

PHYSICAL AND COGNITIVE EXPECTATIONS OF A STUDENT DENTAL ASSISTANT

Dental Assisting (DA) is a practice discipline with cognitive, sensory, affective and psychomotor performance requirements. For the purposes of DA program compliance with the 1990 Americans with Disability Act, a qualified individual with a disability is one who with or without reasonable accommodation or modification, meets the eligibility requirements for participation in the DA program.

Admission to and progression in the DA program is not based on these standards. Rather, the standards should be used to assist each student in determining whether accommodations or modifications are necessary. Standards provide an objective measure upon which a student and the advisor base informed decisions regarding whether a student is “qualified” to meet the requirements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to read the technical standards carefully and to ask for clarification of any standard that is not understood.

If a student believes that he or she cannot meet one or more of the standards without accommodations or modifications, the dental faculty will determine on an individual basis, whether or not the necessary accommodations or modifications can be made in a reasonable manner. Both instructors and students must evaluate the standards continually throughout the program.

PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL STANDARDS

Dental Assisting (DA) students should possess and be able to demonstrate the following:

- 1. Critical Thinking:** critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment. For example, student must be able to identify cause – effect relationships in clinical situations; collect and analyze clinical and radiographic data to aid in problem solving; and assist in the development of dental treatment plans.
- 2. Interpersonal Skills:** interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, groups, etc., from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds. For example, student shall establish rapport with clients/patients and dental team members.
- 3. Communication Skills:** communication abilities sufficient for interaction with others in verbal and written form. For example, explain treatment procedures to patients; initiate preventative oral health teaching; document and interpret treatment rendered and patient/client responses.
- 4. Mobility:** physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces; stand and walk for extensive periods of time. For example, moving from room to room in a clinic and laboratory areas. Must be able to sit in a fixed position for up to an hour while assisting with dental procedures.
- 5. Motor Skills:** gross and fine motor abilities to assist in the provision of safe and effective care. For example, calibrate and use equipment, document care; position and move patients/clients; mix and dispense dental materials and perform expanded function dental procedures as allowed by applicable

laws.

6. **Hearing:** auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs and communicate with patients and other members of the oral health care team.
7. **Visual:** visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in dental care. For example, observe patient/client responses, observe appearance and consistency of dental materials and determine shading and coloring of restorations.
8. **Tactile:** tactile ability sufficient for assessment. For example, perform functions related to dental materials as well as laboratory procedures and treatment procedures.
9. **Weight-Bearing:** ability to lift and manipulate/move 45-50 pounds daily. For example, position patients/clients and move equipment.
10. **Cognitive Abilities:** ability to be oriented to time, place and person; organize responsibilities and decisions. For example, student shall assess client/patient complaints and oral conditions and be able to assimilate and communicate information to other members of the treatment team.

EXAMPLES ARE NOT ALL INCLUSIVE