



Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

PROFESSIONS COMPLEMENTARY
TO DENTISTRY



“ Dental Nursing offers a career for those interested in people and opens up new challenges with continued professional development. ”

THE HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE TEAM NEEDS YOU

PROFESSIONS COMPLEMENTARY TO DENTISTRY

This is a group of staff complementary to the work of dentists which includes Dental Nurses, Dental Hygienists, Dental Technicians and Dental Therapists.

Dental Nurse

A Dental Nurse works closely with the dentist, providing assistance throughout a patient's visit. This includes preparing the surgery, passing instruments, sterilising instruments and preparing fillings. The Dental Nurse maintains sterile conditions and ensures health and safety policy is adhered to, helping to record patient information and carry out stock control.

Dental Hygienist

Dental Hygienists are integral members of the dental team working to the prescription of a dentist, providing preventive, educational and therapeutic care to promote oral health and control oral diseases. Most hygienists work in general practice. Some may also work in hospitals and community dental services.

Dental Therapist

A Dental Therapist works as part of the dental team that provides clinical and educational care for children and adults in the community, including those with special needs. Dental Therapists carry out a range of straightforward treatments, including simple fillings or extractions. They also undertake a range of preventive procedures and provide oral health advice.

Dental Technician

Dental Technicians produce the dentures, crowns, bridges and braces that people may need in the course of dental treatment. The primary role of the Dental Technician is provision of a wide range of oral prostheses, replacement of missing teeth, use of crowns, bridges and implants, and the provision of prostheses to replace human tissue.

Skills Required:

You will need a high standard of work and personal commitment will be necessary. A team approach to healthcare is essential to provide an effective quality service. You will require a high level of manual dexterity, good eyesight and good physical health; be friendly and sympathetic with a calm, confident and reassuring manner; be able to relate well to a wide range of people. You should be able to work well in a team; have good organisational skills to manage the administrative aspects of the job.

Training Programmes

Dental Nurse:

National Certificate in Dental Nursing is a part-time evening programme at various further education institutes in Northern Ireland. The full-time programme at the School of Dentistry, RVH is at present under review.

Certificate in Oral Health Education is a part-time evening programme at:

Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education

Fermanagh College of Further Education

Upper Bann Institute of Further & Higher Education

Entry Qualifications:

Applicants should have a good standard of education and an interest in working with people of all ages in a responsible, caring environment.

Dental Hygienist:

Diploma in Dental Hygiene is a full-time two year programme at the School of Dental Hygiene, College of Queen's University Belfast.

Entry Qualifications:

5 GCSE/GCE O-Level passes at Grades A-C or the equivalent. These should include English Language and a science subject, preferably Biology or Human Biology, and:
possess a) 2 GCSE A-Level passes at Grade E or above or equivalent qualifications or b) have experience as a dental nurse and hold the relevant nationally recognised certificate.

Dental Therapist:

The Diploma in Dental Therapy is 24 to 27 months of full-time study (longer courses give a qualification in dental hygiene). The programme runs at dental schools approved by the British Association of Dental Therapists (BADT).

Entry Qualifications:

You normally need five GCSEs (A-C) including English Language and either Biology or Human Biology and either two A-levels/three Highers at Grade C or above or a nationally-recognised dental nurse qualification.

Dental Technician:

The Foundation Degree in Dental Technology is a full-time three year programme at the School of Dentistry, Queen's University Belfast.

Entry Qualifications:

BTEC National Award in Dental Technology
(This is a one-year part-time programme which requires 4 GCSE/GCE O-Levels at Grade C or above including Mathematics and one Science subject.

How to Apply:

The training courses for Dental Nurse, Hygienist and Technician will be advertised in the local press. For Dental Therapy apply directly to a School of Dental Therapy.

Career Pathways:

A **Dental Nurse** has excellent permanent employment prospects in general dental practice and community clinics, hospitals and the opportunity to progress to a variety of post-qualification certificate courses, offered by the National Examination Board for Dental Nurses. These include Oral Health Education and Dental Sedation.

A **Dental Hygienist** can specialise in certain areas of care. Courses in oral health education will develop your ability to show others how to look after their teeth and you will also have the option of moving into teaching the next generation of hygienists.

A **Dental Therapist** can specialise in certain areas of care by taking courses in oral health education. Dental Therapists can go on to become teachers and practice managers.

A **Dental Technician** can proceed with further education with a BTEC Higher National Diploma and a degree course, BSc (Hons) in Dental Technology.

Professional Recognition:

The Dental Nurse may register with the voluntary National Register for Dental Nurses. The Dental Hygienist students will be required to register as student members of the British Dental Hygienists' Association. Once they have qualified, Dental Hygienists have the right to apply for registration with the General Dental Council (GDC).

All Dental Therapists must register with the General Dental Council (GDC) before they can practise. To qualify for registration, they must have a Diploma in Dental Therapy or a combined Diploma in Dental Hygiene and Dental Therapy. All Dental Technician students who attain a BTEC National Award are eligible to join the Dental Technicians Association (DTA) register and work as Dental Technicians.

Web Links:

Queen's University Belfast – www.qub.ac.uk

General Dental Council – www.gdc-uk.org

British Dental Hygienists' Association – www.bdha.org.uk

British Association of Dental Therapists –

www.badt.org.uk/schools

Dental Technicians Association – www.dta-uk.org

Belfast Telegraph – www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk

Belfast Institute of Further & Higher Education – www.belfastinstitute.ac.uk

East Down Institute of Further & Higher Education – www.edifhe.ac.uk

Fermanagh College of Further & Higher Education – www.fermanaghcoll.ac.uk

Newry & Kilkeel Institute of Further & Higher Education – www.nkifhe.ac.uk

North Down and Ards Institute of Further & Higher Education – www.ndai.ac.uk

Upper Bann Institute of Further & Higher Education – www.ubi.ac.uk

St Bartholomew's & the Royal London School of Medicine and Dentistry – www.mds.qmw.ac.uk

University of Wales College of Medicine, Dental School – www.uwcm.ac.uk/study/dentistry

University of Leeds, School of Dentistry – www.leeds.ac.uk/dental

University of Manchester, The Turner Dental School – www.den.man.ac.uk

The University of Sheffield, School of Clinical Dentistry – www.shef.ac.uk/dentalschool



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