

PART I	DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL SERVICES	6.201
	STATE OF HAWAII	6.202
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Class Specifications  
for the Class:

DENTAL ASSISTANT SERIES

Series Definition:

This series includes positions, the duties of which are to provide chairside assistance to a dentist or dental hygienist in the performance of dental procedures such as prophylactic treatment, restorative dentistry or oral surgical operations; and to perform such clinical-support duties as receiving and preparing patients for dental treatment, preparing materials and equipment for use, including sterilizing instruments and materials and laying out instruments, performing dental X-ray procedures, and keeping records of appointments, examinations, treatments and supplies. This work requires as a primary qualification, knowledge of the techniques and procedures of dental assistance that facilitates the professional work of dentistry. Such knowledge is usually acquired in post high school dental assistance courses, and/or through intensive on-the-job training and experience.

Criteria for Determining Levels:

The following factors are used in these standards to differentiate levels of difficulty and responsibility of dental assistant positions:

1. Nature of assignment:

This factor measures the variety of tasks performed, the difficulty and complexity of the techniques and procedures employed, the nature of relationships with patients and others, the precautions observed regarding the physical and emotional condition of the patients, and the specialized skills, knowledge and abilities required to perform the work.

The dental assistant facilitates the work of the professional dentist by relieving him of non-professional tasks involved in the treatment of patients. Some tasks are relatively routine and repetitive, such as: cleaning and sterilizing instruments and equipment; disposing of and replacing soiled linen; sorting, counting and storing supplies and instruments; keeping office and storage space orderly; and filing dental records. More difficult procedures and techniques which require specialized knowledge and training in dental assistance, include

such duties as mixing amalgams, cements, silicates, or other materials for tooth restoration, and timing the preparation to have such materials available and of the proper consistency when they are needed by the dentist; preparing impression trays; mixing chemicals and developing, fixing, and drying X-ray films; preparing syringes for administration of local anesthesia; and providing chairside assistance to dentists during specialized treatment or oral surgery, or when treatment involves difficult patient-management problems.

2. Control over the work:

This factor concerns the nature of available guidelines for performance of the work and the degree of supervisory direction and control received.

In the performance of chairside assistance duties, dental assistants are under close surveillance of a dentist; however, as the dental assistant gains in experience and knowledge the degree of independence also increases so that at the upper levels the assistant anticipates the dentist's needs for instruments and materials and performs duties with a minimum of direction. In the performance of auxiliary clinical duties, the degree of control varies from close supervision over routine functions at the lowest level, to considerable independence at the upper level in the performance of such duties as: determining from the treatment prescription what equipment and procedures the dentist will use, and preparing work area by laying out or having at hand whatever instruments and materials will be needed; preparing for dental X-rays, positioning patients and exposing and developing X-rays with a minimum of direction; explaining to patients post-operative care, oral hygiene, and the importance of preventive dentistry; and assuming responsibility for management of a field clinic by coordination of dental health functions and activities with social workers, public health nurses, teachers parents and community organization leaders.

Guidelines include standard dental clinical procedures and techniques, departmental regulations, policies and procedures, and manufacturers' instructions concerning equipment and materials.

Supervisory positions are not typically found in this series, since a dentist is usually the dental assistant's supervisor. However, if a dental assistant is assigned significant supervisory responsibility over other dental

assistants, such responsibility will be considered in evaluating the position.

This series replaces the following State of Hawaii classes:

Dental Assistant I, 6.205  
Dental Assistant II, 6.207

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Director of Personnel Services

DENTAL ASSISTANT I

6.201

Duties Summary:

As a trainee, furnishes chairside assistance to a dentist or dental hygienist in the performance of dental procedures; cleans and sterilizes dental instruments and equipment; keeps records of examinations, dental conditions and appointments; keeps office and laboratory clean and orderly; participates in training sessions and performs other related duties as required.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

This represents the trainee level in an on-the-job training program in the techniques and procedures of dental assistance. A dental assistant at this level follows detailed instructions of a dentist and/or dental hygienist; work is performed under continuing supervisory direction and is subject to regular review for accuracy and neatness. Duties of a developmental nature are performed under very close supervisory control.

Examples of Duties:

Under close supervision, seats and drapes patients; adjusts chair; lays out dental instruments and supplies; hands instruments to dentist or dental hygienist; cleans and sterilizes dental instruments and equipment; cleans and keeps office and laboratory in an orderly condition; makes appointments and maintains appointment schedules; keeps records of dental examinations and conditions; prepares requisitions for supplies

as directed; participates in training sessions; may assist in the taking and developing of X-rays; may transport patients between their homes or classrooms and the clinic; may pick up and deliver supplies and equipment.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

Knowledge of: Oral hygiene and personal cleanliness; simple office and recordkeeping procedures.

Ability to: Learn proper layout and handling of dental instruments and supplies; keep dental records and appointment schedules; clean and sterilize dental instruments and equipment; follow oral and written instructions deal tactfully with people; stand for long periods of time; work within confined office spaces.

DENTAL ASSISTANT II

6.202

Duties Summary:

Furnishes chairside assistance to a dentist in the performance of dental procedures; under general supervision performs related clinical-support duties such as cleaning and sterilizing dental instruments and equipment, and preparing restorative and other materials for treatment of patients; makes appointments, maintains dental records; retracts tongue and cheeks-from area of operation; and performs other related duties as required.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

A dental assistant at this level performs chairside assistance during professional dental, treatment under the immediate direction of the dentist who gives instructions as required to insure that prescribed procedures are followed and necessary precautions are taken. Performs auxiliary clinical-support duties under general supervision, following established clinical procedures and techniques. This level is distinguished from the previous level by the requirement for knowledge of a variety of technical procedures, and the performance of auxiliary duties without close supervision and guidance. Judgment and tact are required in dealing with hospitalized or other patients who may have conditions requiring special handling or precautions.

Examples of Duties:

Performs chairside assistance during dental treatment as follows: receives and prepares patients for treatment; arranges dental instruments, materials and medications, and hands them to the dentist as required; mixes restorative and other material for treatment of patient; keeps oral operating area clear during dental procedures by use of suction devices, water sprays, cotton rolls and holders, and by retraction of cheek and tongue; aids dentist in patient management by contributing to patient's comfort and placing patient at ease through reassuring conversation and actions; gives emergency assistance for local and systematic distress under dentist's direction. Cleans and sterilizes dental instruments and equipment; keeps laboratory, office and operating room clean and orderly; makes appointments and maintains appointment schedules; keeps records of dental examinations and conditions; orders supplies and equipment as needed; assists in the exposing and developing of X-rays; transports patients to and from clinic and picks up and delivers equipment and supplies; may perform laboratory procedures such as mixing plaster for construction of diagnostic models, manipulating wax for bite records and castings, and polishing dentures and metallic restorations before insertion in the mouth.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

In addition to the knowledge and abilities required at the previous level, this level requires:

A good knowledge of the use and care of dental equipment, instruments and materials; dental terminology; the various technical procedures which are involved in chairside and clinical-support of dental treatment; simple office and recordkeeping procedures.

The ability to perform the full range of standard dental assistance duties with a minimum of direction; deal tactfully and effectively with people; work within confined office space.

DENTAL ASSISTANT III

6.203

Duties Summary:

Performs tactical dental chairside assistance and clinical-support duties that require specialized knowledge and skill, and involve the more complex clinical procedures of dental assistance work, such as operating-room procedures in oral surgery, or clinical procedures in prosthetic dentistry, and/or performs dental X-ray work including the exposing and developing of dental X-rays for both standard and unusual views; and performs other duties as required.

Distinguishing Characteristics:

A dental assistant at this level performs, for a preponderant part of the time, technical chairside assistance and clinical-support duties that require considerable specialized knowledge and skill. Assignments are distinguished from those of the next-lower level by the regular use of the more complex clinical procedures of dental assistant work, such as: clinical procedures in prosthetic dentistry requiring knowledge of the specialized equipment used and of the characteristics, use and preparation of prosthetic materials; clinical operating-room procedures in oral surgery requiring knowledge of the sequence of steps in a number of oral surgical operations, and the use and care of a large array of dental surgical instruments.

This level is also characterized by greater independence of action; dentists give dental assistants at this level a minimum of specific directions, which are normally limited to directions required by unusual and emergency professional treatment. Generally, the dental assistant acts independently in making necessary preparations in advance of appointments, and deciding what procedures and techniques to employ in supporting the professional work of the dentist; the dentist explains changes in professional dental procedures and is available to resolve unusual problems and to give advice when needed.

In making appointments, and in receiving and dismissing patients, the dental assistant independently takes any of various precautions indicated by the patient's condition. Such precautions include rescheduling the appointments of patients who are in particularly disturbed conditions upon appearing for treatment; observing the patient's general condition after treatment and holding him in a recovery room if indicated; and

making certain that the patient understands any instructions from the dentist on post-treatment care.

Examples of Duties:

During dental treatments involving various aseptic, anesthetic, precautionary, emergency, or other special measures, anticipates the dentist's needs at each stage of the treatment procedure and hands him appropriate instruments and materials without specific direction. Recognizes and responds to situations in which complications of dental treatment indicate that the dental assistant is required personally to perform retractions of the patient's tongue and cheek for convenient access, to keep the mouth clear of saliva and blood by manipulating syringes and suction equipment, and to take necessary precautions to guard against sudden unexpected movements of the patient. During oral surgery, exercises rapid and accurate judgment in anticipating the dentist's needs for particular instruments and materials; as required, clears the patient's mouth, holds sutures, and observes necessary aseptic precautions observes the patient constantly for evidence of fainting or shock; calls distress symptoms to the dentist's attention and assists in restorative measures. Independently performs extra-oral as well as intra-oral X-ray work ordered by the dentist, observing proper precautions against the hazards of overexposure of self or of the patient. Positions the patient, adjusts and operates X-ray equipment (including panoramic equipment, if required), exposes and develops film for both standard and unusual views, and takes additional exposures as required.

In addition to the assignments described above, may be responsible for management of a dental field clinic as part of a public health program, requiring frequent contacts and coordination of activities with social worker, public health nurses, teachers, parents and community organization leaders; helps with training of lower-level dental assistants and may assist in dental health education programs by participating in demonstrations, leading group discussions, etc.; may be required to operate a mobile dental van.

Knowledge and Abilities Required:

In addition to the knowledge and abilities required at previous levels, this level requires:

Knowledge of the terminology, procedures, materials and instruments used in specialized fields of dentistry.

The ability to anticipate and respond to dentist's needs during treatment; to ease patient's emotional tensions; and to recognize obvious physical or emotional conditions that require special precautions; work within confined office space.