

Dentist

Dentists examine patients' teeth and mouth to look for signs of decay or disease. They then treat any decay or disease to prevent the patient being in pain.

The Work

You could be:

- 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.

Pay

- During the dental vocational training year, a dentist earns £39,603 a year. (1 April 2024)
- During their Dental Core Training a dentist will earn £50,538 a year. (1 October 2024)
- Dentists employed by the NHS including community dental services can earn between £52,035 and £94,673 a year. (1 April 2024)
- A self-employed General Dental Practitioner carrying out private and NHS work can earn anything from £60,000 to over £100,000 a year.
- A dentist doing wholly private work can earn in excess of £140,000 a year.

Conditions

- You would work in a dental surgery, or in a hospital or clinic.
- You might work in schools.
- You might need to travel between places of work.
- If you are in a practice, working hours are usually regular but might include evenings or weekends. You may be on call for emergencies.
- You wear a white coat and protective clothing including gloves, safety glasses and a mouth mask.

Getting In

Entry is competitive. You need to study for a degree in dentistry (SCQF Level 10) from an approved dental school, which usually takes 5 years. This gives you registration with the [General Dental Council \(GDC\)](#), which you need to practise as a dentist in the UK.

- The Universities of Dundee and Glasgow offer the BDS in Dentistry.
- For the University of Dundee, you need 5 Highers at AAAAB (first sitting) including Biology (Human Biology preferred) and Chemistry plus English and Maths at National 5 at B. Offers will be condition-based on the attainments of 3 Advanced Highers or crash Highers at BBB in 6th year, including Biology or Chemistry. Widening access entry is possible with Advanced Higher Biology or Chemistry at B plus 5 Highers at AAABB including Biology (preferably Human Biology) and Chemistry, with one at A.
- For the University of Glasgow, you need Advanced Higher Biology and Chemistry at B plus 5 Highers at AAAAB (by end S6 with min AAAAB after S5) including Biology and Chemistry at A and Maths or Physics plus English at National 5 at B. Glasgow will not consider applicants after fifth year. Widening access entry is possible with 1 Advanced Higher at B plus Highers at AAABB (by end S6 with min AABB after S5 including Biology or Human Biology) including Biology (or Human Biology) and Chemistry at A (if not held at B Advanced Higher at B required) and Maths or Physics plus English at National 5 at B. Successful completion and grades in the Reach Programme necessary.
- Those who already have a degree in another subject can follow a 4-year Graduate Programme in dentistry at the University of Aberdeen.
- It is recommended that you have some work experience shadowing a dentist before you apply.
- Before applying to dental school you must sit the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT). If you get an Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) you can apply for a bursary to cover the cost of the test. Check the website for further details at www.ucat.ac.uk.
- You will require a satisfactory criminal record check from Disclosure Scotland to show that you are suitable for this type of work. Contact Disclosure Scotland for details on the type you would need.
- You must undergo screening for blood borne diseases such as Hepatitis B and C or HIV.

Most dentists in Scotland are self-employed, working in general practice, doing a mixture of NHS and private work. There are also jobs in community dentistry, particularly in schools and in the armed services.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to get on well with people from all backgrounds and of all ages
- friendly and reassuring as patients may be anxious and in pain
- confident to make decisions based on your specialist knowledge
- able to work carefully and accurately with fine instruments
- able to work alone and as part of a team
- able to concentrate for long periods.

If you work in general practice you should have good business skills.

Training

- Once you have qualified and registered with the GDC, you must complete one year of Dental Vocational Training (DVT), under the supervision of an experienced dentist. This is essential if you wish to work in the National Health Service (NHS).
- Within the NHS you would go on to do Dental Core Training (DCT), which is a flexible training programme of one to three years.

- If you decide to specialise in a particular area of work, you may need to do further training.
- Throughout your career you must keep your skills and knowledge up to date through Continuous Professional Development (CPD).

Getting On

- You might decide to become a specialist in one area of dentistry. This takes three to five years to complete.
- You must continue to undertake CPD activities throughout your career to keep up with new developments.
- You might work in a hospital, where complex treatment such as oral surgery is done.
- In hospital you could move through a series of grades to become a consultant.
- With experience you may move into teaching or research.
- It can help to be able to move around the country.
- You may be able to work abroad.

More Information

The University of Dundee offers a unique three day Dental Insight programme running every June. To be eligible for a place you must be an S5 secondary school pupil studying in Scotland, and be on track to achieve the minimum entrance requirements to study dentistry at the University of Dundee.

Dental students in Scotland can apply for the Dental Student Support Grant (DSSG). This provides £4,000 each year for those whose annual household income is less than £34,000 a year. They must commit to working in NHS Dentistry in Scotland after graduation. Full information is available on the www.mygov.scot website.

Contacts

British Dental Association (BDA)

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Email: enquiries@bda.org

Website: www.bda.org

X: @TheBDA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thebritishdentalassociation

NHS Scotland Careers

Website: www.careers.nhs.scot

Website (2): jobs.scot.nhs.uk

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.