

Dental Assistant

DESCRIPTION OF WORK: Positions in this banded class provide technical assistance to dentists and dental students in the care of dental patients. Positions provide primary clinical support for patient care by performing dental assisting duties in a variety of clinical settings, i.e., emergency care, general dentistry, restorative dentistry, oral surgery, endodontics, orthodontics, prosthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and radiology. Duties performed include maintaining inventories of supplies and equipment, cleaning and sterilizing instruments, preparing and arranging instrument trays for clinical use, explaining procedures and providing support to patients, passing instruments to the dentist during dental procedures, preparing impression and filling materials, operating oral evacuation equipment, retractors, and water/air sprays, monitoring the patient's behavior and vital signs as requested by the dentist, completing patient records and charts, billings and reappointments, clearing and cleaning the operatory and instruments, taking routine x-rays and photographs, and instructing patient, family, and/or health care staff in basic oral hygiene. Positions in this class typically have some responsibility for orienting dental and dental assistant students in the utilization of dental assistants in office management, patient relations, and routine chair-side procedures. Work may include supervision of other dental assistants.

EXAMPLES OF COMPETENCIES:

CONTRIBUTING:

Knowledge-Technical: Basic knowledge of dental assistance practice including dental equipment, instruments, and procedures. Completes and demonstrates CPR and OSHA related training, compliance, and ability. Knowledge and ability to follow dental office business practices, patient care, and patient charting protocols.

Patient Care: Ability to prepare, sterilize/disinfect and arrange instruments and equipment for clinical use; ability to maintain inventories of supplies, equipment, and instrument trays. Ability to pass instruments to dentist during routine procedures. Ability to direct and escort patients within clinical area and communicates with several clinical areas to maintain smooth patient flow. Ability to operate oral evacuation equipment, retractors, and water/air sprays during patient treatment.

Information/Records Administration: Ability to take and record patient blood pressures, pulse and temperatures and updates patient health histories. Ability to maintain accurate and timely records of patient charts. Ability to prepare and distribute daily schedules of assignments to students; ability to distribute patient records/information as needed.

Communication: Ability to communicate information about services, processes, and procedures effectively to patients using prescribed or established guidelines. Ability to communicate effectively with a variety of individuals including colleagues, students, faculty, and other health care professionals.

JOURNEY

Knowledge-Technical: Thorough knowledge of dental assistance practice including dental equipment, instruments, and procedures; knowledge of preparation methods and dental materials. Knowledge of dental office business practices, patient care, and patient charting. Thorough knowledge of effective clinical teaching skills and behaviors. Ability to continually learn new computer technologies and procedures in the field; ability to apply knowledge obtained at clinical continuing education programs sponsored by the School of Dentistry.

Patient Care: Ability to prepare, sterilize/disinfect and arrange instruments and equipment for clinical use; ability to maintain inventories of supplies, equipment, and instrument trays. May require ability to instruct students. Ability to pass instruments to the dentist during routine and non-routine procedures. Ability to mix impression and filling materials; ability to fabricate temporary restorations, place sealants, and perform coronal polishing. Ability to perform steps in preparing and completing radiographs. Ability to explain procedures and provide support to patients.

Information/Records Administration: Ability to collect/assimilate a variety of information for assessments. May require ability to perform basic preliminary data analysis. Ability to ensure accuracy and timely completion of all patient records and charts activity by dental assistants. Ability to assist in scheduling patient appointments and posting patient payments.

Communication: Ability to explain and interpret programs, policies and procedures that deviate from standard operating procedures by determining and consulting appropriate resources such as policies, manuals, or other staff. Ability to present ideas in a clear, concise, organized manner. Ability to communicate information related to overall clinic operations.

Planning and Organizing Work/Supervision: May require ability to serve as a lead role/trainer for other dental assistants and students on clinic processes, procedures and chair side technique.

ADVANCED

Knowledge-Technical: Comprehensive knowledge of the principles methods and techniques of dental procedures; through knowledge of the use and care of equipment using in a dental clinic. Considerable knowledge of proper patient care management, employee supervision, and administrative standards as it pertains of student clinical areas. Considerable knowledge and adaptation of effective clinical teaching skills and behaviors. Ability to understand and apply new processes and technologies as directed by dentist and administration.

Patient Care: Ability to supervise and monitor all sterilization activities, including the maintenance of and cleaning of hand pieces and dental units. Ability to maintain inventory for all supplies; ability to order items needed from outside vendors; ability to work with faculty to handle special orders. Ability to assist dentist in more complex chair side procedures. Ability to instruct staff and students in proper chair side assistance.

Information/Records Administration: Ability to collect routine and non-routine information to be used by other health care professionals in preparing assessments or data analysis. Ability to identify problems and opportunities to improve patient data collection; ability to recommend improvements and changes in information/records administration; ability to ensure quality control.

Communication: Ability to interpret guidelines and advise others regarding processes, services, and operations as applied to non-standard situations. Ability to model excellent patient communication; ability to assist other dental assistants in improving communication skills; ability to help others resolve patient issues. Ability to communicate expectations to other employees, which may include formal/informal training.

Planning and Organizing Work/Supervision: Ability to supervise dental assistants including organizing and assigning work of dental assistants; ability to schedule work of dental assistants based on patient load; ability to ensure appropriate staff coverage in patient areas. Ability to supervise dental assistant students. Ability to train and supervise dental assistants. Ability to ensure OSHA compliance and completion of all CPR and bloodborne pathogen classes by dental assistants.

MINIMUM TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE: High school diploma or equivalency and completion of an accredited dental assisting program; or equivalent combination of training and experience.

Special Note: This is a generalized representation of positions in this class and is not intended to reflect essential functions per ADA. Examples of competencies are typical of the majority of positions, but may not be applicable to all positions.