

Dental Assisting Functions List

The following is a list of 70 dental assisting tasks developed by the ADA/DANB Alliance in the course of its research. These selected tasks were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.

Functions in each state that correspond to the national Core Competencies Study functions are **numbered** in the Career Ladder Template, using language directly from the state's dental practice act. Functions listed with **bullets** in the *Career Ladder Template* are part of the state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB research.

1. Perform mouth mirror inspection of the oral cavity
2. Chart existing restorations or conditions
3. Phone in prescriptions at the direction of the dentist
4. Receive and prepare patients for treatment, including seating, positioning chair, and placing napkin
5. Complete laboratory authorization forms
6. Place and remove retraction cord
7. Perform routine maintenance of dental equipment
8. Monitor and respond to post-surgical bleeding
9. Perform coronal polishing procedures
10. Apply effective communication techniques with a variety of patients
11. Transfer dental instruments
12. Place amalgam for condensation by the dentist
13. Remove sutures
14. Dry canals
15. Tie in archwires
16. Demonstrate knowledge of ethics/jurisprudence/patient confidentiality
17. Identify features of rotary instruments
18. Apply topical fluoride
19. Select and manipulate gypsums and waxes
20. Perform supragingival scaling
21. Mix dental materials
22. Expose radiographs
23. Evaluate radiographs for diagnostic quality
24. Provide patient preventive education and oral hygiene instruction
25. Perform sterilization and disinfection procedures
26. Provide pre- and post-operative instructions
27. Place and remove dental dam
28. Pour, trim, and evaluate the quality of diagnostic casts
29. Size and place orthodontic bands and brackets
30. Using the concepts of four-handed dentistry, assist with basic restorative procedures, including prosthodontics and restorative dentistry
31. Identify intraoral anatomy
32. Demonstrate understanding of the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard
33. Place, cure and finish composite resin restorations
34. Place liners and bases
35. Place periodontal dressings
36. Demonstrate understanding of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard
37. Take and record vital signs
38. Monitor vital signs
39. Clean and polish removable appliances and prostheses
40. Apply pit and fissure sealants
41. Prepare procedural trays/armamentaria set-ups
42. Place orthodontic separators
43. Size and fit stainless steel crowns
44. Take preliminary impressions
45. Place and remove matrix bands
46. Take final impressions
47. Fabricate and place temporary crowns
48. Maintain field of operation during dental procedures through the use of retraction, suction, irrigation, drying, placing and removing cotton rolls, etc.
49. Perform vitality tests
50. Place temporary fillings
51. Carve amalgams
52. Process dental radiographs
53. Mount and label dental radiographs
54. Remove temporary crowns and cements
55. Remove temporary fillings
56. Apply topical anesthetic to the injection site
57. Demonstrate understanding of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines
58. Using the concepts of four-handed dentistry, assist with basic intraoral surgical procedures, including extractions, periodontics, endodontics, and implants
59. Monitor nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia
60. Maintain emergency kit
61. Remove permanent cement from supragingival surfaces
62. Remove periodontal dressings
63. Place post-extraction dressings
64. Fabricate custom trays, to include impression and bleaching trays, and athletic mouthguards
65. Recognize basic medical emergencies
66. Recognize basic dental emergencies
67. Respond to basic medical emergencies
68. Respond to basic dental emergencies
69. Remove post-extraction dressings
70. Place stainless steel crown



Levels of Supervision

An important consideration in the discussion of the delegation of tasks to dental assistants is that of supervision of dental assistants by their dentist-employers. The American Dental Association (ADA) has identified four levels of supervision for dental auxiliaries, including dental assistants, which it defines in its “Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel,” (2006: 307) which is part of its *Current Policies*, last updated in 2007. Note that “allied dental personnel” refers to dental assistants, dental hygienists and dental laboratory technicians.

The four levels of supervision defined by the ADA are as follows:

Personal supervision: A dentist is personally operating on a patient and authorizes the allied dental personnel to aid treatment by concurrently performing a supportive procedure.

Direct supervision: A dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures, and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel and, before dismissal of the patient, evaluates the performance of the allied dental personnel.

Indirect supervision: A dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, has personally diagnosed the condition to be treated, authorizes the procedures, and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

General supervision: A dentist is not required to be in the dental office or treatment facility when procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, but has personally diagnosed the condition to be treated, has personally authorized the procedures and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

Furthermore, the ADA’s Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel stipulates that intraoral expanded functions should be performed by allied dental personnel “only under the direct supervision of a dentist.”

Because the study of dental assisting core competencies undertaken by the ADAA/DANB Alliance did not address the question of supervision, the ADAA/DANB Alliance does not make any recommendations as to the levels of supervision that should be necessary for the delegation of the tasks included in the study to dental assistants. However, the ADAA/DANB Alliance believes it is important to call attention to the fact that, while the ADA has defined supervision levels in the aforementioned policy statement, which governs the ADA’s own activities and the activities of its members, these definitions have not been uniformly adopted by the dental boards of every U.S. state or district.

For the purposes of this volume, if a state’s dental practice act specifically defines levels of supervision, the state-specific definition is noted in the template.



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Education/Training/ Credential Required	Job Title According to State of KY	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in KY
<p>To perform coronal polishing procedures under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in the state of Kentucky, a dental assistant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete an eight-hour course at a CODA-accredited institution <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain a certificate from the authorized institution which shall be provided to the board for the assistant's file and maintained in the employee's personnel file at each place of employment <hr/> <p>To become a registered dental assistant in the state of Kentucky, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand, read, speak and write the English language with a comprehension and performance level equal to at least the ninth grade <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit a completed and signed "Application for Dental Assistant Registration" <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not be currently subject to disciplinary action pursuant to KRS Chapter 313 <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide proof of completion of required educational course on transmission, control, treatment and prevention of AIDS <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide proof of current CPR certification which meets or exceeds the guidelines by the American Heart Association <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit to a criminal background check from the Admin. Office of the Courts in Kentucky <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide proof of one (1) year of dental office experience along with the name and address of the supervising dentist <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully complete a CODA-accredited dental assisting program <p>Note: Any individual practicing as a dental assistant in Kentucky on July 15, 2010, shall apply for registration no later than July 15, 2011.</p>	<p>Dental Assistant <i>qualified in coronal polishing</i></p> <hr/> <p>Registered Dental Assistant</p>	<p>Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)</p> <hr/> <p>DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) or Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)</p> <hr/> <p>Dental Assistant</p>	<p>To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures in the state of Kentucky, a dental assistant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass the national DANB Radiation Health and Safety (RHS) exam <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a six-hour Kentucky Board-approved course in dental radiography safety and complete one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A minimum of four hours of instruction in dental radiography technique while under the employment and supervision of the dentist in the office A four-hour course in radiography technique approved by the Kentucky Board <hr/> <p>The ADAA/DANB Alliance developed a listing of standardized job titles (left) based on its national Core Competencies Study conducted from 2002-2005.</p> <p>The same study utilized a list of 70 job functions which were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.</p> <p>Functions in this state that relate to the national DANB/ADAA Core Competencies Study are numbered to the right, using language directly from this state's dental practice act. (The numbers correspond to the study's task numbering system.)</p> <p>Functions listed with bullets are part of this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB/ADAA research.</p>	<p>The following functions are not permitted by any level of dental assistant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20. Subgingival and supragingival scaling 46. The making of final impressions from which casts are made to construct any dental restoration 46. Placement of final impressions 49. Perform pulp vitality testing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placement and removal of actisite Administering local anesthetic agents by infiltration or block Brush biopsy Diagnosis General supervision Administering nitrous oxide analgesia Probing Root planing Place sutures The practice of dental hygiene or the performance of the duties of a licensed dental hygienist that require the use of any instrumentation which may elicit the removal of calcareous deposits or accretions on the crowns and roots of teeth Treatment planning and prescription, including prescriptions for drugs or medicaments, or authorization for restorative, prosthodontic or orthodontic appliances Surgical procedures on hard or soft tissues of the oral cavity, or any other intraoral procedure that contributes to or results in an irreversible alteration of the oral anatomy Administration of injectable medication or anesthesia unless otherwise authorized by law
<p>A dental auxiliary in the state of Kentucky may perform basic supportive dental procedures specified by the state dental practice act (see opposite page) under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist.</p> <p>There are no education or training requirements for this level of dental assisting.</p>	<p>Dental Auxiliary</p>	<p>Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>	<p>These state templates reflect the work being done by the ADAA/DANB Alliance to support a uniform national model for one set of dental assisting tasks, levels and requirements, which will serve as a viable career ladder for dental assistants.</p>	<p>†DANB has not received confirmation that the most recent version of the Career Ladder Template has been reviewed and approved by the Kentucky Dental Board. All of the templates in this volume reflect DANB's interpretation of state or Washington, D.C. dental practice acts. For authoritative information regarding requirements for dental assistants in each state or Washington, D.C., please contact the relevant dental board.</p>

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Job Title According to State of KY	Allowable Functions (Functions with numbers relate specifically to Core Competency designations; functions with bullets are in this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB research)			
Registered Dental Assistant <i>qualified in coronal polishing</i>	<p><u>Under Direct Supervision*</u></p> <p>9. Perform coronal polishing procedures (including pumicing; see requirements on previous page)</p>			
Registered Dental Assistant	<p><u>Under Direct Supervision*</u></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>1. Examine oral cavity</p> <p>6. Placing, packing and removing retraction cord</p> <p>12, 33, 51. Placing, carving and polishing amalgam restorations</p> <p>13. Removal of sutures</p> <p>18. Fluoride</p> <p>22. Expose radiographs (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)</p> <p>27. Placing and removing rubber dams</p> <p>28, 44. Placement and pouring model of preliminary impressions</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>28, 46. Holding and removing final impressions, and pouring model</p> <p>29. Bands and bonding brackets</p> <p>33. Placing and finishing composite resin restorations</p> <p>34. Applying bases and cavity liners</p> <p>35. Placing periodontal dressings</p> <p>37, 38. Take and monitor vital signs</p> <p>40. Sealant application</p> <p>45. Placing and removing matrices</p> <p>47, 54. Fabricate, place and remove temporary crowns</p> <p>56. Application of topical anesthetic</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>59. Monitoring nitrous oxide analgesia</p> <p>61. Remove cement from coronal surfaces</p> <p>62. Removing periodontal dressings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleaching • Diagnodent • Pumicing • Starting intravenous (IV) access lines • Removal and placement of sulcular medicament </td> </tr> </table>	<p>1. Examine oral cavity</p> <p>6. Placing, packing and removing retraction cord</p> <p>12, 33, 51. Placing, carving and polishing amalgam restorations</p> <p>13. Removal of sutures</p> <p>18. Fluoride</p> <p>22. Expose radiographs (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)</p> <p>27. Placing and removing rubber dams</p> <p>28, 44. Placement and pouring model of preliminary impressions</p>	<p>28, 46. Holding and removing final impressions, and pouring model</p> <p>29. Bands and bonding brackets</p> <p>33. Placing and finishing composite resin restorations</p> <p>34. Applying bases and cavity liners</p> <p>35. Placing periodontal dressings</p> <p>37, 38. Take and monitor vital signs</p> <p>40. Sealant application</p> <p>45. Placing and removing matrices</p> <p>47, 54. Fabricate, place and remove temporary crowns</p> <p>56. Application of topical anesthetic</p>	<p>59. Monitoring nitrous oxide analgesia</p> <p>61. Remove cement from coronal surfaces</p> <p>62. Removing periodontal dressings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bleaching • Diagnodent • Pumicing • Starting intravenous (IV) access lines • Removal and placement of sulcular medicament
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Dental Auxiliary	<p><u>Under Direct Supervision*</u></p> <p>1. Examine oral cavity</p> <p>22. Expose radiographs (see "Radiography Requirements" on previous page)</p> <p>28, 44. Placement and pouring model of preliminary impressions</p> <p>37. Take vital signs</p> <p>56. Application of topical anesthetic</p> <p>61. Remove cement from coronal surfaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diagnodent • Holding final or master impression • Removal and placement of sulcular medicament 			

*Direct Supervision: The dentist is physically present in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, authorizes the procedures to be performed, remains in the office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed, and evaluates the performance of the individual supervised.