Amherst
- UMass Lowell
- Worcester State University

Specific Transfer Information

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