



Dentist

Dentists promote good oral hygiene, diagnose and treat teeth and mouth problems and help prevent dental disease,

What does the job involve?

- examining gums for disease, sometimes using x-rays, and treating them
- examining the whole mouth to check for disease, such as cancer
- fitting false teeth or crowns, applying protective coatings to teeth, drilling and filling teeth, or removing teeth
- giving a local anaesthetic, by injection, to allow otherwise painful treatment to be done
- doing minor surgery under general anaesthetic, usually given by a qualified anaesthetist
- prescribing medication if necessary
- advising patients on good dental healthcare
- discussing cases with colleagues and advising patients to see other professionals if necessary
- keeping records of patients and their treatment.

Routes and choices while at school:

You will need to try to get at least five GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C), or equivalent qualifications. These should include English, maths and science. Other relevant subjects include biology, chemistry, medicine and IT.



Skills You'll need:

- knowledge of medicine and dentistry
- customer service skills
- physical skills like movement, coordination and dexterity
- thinking and reasoning skills
- to be thorough and pay attention to detail
- excellent verbal communication skills
- the ability to work well with your hands
- the ability to read English
- to be able to use a computer and the main software packages competently



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How to get into this role:

You can get into this job through:

- a university course

University

You'll need to complete a 5-year degree in dentistry approved by the [General Dental Council](#), followed by 1 to 2 years of postgraduate dental training.

You might be able to do a 4-year degree course if you already have a degree in a relevant subject, for example biomedical sciences.

When you apply for a dentistry course, you could be asked to take the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT) or BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT). They test the skills you'll need on the course, like critical thinking, problem solving, data analysis, communication and scientific knowledge.

You might be able to apply for a 4-year dental degree course if you've already got at least an upper second class degree (2:1) in biology, chemistry or a biomedical subject.

Further information

Career tips

You can find out more about becoming a dentist from the [British Dental Association](#) and [Health Careers](#).

You could work at a dental practice, for the armed forces, at a health centre or in an NHS or private hospital.

You may need to wear a uniform and protective clothing.



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Career path and progression

As a dentist in general practice, you could go on to become a partner in the practice or set up your own practice.

In hospital dental services, you can follow the same career structure and training pathway as a hospital doctor. For example, you could also specialise in implant or paediatric dentistry. As a consultant, you'll often find work opportunities in the private sector.

With experience, you could lead a team, or manage a unit or department.

You could also progress to teaching and training student dentists and other healthcare professionals.

Rates of Pay

- During the vocational (or foundation) training year, a dentist earns £33,728 a year (2021/22).
- Dentists employed by the NHS including community dental services can earn between £41,000 and £89,000 a year.
- A self-employed General Dental Practitioner carrying out private and NHS work can earn anything from £50,000 to over £100,000 a year.
- A dentist doing wholly private work can earn in excess of £140,000 a year.