



**DENTAL ASSISTING PROGRAM**  
**Certificate in Dental Assisting**  
**Pima County Community College District**

**Tipsheet**

**1. Q. How will this program prepare me to be a dental assistant?**

- A. The dental assistant performs a wide variety of tasks requiring both interpersonal and technical skills. Some specific tasks dental assisting students will learn include: chairside assisting/instrument transfer, exposing and developing radiographs (x-rays), preparation and sterilization of instruments, compliance to OSHA standards, measuring blood pressure, handling medical emergencies, charting dental conditions, mixing dental materials, giving patients oral hygiene instruction, and performing office procedures.

**2. Q. What is the employment outlook for a dental assistant?**

- A. A shortage of dental assistants locally and nationwide has created a great need for qualified dental assistants. Most students are offered jobs upon completion of the program. Our graduates are in demand!

**3. Q. Are there any specific skills/technical standards/physical demands in this profession?**

- A. If you have strong communication skills, enjoy working with people, are reliable, have good organizational skills, and work well with your hands as well as your mind, dental assisting would be a great career choice.

Program Technical Standards

- Students need to have the ability to see, have normal color discrimination, have good hand-eye coordination, manual dexterity and can work accurately with detailed numbers.
- Students must be able to communicate verbally with patients.
- Students must be able to follow specific detailed instructions to include organizing tasks sequentially.
- Students must be able to process information and demonstrate rational and appropriate behavior under stressful conditions that may impact patient treatment.
- Students must have long term memory capability.
- Students will need to be able to maneuver around a dental chair/operator/dental office.

## Program Technical Standards (continued)

- Students may be required to participate in clinical simulations as a dental patient.

### **4. Q. What degree will I earn?**

- A. You will earn a Certificate in Dental Assisting from Pima Community College. You will be eligible to take the Arizona State Oral Radiography Certification examination and the Dental Assisting National Board's (DANB) Certified Dental Assistant exam (CDA).

### **5. Q. Is the program accredited?**

- A. Yes. It is the ONLY program in Tucson meeting the standards for accreditation by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association.

### **6. Q. How long is the Dental Assisting Program?**

- A. You can begin your new and exciting health care profession with just nine months (two semesters) of schooling. The program begins each fall semester in late August. The fall semester must be completed in order to register for the spring semester. Clinical procedures in affiliated dental clinics and/or private offices will be completed during the spring semester of study. Graduation is in mid-May.

### **7. Q. Can I attend the Dental Assisting Program as a part-time student?**

- A. Classes are scheduled on a full-time basis during traditional hours from Monday through Thursday.

### **8. Q. What will my schedule be?**

- A. Please contact a dental assisting faculty member at 520-206-6916 to make an appointment to go over your schedule. Schedules may not be available until April.

### **9. Q. What is an Advising Sheet and why is it important?**

- A. The Advising Sheet is designed to provide you with additional information regarding program prerequisites, support courses, application procedures, and important phone numbers relative to the Health Related Professions Admissions office.

### **10. Q. Is there an application deadline?**

- A. Class positions are filled on a first come, first served basis. Call 520-206-6618 to request an application. Complete the application, attach a photocopy of your diploma or GED, and return these papers to the Health Related Professions Admissions office at 2202 West Anklam Rd. Tucson, AZ 85709-0205. Then call

520-206-6916 to make an appointment to go over your fall schedule. (Please be sure you have taken your Assessment tests and bring copies of the results to this student/faculty appointment.)

**11.Q. How much does the Dental Assisting Program cost?**

- A. The entire tuition for both semesters is approximately \$1424 (for in-state residents). Other expenses include: Textbooks (\$300), Uniforms (\$100), Lab Fees (\$55) Liability insurance (\$30), and miscellaneous processing fees (\$27). (Note: Students will also be responsible for state x-ray certification fees (\$230) and CPR training (\$54). Each student must have medical insurance. Low cost student medical insurance is available.

**12.Q. Is there a waiting list or lottery to get into this program?**

- A. Students are accepted on a first come, first served basis until maximum enrollment is achieved. Historically, any student who applies to the Dental Assisting Program will be accepted if all basic requirements are completed. (See Advising Sheet)

**13.Q. Is financial aid available?**

- A. Information regarding financial aid may be obtained at the West Campus Financial Aid office. Phone 206-6606. Several students have received assistance from Job Path. Contact Barbara Selwyn, Job Path Career Counselor at 520-324-0402 for additional information.

**14.Q. Are immunizations required?**

- A. Students may be exposed to bloodborne and infectious diseases. For this reason, students enrolled in the program will be required to show proof of the following immunizations:
- a. Measles/Rubella/Rubeola (if born after 1957)
  - b. Tetanus/Diphtheria (within 10 years)

**NOTE:** It is *highly* recommended that all health care professionals be vaccinated against Hepatitis B.

**15.Q. Is there any required health documentation?**

- A. You must complete a tuberculosis (TB) test or chest x-ray. Forms will be provided the first week of classes to document immunizations and tests.

**16.Q. How can I be sure that this will be the career I want?**

- A. It is strongly recommended that you make arrangements to observe (shadow) assistants in private practices or clinics prior to choosing dental assisting as a profession.

**17.Q. Are there any advantages to completing the Dental Assisting Program prior to pursuing a career in Dental Hygiene?**

- A. Graduates of Pima Community College's Dental Assisting Program who have been accepted into Dental Hygiene Programs feel that the skills and practical experience gained is invaluable in achieving their long range goals. Ask your Dental Assisting faculty advisor to explain other benefits.

**18.Q. Where can I go if I have more specific questions about the Dental Assisting Program?**

- A. If you need more specific information regarding the dental assisting program you may contact the Dental Assisting Faculty offices at 520-206-6916. You may also visit our Website at <http://wc.pima.edu/~hrp/ADMISS.HTM> or [www.pima.edu](http://www.pima.edu) (click on to "Health Related Professions" and then to "Dental Assisting Education."

**19. Q. What is the curriculum of the Dental Assisting Program?**

- A. There are twenty nine (29) DAE credit hours. The only other required course for graduates is a writing course. It is *strongly* recommended that students complete their writing course prior to entering the program. (Course descriptions are available in the college catalog).

**FIRST SEMESTER (FALL)**

DAE-159	Introduction to Health Care for Dental Assistants	2
DAE-160	Orientation to Dental Care	1
DAE-161	Biomedical Dental Science	3
DAE-162	Dental Assisting I	3
DAE-163	Oral Radiography	3
DAE-164	Dental Materials	3
DAE-165	Pre-Clinical Procedures	<u>2</u>
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**SECOND- SEMESTER (SPRING)**

DAE-166	Dental Assisting II	3
DAE-167	Dental Assisting III	3
DAE-190	Clinical Procedures	<u>6</u>
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**SUPPORT COURSE (Complete Before Entering Program or During Second Semester of Study)**

WRT-154	Career Communications (or WRT-100 or WRT-101)	3
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