MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
BE A DENTAL PROFESSIONAL.

Become a Certified Dental Assistant in only one year, at Central Oregon Community College!

- Work as a team with other health care professionals to provide patient care
- Help improve patients’ health
- Make patients feel cared for
- Assist the dentist and offer direct patient care
- Flexible work schedules and hours
- Good pay and benefits

COC also offers Pre-Dental Hygiene and Pre-Dental curriculum.

MORE INFORMATION

cocc.edu/programs/dental-assisting
or contact the program director
Lynn Murray • COCC Bend Campus
Health Careers Center • Room 245
lmurray@cocc.edu • 541.383.7574
The Dental Assistant Career Path

As a dental assistant, you have so many options to grow professionally and expand your career. The biggest challenge you’ll have is figuring out where you want to grow. When weighing your options, it is important to keep in mind your state’s requirements and available job titles.

Broadening your role

Once you have that covered, there are two main types of dental assistant career paths you can follow: broadening your role chairside, or shifting your focus in the dental field. As you explore each path’s potential, here are some key milestones and educational opportunities to consider.

If you love patients, helping people, and promoting wellness, working chairside might be a good path for you. There is a wide array of duties for chairside dental assistants, and growth opportunities can include everything from earning your Certification to becoming a dentist, and everything in between.

**Become a Certified Dental Assistant:** Earning your Certification is a wonderful way to gain recognition and increase your earning potential. Check out [https://www.danb.org/](https://www.danb.org/) for more information on certifying.

**Become an Expanded Function Dental Assistant:** Expanding the functions you can perform as a dental assistant is a great way to take on more responsibilities and stand out in your office.

**Become a Dental Hygienist:** Advancing your career to include cleaning teeth and advising patients comes with a lot of perks, including increased pay and work hour flexibility. To do this, you will need to earn at least your Associate’s Degree in Dental Hygiene, and complete licensing examinations specific to your state. For a list of relevant schools, check out the dental hygiene programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) at [ada.org](https://ada.org).

**Become a Dentist:** As the most advanced role within a dental practice, becoming a dentist requires a substantial educational commitment. All dentists have to have a college degree, complete 4 years of dental school, and pass a series of state licensing examinations to get their D.D.S. or D.M.D. Some also choose to continue their professional education by completing a residency program in a dental specialty. If you’re interested in learning more about the process, check out [ada.org](https://ada.org).

Information Source: The Dale Foundation, [https://www.dalefoundation.org/For-Dental-Assistants/The-Dental-Assistant-Career-Path](https://www.dalefoundation.org/For-Dental-Assistants/The-Dental-Assistant-Career-Path)