

# Exploring Careers Through Technical Routes

## Dental Nurse



### The Industry

Dental nurses work with dentists to assist with all aspects of patient care from carrying out check-ups to seeing patients through operations. They are an essential part of the dental team having a variety of tasks to complete both during and outside of dental procedure times.

General duties include: passing instruments to the dentist; removing water and saliva from the patient's mouth during treatment; preparing materials to make fillings and moulds; reassuring the patient and making sure they are relaxed and comfortable at all times; keeping the surgery tidy and instruments sterile; recording information about each patient; ensuring confidentiality at all times.

You could work in a dental practice, a hospital, with the community dental service, in a university or in the armed forces.

Chartered Society of Designers [www.csd.org.uk](http://www.csd.org.uk)  
 Chartered Professional Institute (IPA) <http://www.ipa.co.uk>  
 Creative and Cultural Skills <https://ccskills.org.uk>

### Skills and Requirements

You will need to have excellent communication skills and a caring nature as dental nurses need to be friendly, reliable and calm. You will also need:

- The ability to relate to all types of people to put them at ease, gain their confidence and decrease problems or fears
- Excellent organisational skills to ensure essential equipment and materials are easily accessible and sterilised efficiently during dental procedures
- Strong interpersonal skills and to enjoy working as part of a team
- A willingness to learn and enjoy working with new methods and advancements within dental care
- An ability to protect the confidentiality of patient information
- The ability to operate a computer based system
- Good manual dexterity, good eyesight and colour vision
- To act within the General Dental Council's (GDC) ethical guidance and standards for a dental professional.

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## Working and Learning as a Dental Nurse



### Progression

#### Study Programme

**Level 2**  
Dental Nurse.

**Level 3**  
Dental Nursing Assistant.



#### Apprenticeships

**Level 3**  
Dental Nursing.



#### Further study

**Cert HE**  
Dental Nursing.  
**FdSc**  
Dental Nursing.  
**BSc**  
Dental Nursing.  
**BSc (Hons)**  
Dental Therapy and Hygiene.



#### Career roles

Dental therapist helping a dentist carry out the more routine dentistry work.

Dental hygienist helping people to look after their teeth and gums.



### Calculation including problem solving

#### Tasks:

- Mix cement for the dentist to use when replacing a crown.
- Sterilise instruments and perform cross-infection controls after each patient.
- Plan the preparation of instruments to ensure the dentist can keep to the schedule of patient appointments.

#### GCSE maths links:

- Ratio, proportion and rates of change** (direct and inverse proportion - calculating amounts using proportion).
- Ratio, proportion and rates of change** (ratio in context - sharing in a given ratio).
- Problem solving** (solving number problems).

#### Functional skills maths L2 links:

- Measure, shape and space**  
**MSS1/L2.5** Calculate with units of measure within the same system.
- Number**  
**N1/L2.3** Calculate ratio and direct proportion.
- Measure, shape and space**  
**MSS1/L2.2** Calculate, measure and record time in complex contexts.

### Communication, all forms

#### Tasks:

- Write a leaflet for local schools to advise children on oral health maintenance.
- Help a patient to overcome pain whilst having an injection.
- Work closely with the dentist during the dental procedure, and in maintaining the client's electronic record.

#### GCSE English links:

- Analysing non-fiction** (responding to a non-fiction text - analyse an extract).  
**Writing** (literary techniques - informative language).
- Spoken language** (speaking and listening - audience and purpose; personal presence - body language; voice).
- Spoken language** (speaking and listening - audience and purpose).  
**Writing** (writing non-fiction - a template).

#### Functional skills English L2 links:

- Writing composition**  
**WC/L2.2** Write text of an appropriate level of detail and of appropriate length to meet the needs of purpose and audience.
- Speaking, listening and communicating**  
**SLC/L2.6** Use language that is effective, accurate and appropriate to context and situation.
- Writing composition**  
**WC/L2.3** Organise writing for different purposes using appropriate format and structure.