

WASHTENAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE POLICY ON STUDENT COMPETENCIES

A dental assistant is a health care professional whose primary responsibility is to work with the dentist in the office and perform duties delegated by the dentist. In addition to the duties of the profession, the dental assistant must always be aware of the patient's condition and needs and be able to interact appropriately.

Please refer to Appendix A-1 for required student acceptance.

TECHNICAL STANDARD	DEFINITION	EXAMPLES OF NECESSARY ACTIVITIES (Not All Inclusive)
Cognitive Qualifications	Sufficient Reading, Language and Math Skills; intellectual and emotional functions necessary to plan and implement dental care for individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to comprehend and interpret written material • Follow and deliver written and oral direction • Prepare dental treatment plans
Critical Thinking	Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment; synthesize information from written material and apply knowledge to clinical situations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations • Develop dental treatment plans • Make rapid decisions under pressure • Handle multiple priorities in stressful situations • Assist with problem solving
Interpersonal	Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, educational, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish rapport with patients and colleagues • Cope effectively with stress • Cope with anger/fear/hostility of others in a calm manner • Cope with confrontation • Demonstrate high degree of patience
Communication	Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and non-verbal form (speech, reading, and writing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain treatment procedures • Initiate patient education • Document and interpret treatment actions and patient responses
Mobility	Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room, to maneuver in small spaces and to perform procedures necessary for emergency intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move around in clinical operatories, workspaces, classrooms, laboratories and other treatment areas • Administer cardio-pulmonary resuscitation procedures • Remain on one's feet in upright position at a workstation without moving about • Climb stairs • Remain in seated or standing position for 3-5 hour periods without a break
Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective dental care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calibrate and use equipment • Position patients • Perform repetitive tasks • Able to grip • Bend at knee and squat. • Reach above shoulder level • Lift with assistance 150 pounds • Exert 20-50 pounds of force (pushing/pulling) • Successfully complete a CPR (Healthcare Provider) certification course
Hearing	Normal, corrected or aidable-auditory ability sufficient to interpret verbal communication from patients and health care team members and to monitor and assess health needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hear monitor alarms, emergency signals, and cries for help • Hear tape recorded transcriptions • Hear telephone interactions • Hear audible stethoscope signals during blood pressure screenings
Visual	Normal, corrected -visual acuity sufficient for observation and assessment necessary for patient assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe patient responses • Identify and distinguish colors • Accurately read mm markings on small dental instruments
Tactile	Tactile ability sufficient for gross and fine motor coordination necessary for delicate manual assessment of oral tissues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform palpation, functions of physical examination and/or those related to therapeutic intervention.
Environmental	Ability to tolerate environmental stressors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with chemicals and detergents • Tolerate exposure to fumes and odors • Work in areas that are close and crowded