

Dental Assisting Program Review

To improve the quality of teaching and learning by asking faculty, staff and administrators to reflect upon and examine teaching methodologies, learning outcomes and curriculum.

A) Evaluate the curriculum using Commission on Dental Accreditation guidelines.

See Curriculum section of Commission on Dental Accreditation Self-Study for Dental Assisting Programs which follows this report.

B) Review and revise learning outcomes.

See completed CCOGs on PCC website. All have been revised and are posted on the internet.

C) Evidence that outcomes are being met.

The Dental Assisting program has developed program goals and an assessment plan to measure attainment of them. (See Exhibits 1 and 2) The program's goals include preparing students to be competent as Goal #1. The faculty developed a set of graduation competencies which form the basis for the curriculum and reflect the outcomes of each course. (See Exhibit 27).

To graduate from the Dental Assisting program, the set of competencies must be met by the student. These competencies are supported by outcomes and objectives in each of the courses and a variety of evaluation methods are used to evaluate the students readiness to graduate. An example of competency assessment is included with Exhibit 27. The methods of evaluating competence are described in the competency assessment plan and each individual CCOG describes strategies for measuring course outcomes.

See Exhibit 1: Purpose and Goals

Exhibit 2: Assessment Plan for Dental Assisting Program Goals

Exhibit 27: Competencies for the Dental Assisting Graduate and sample competency assessment plan.

D) The courses in the Dental Assisting program are a reflection of the college's core outcomes.

Communication: Students demonstrate effective communication through group interaction, individualized teaching of patients and chart documentation as well as through classroom learning activities. Examples:

DA 111 Clinical Procedures: Select a clinical topic, write a one page paper and prepare and present a report on the topic.

DA 150/152 Dental Office Procedures: Write resumes, business letters, insurance codes.

DA 122 Write a paper on some aspect of the effects of radiation exposure

Community and Environmental Responsibility: Students apply their understanding of the effects of hazardous wastes on the environment by practicing correct handling and

disposal in the clinical setting. Examples:

DA 111,113,115 Disposal of biohazards, sharps and chemicals.

DA 120 Dental Radiology: Processing chemicals are disposed of according to city guidelines.

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving: Students develop the ability to analyze and process knowledge and demonstrate the ability to use these skills through classroom and lab exercises, and in actual clinical practice in on-campus clinic, OHSU rotations and in practicum situation prior to graduation. Examples:

Health History Review: Students review, recognize potential problems and present information to supervising dentist.

Radiology Lab: Critique x-rays in order to correct errors in technique or processing.

Dental Materials Lab and Clinic: Assess dentists need for particular material, select appropriate product, correctly prepare it for use.

Cultural Awareness: The on-site campus dental clinic serves a multicultural segment of the community. Students provide clinical care for a wide variety of clients from varying cultural and ethnic backgrounds. They comprise a cohort group of students from many cultures and throughout the two year program work in a dental team setting. Classroom exercises in DA 145 Dental Health Education explore the culture, values and health behaviors of a variety of groups.

Professional Competence: Dental Assisting students demonstrate mastery of the standards of the profession by passing a certification exam. The graduation competencies developed by the faculty reflect the standards of the profession. (See Exhibit 3) Students are required to demonstrate professional competence prior to graduation through in the PCC Clinic, OHSU Senior Clinics, Dental office practicum assignments, service learning assignments and public health projects.

Self-reflection: The evaluation of clinical learning activities provides an opportunity or each student to do a self- assessment of the skill prior to being evaluated by an instructor. The exit survey given to students just prior to graduation asks students to assess their ability to perform the basic skills of dental assisting.

To maintain instructional quality consistent with standards of excellence within the discipline/program.

A) Assess the success of the program in contributing to the College mission.

The purpose and goals of the Dental Assisting program are a direct reflection of the college's mission statement.

See Exhibit 1: Purpose and Goals Statement

The success of the program is assessed on a yearly basis. (See Exhibit 2: Goal Assessment Plan). The faculty and administration are confident that the program is contributing to the College's mission as reflected by the success and diversity of its students and by its excellent reputation in the community.

B) Describe changes the SACC has made to instructor qualifications and reasons for the change.

No changes have been made.

C) Describe how students use the library and other outside information resources.

1. Several student assignments require the use of resources from outside the classroom. These include general library resources, business software, dental journals and texts, and the internet. Examples:

DA 125 Radiology, DA 160 Pharmacology and DA 114 Clinical Procedures III all require some form of research paper.

DA 150 and 152 Dental Office Procedures requires the use of business software and the multimedia lab facility

2. Guest speakers provide information on employment opportunities and a variety of practice settings.

To respond to the changing needs of students and the community.

A) List the professional development activities of the faculty over the last three years and describe any instructional or curricular changes made as a result of those activities.

Bonnie Marshall teaches continuing education courses to the professional dental community and is a consultant to the Commission on Dental Accreditation. She also is an officer in the state and national dental assisting professional association. She is also pursuing a baccalaureate degree.

Ginny Jorgensen teaches continuing education courses, is on the College safety committee and is the resident authority on infection control, bloodborne pathogens regulations and compliance issues. She is asked to speak at a variety of professional meetings and presents continuing dental assisting education training locally. She is also working towards a baccalaureate degree.

Dr. Nancy Pilgrim is a licensed dentist and maintains her license by completing 40 hours of continuing dental education every two years. As a new faculty member, she has been attending PCC training in instructional methods and technology as well.

B) Describe any significant shift in student demographics within your discipline and how that has impacted instruction.

1. The program attracts mostly women, many of whom are using the program as a stepping stone to Dental Hygiene. Others are women who are in need of a quick route to a career which provides income and opportunities with a minimum of time in school. The variety of students is a challenge to instructors who must design learning activities which meet the needs of students with a range of academic skills.

3. Many ethnic groups are represented in the program. Students who come into the program with English as a second language often need accommodations in test taking time, and other support. Students with disabilities are accommodated as well. This year a student who uses a wheelchair was successfully accommodated in the facility with some difficulty due to structural limitation. These problems will be addressed during the upcoming remodel. An extended program option has been developed to ensure students can complete the program if they desire. Instructors develop individualized instructional plans for these students which requires extra time.

C) Give examples of how feedback from students and businesses was used to make curriculum or instructional changes.

The program has a comprehensive outcome assessment program which addresses the program goals. (See Exhibit 2: “Assessment Plan for DA Program Goals.”) It includes

1. Surveys of employers (dentists) resulting in increasing instruction in specialty areas.
2. Student exit surveys resulted in changes of course sequence and changes in evaluation methods.
3. Alumni surveys sent to graduates after one year in the work environment. Feedback has resulted in changes in the Dental Office Procedures course to incorporate dental office software training.
4. Patient satisfaction surveys. Our patient care clinic provides a critical source of student experience and we must provide the patients with a high standard of care. Surveys indicated that patients give the quality of care very high ratings but had many problems with access to our clinic due to the parking situation. Other feedback indicates frustration with the lack of appointment times during spring term when students are off campus. To reduce the number of referrals, we will be offering dental services one extra day during spring term to complete treatment begun fall and winter terms.
5. Advisory committee membership includes employers from private and group practices as well as dental assistants from different work settings who provide current feedback on issues relating to dental assisting education.
6. Results of comprehensive Dental Assisting National Board Examination. The school annually receives a complete breakdown of student’s scores which allows us to analyze strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum.

D) What strategies are used within the discipline/program to increase enrollment, improve student retention and student success.

1. The program can’t be expanded significantly to increase enrollment due to

facility and staffing limitations so the emphasis is on retention of students. We are refining our admissions process to accept students who are better prepared academically and more knowledgeable about the field. Many of the students who leave early do so in the first term because they are unprepared or find they do not like the work.

2. The facility accommodates 45 students comfortably and we usually over-enroll in the fall by 5 students.
3. The faculty worked with the advisory committee and a large local dental group who hires our graduates to develop a forgivable loan program for dental assisting students. This has reduced the number of students who leave due to financial problems. Another large dental group is interested in developing a similar program.
4. Faculty have developed an extended program option to accommodate students who need more time to complete the requirements.
5. Program orientation presents detailed information regarding expectations and job duties of a dental assistant.

E) Report any changes made in the last three years to increase student access and diversity.

1. The program has a diverse group of students. The health admissions coordinator, faculty and director visit high schools and career fairs in the area to promote the program.
2. Several men have applied and been accepted to the program in recent years. This is a fairly new phenomenon in a formerly all female field.
3. The department has built a career ladder with the two clinical dental programs. Dental Hygiene applicants receive extra points for training as a dental assistant. Many applicants are now using the dental assisting program here at PCC as a stepping stone to dental hygiene.
4. Dental Assisting faculty are co-teaching the Introduction to Health Careers course with Nursing and Radiography faculty. Students who complete this course are guaranteed admission to the program

F) Identify any operational issues faced by the SACC that impact student learning in your area (eg. facilities, availability of part time faculty and other needed resources).

1. Lack of space and adequate dental equipment. The facility is 30 years old and has inadequate technology (dental equipment), storage, student areas, faculty space and business office space. The faculty have identified and prioritized our needs based on factors that most directly impact student learning and we hope

those will be funded through the bond measure remodel.

2. Our costs are high compared to other college programs due to the nature of the educational experience, high faculty:student ratios, need for expensive equipment and accreditation requirements. As in other allied dental programs, Dental Assisting students are expected to pay for some supplies, film, gloves, uniforms and other costs of being a student.

To develop recommendations for improvement in the program/discipline.

A) Assess the strengths and areas in need of improvement in the program/discipline.

Strengths:

1. diverse applicant pool
2. strong dental community support. Local dentists volunteer to be training sites for our students and serve on our advisory committee.
3. have high retention rate in program completion
4. 100% of graduates find employment upon graduation
5. instructors active in professional organizations; private practice; and community based involvement.
6. excellent rotation site at OHSU where students are exposed to the dental school environment.
7. fully accredited by Commission on Dental Accreditation

Areas of Needs:

1. technology and equipment improvement
2. clinic design to allow for safety. Modernizing to current dental equipment standards to avoid cross contamination and allow for patient privacy and confidentiality.

B). Set of recommendations:

1. Make current clinical technology available to students

2. Get computer internet access in clinic and dental charting/pt. file office programs
3. Acquire part-time instructor office space and office hours for student advising and class prep
4. Find adjacent parking for dental patients (as done currently for child care)
5. Use foundation assistance in acquiring/locating/pursuit of equipment upgrades.
6. Request Carl Perkins money for big ticket equipment as new technology becomes available.

To ensure that curriculum keeps pace with changing industry demands and continues to successfully prepare students to enter into the career field.

A) Evaluate the impact the advisory committee has on curriculum and instructional methods.

1. Brings current practices to our attention
2. Functions as liaison between PCC, the community and the dental profession
3. Keeps us apprised of resources and grant funds available to us and of the changing needs of the dental profession.
4. Advises us in implementing outcomes to be used in curriculum revision.

B) Review job placement statistics of students in your program over the last three years, including salary information where available.

Alumni survey data indicates that most students work in general dental practices. Students who want to work in a specialty practice can easily find the opportunity. All students find positions immediately after graduation. Some are hired at the sites where they do their practicum prior to graduation. The department keeps a book of available positions that shows more positions open than can be filled.

C). Analyze the program learning outcomes, competencies, and skills as compared to the business and industry needs today and in the immediate future.

1. Standards of the ADA Accreditation Committee are being met.
2. Students are prepared for the certification exams in the program.

3. Students take radiography certification tests while in the program so they are eligible for employment immediately upon graduation.
4. Preparation for specialty areas such as expanded functions and orthodontia is offered during the program.
5. For OJT dental assistants, the faculty offer continuing education classes in a variety of areas to prepare working dental assistants in with employment skills.
6. 100% of graduates are offered employment immediately after graduation.

D) Forecast future employment opportunities.

All indicators show dental assisting to be a growth area. As long as the economy is sound and the business of dentistry is flourishing, the dental assistant will have employment. Advisory committee liaisons report a great need in the metro area for assistants and, judging from phone calls to the department from other areas of the state, the need is great in other communities as well.

E). Analyze any barriers to certificate completion. Describe the main reasons students leave the program before completion.

The faculty and administration worked hard to eliminate the primary barrier to completion which was financial problems. DenKor Corporation, which operates dental clinics in three states is desperate for dental assistants. After meeting between the program director, faculty, the Denkor CEO and Human Resources director, the department endorsed a forgivable loan program which gives students funds for school in exchange for work after graduation. There is no commitment on the colleges part and the corporation has no influence in the education of the student. At least ten of our students elected to use these funds in this, the first year.

We also received a grant from the ODS Foundation two years ago for scholarship funds which are used to help students who need immediate help to complete the program.

We have developed the extended curriculum to help those students who need extra time to complete the program, reducing the number of early leavers.