

Dental Assistant Training Program Overview

Program Overview

The Dental Assistant Training Program (DATP) prepares students for entry-level dental assisting roles through hybrid online coursework, hands-on workshops, and clinical training.

Application Process

- Apply online through the University of Utah Professional Education portal.
- Eligible applicants will interview with program staff.
- Acceptance requires tuition payment, background check, drug screening, and required immunizations.
- Program includes 36 hours of online modules, three 8-hour sessions of hands-on workshops, optional open labs offered twice a week, and 90 hours of externship training.

Orientation

All students must attend a mandatory orientation during the first week. Orientation begins at 9:00 AM and lasts about 3 hours.

Topics covered:

- Program overview and expectations
- Tour of labs and clinical spaces
- Canvas access and online module instructions
- Badge and UID information

Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification

Students must complete American Heart Association (AHA) BLS certification before their first workshop. This includes an online module and an in-person session. Students with valid certification are exempt. The DATP does not provide BLS training.

Online Coursework

Students receive 6 months of access to online NELDA/DALE foundation modules. Coursework includes three 12-hour courses:

1. Infection Control
2. Radiation Health and Safety (RHS)
3. Anatomy, Morphology, and Physiology (AMP)

These courses prepare students for two exams required for Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) certification. The third exam requires 3,500 hours of chairside experience.

Hands-on Workshops

Three mandatory workshops run from 8:00 AM–5:00 PM each month at the School of Dentistry (530 Wakara Way). Optional open labs provide additional skills practice.

Workshop Topics

Workshop 1: Core Skills

- Infection control processes (handwashing, PPE, operatory setup)
- HIPAA guidelines, ethics in dentistry
- Basic dental anatomy and charting
- Instrument transfer and transfer zones
- Alginate impressions and model trimming
- Retraction and isolation techniques, and coronal polishing

Workshop 2: Medical Emergencies & Radiology

- Patient vitals and medical history review, and continued dental charting
- Radiology safety, positioning and techniques
- Digital scanning and impression techniques

Workshop 3: General Chairside Assisting

- Specialty dental procedures and instruments
- Tray setups, dental materials and mixing techniques
- Fabrication of temporary crowns and custom trays

Example Workshop Schedule

Month	Activities
January	Orientation
February	Workshop 1; Assisting Rotations; Epic Training
March	Workshop 2; Begin Externships
April	Workshop 3
May	Course Completion

Externships (90 Hours)

Students begin externships after completing Workshop 2. The Program Manager assigns clinic placements. Students contact clinic supervisors to schedule hours. Required rotations include Oral Surgery, Endodontics, Pediatrics, and Sterilization, with optional specialty rotations.

Externship Hours Tracking

Students must log externship hours on the provided sheet. Each shift must be at least 4 hours and signed off by a supervisor. Completed logs are submitted to instructors.

Program Completion

Students earn a Certificate of Program Completion after completing all modules, workshops, and externship hours. This certificate qualifies them to register for the General Chairside Assisting (GC) exam.