

DENTAL ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

This involves supervision of dental assistants, and performance of skilled, work in rendering technical assistance to dentists or dental students in the care of dental patients. This work is identified in such places as the Department of Correction, the Department of Human Resources, North Carolina Memorial Hospital, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Work is performed under the general supervision of a professor or dentist supervisor and is reviewed through general observation of work and/or evaluation of records. At least 40% of the time should be in supervisory and administrative duties. An employee at UNC-CH usually serves as an instructor-supervisor in a program for dental students in the effective utilization of dental assistants in their operative procedures. Duties include most or all of the following: assists as a dental instructor in forming teams to give demonstrations of operating techniques and procedures; introduces new and improved methods and techniques to dental assistants; prepares records and reports; observes dental assistant-dental student teams working together and suggests methods of improving team concept of operating; instructs dental assistants in proper patient management; occasionally demonstrates dental techniques to students and dental assistants; inspects all equipment and instruments periodically for proper maintenance by the dental assistant, and maintains an inventory of equipment and supplies used in the program; assigns the dental assistants to specific dental students; keeps attendance records of the dental assistants and dental students; reviews all dental student accomplishment records prepared by the dental assistant; and assists program supervisor in preparing time and motion studies for the evaluation of assisting procedures.

In other departments and agencies, the employee performs duties similar to the dental assistant and in addition performs the following duties; makes staff assignments; checks on charts, supplies, and appointments; assigns and supervises dental assistant students; orients new staff and may be involved in selecting new clerks or dental assistants; inventories and orders supplies and medications; ensures proper maintenance of equipment; monitors housekeeping; monitors flow of patients and general office operations; completes required patient and office records. Work may also include monitoring costs, billing for services rendered, and/or coordinating with third party payers.

I. DIFFICULTY OF WORK:

Complexity - Duties are varied and require some analysis and planning in supervisory and training situations. The employee must be able to oversee office management and dental assistant functions. The employee also must be able to train others in patient management and dental assistant procedures and may participate in the billing process.

Guidelines - These include established technical procedures, office protocols, and available journals and textbooks. Guidelines and procedures are easily understood and stable. In a large training program, teaching and supervisory guidelines are available.

II. RESPONSIBILITY:

Accountability - Employee has considerable opportunity to represent or impact upon the work unit since the duties involve assigning, observing, and evaluating the work of others; training dental and dental assistant students; and handling monies. The employee does not take accountability for patient services delivered since the dentist is legally responsible for these services.

Consequence of Action - The employees work could affect the safety and well being of the patient since they are performing procedures directly on the patient; however, the dentist is at the chairside during most procedures and is legally responsible for the work performed.

Review - Chairside work is closely supervised/reviewed by the dentist. Administrative and supervisory work is reviewed generally by the supervising dentist through observation and written reports.

III. INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS:

Subject Matter - Employee explains dental assisting and office management procedures; explains oral hygiene care to students, patients, and dental assistants; orients dental and dental assistant students. Communications with patients may be difficult if the patient is a child, mentally ill or retarded, unpredictable, or refusing treatment.

Purpose - Work involves explaining dental treatments and patient care procedures and can involve influencing patient behavior to receive treatments.

IV. WORK ENVIRONMENT:

Nature of Working Conditions - These vary depending on the work unit. Employee works in semi-sterile/aseptic conditions. Working with uncooperative patients, inmates, the mentally ill or mentally retarded might be disagreeable.

Nature and Potential of Personal Hazards - This routinely includes exposure to sharp instruments, x-ray, chemicals, mercury vapor. Procedures for dealing with these are well established and well communicated through standard training. Working with certain patients may involve exposure to unpredictable patient response and potentially dangerous behavior as well as a variety of diseases.

V. JOB REQUIREMENTS:

Knowledges, Skills, and Abilities - Thorough knowledge of the principles, methods, and techniques of dental procedures. Thorough knowledge of the use and care of equipment used in a dental clinic. Considerable knowledge of proper patient management as it pertains to student clinical areas. Considerable knowledge of administrative standards. Ability to establish harmonious working relationships between the dental student and dental assistant, and to supervise staff and students.

Minimum Education and Experience - Completion of a dental assistant program from an appropriately accredited institution and one year of experience as a dental assistant; or high school or General Educational Development diploma and two years of experience as a dental assistant; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.