



2026 Advising Guide

Start Date: Fall Term 2026

Clackamas Community College – Health Sciences Department
Harmony Campus, Harmony East 3rd Floor
Phone: 503-594-6589; Email: healthsciences@clackamas.edu

Dental Assistant Program - Clackamas Community College Harmony Campus, Milwaukie, OR

In order to be considered for formal program admittance, students must complete a series of requirements prior to the application closing. The Dental Assistant Program accepts 24 students per cohort and classes start in Fall at our Harmony Campus. The purpose of the Advising Guide is to provide prospective students with the necessary information to make an informed decision prior to applying.

Admission to the program is based on a point-system. Meet with a Health Sciences Program Academic Advisor prior to completing the program application. They will assist you with building an academic plan and ensure you have met all the eligibility requirements prior to applying.

If you have questions regarding the information, dates and or process below, please contact healthsciences@clackamas.edu.

Application Deadlines and Dates

- Application Opens: March 1, 2026
- **Application Closes:** July 1, 2026
- **Notification of Application Status:** July 22, 2026
- Mandatory Orientation for Conditionally Accepted Students: TBA (Harmony Campus)

Program Eligibility and Requirements

Students formally accepted into the Dental Assistant Program must attend a mandatory orientation. During the orientation, students will start the process of completing all non-academic requirements. Please start collecting your vaccine records for the below list of immunizations and if accepted, be prepared to submit documentation during the orientation.

- High School Diploma or equivalent
- Immunizations (MMR, Varicella, Tdap, Hep B, COVID-19*, seasonal Flu*)
- Criminal Background Check
- Drug Screen
- Tuberculosis Blood test
- Training (BLS/CPR for Healthcare Providers through American Heart Association) **

Note: Criminal background check requires a social security number. Students will start the criminal background check process during the orientation and upload vaccine records and BLS/CPR card.

*COVID-19 and Seasonal Flu vaccines are recommended but not required.

**HP-100 BLS/CPR First Aid/Bloodborne Pathogens course meets this requirement.

Student Success with Online and Lab Courses

The Dental assistant Program includes online components. The online courses require students to have strong computer skills (examples below):

- using Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and Google Docs
- saving and uploading documents
- using email, and avoiding phishing attempts
- attaching documents to emails
- navigating the Internet; recognizing credible, safe information
- searching for career and job information
- understanding the impact of your digital footprint

Although not required, we encourage students to prepare for online course navigation by completing the following free preparatory courses:

- Computer and digital literacy - <https://libguides.clackamas.edu/northstar>
- Moodle 101 – Information about Moodle can be found on the CCC website by searching “Moodle 101”

The face-to-face skills lab requires students to have the following abilities (examples below):

- Fine motor skills (ability to make movements using the small muscles in your hands or wrists)
- Tactile ability (sense of touch)
- Visual acuity (clearness of vision)
- Hearing ability (auscultate patient vitals, audible alarms, etc.)
- English language (ability to read, write and verbally relay information to patient and team)
- Professional behaviors (ability to show up on time, maintain boundaries and appropriate language, follow protocols, adapt to changing environment)

Additional Courses

Note: courses may be taken at any time; however, students must complete in order to earn 1-year certificate in Dental Assisting. It is recommended that you take these courses prior to enrollment in the Dental Assistant Program.

- MTH-050 Technical Math or placement into MTH-060 or higher
- WR-121Z Composition I OR WR-101 Workplace Writing
- PSY-101 Human Relations

Application Point Breakdown

- Essay 1** (see rubric) = **5 points possible**
- Essay 2** (see rubric) = **10 points possible**
- CCC Healthcare Career Certification (optional additional points) = **3 points possible**

Note: It is not necessary to complete the Healthcare Career Certificate prior to applying.

However, we provide 3 additional points for those who have earned their Healthcare Career Certificate from CCC.

Total possible points = 18

NOTE: Your scored essays combined with the additional possible points will be used to determine your score. If two applicants receive the same score, we'll use the date the application was submitted to break the tie.

Dental Assistant Program Application Steps

Step 1: Review all information provided on the website prior to applying.

Step 2: Additional courses and meet with an advisor

Students must complete the following courses to earn the 1-year certificate in Dental Assisting. It is recommended that you take these courses prior to enrollment in the Dental Assistant Program.

- MTH-050 Technical Math or placement into MTH-060 or higher
- WR-121Z Composition I OR WR-101 Workplace Writing
- PSY-101 Human Relations

Note: If you have taken pre-requisite courses at another institution, you will be asked to upload your unofficial transcripts in the program application.

If you need assistance with course placement assessment (e.g., MTH or WR) or have general questions regarding the program, please schedule an appointment with the admissions team at welcome@clackamas.edu or advising team at advising@clackamas.edu

Step 3: Submit program application.

- You will answer two essay questions (see Advising Guide for question and rubric).
- You will need to submit the "Vaccine Attestation Form" in this application. Your application will not be considered for review without the Vaccine Attestation Form.
- If you need assistance in locating your vaccine records, and you received vaccines in Oregon, please connect with the Oregon State Immunization Registry (see webpage for details) system. They can provide you with copies of any records they have on file.
- The application link will be available on the program webpage.

Step 4: Collect your vaccine records.

If accepted, you will bring your vaccine records to the mandatory orientation. Students who do not have proof of immunization at the time of orientation may be asked to reapply for the next cohort.

Dental Assistant Program Application Essays

The Dental Assisting application requires prospective students to answer two essay questions. The applications are “de-identified” prior to reviewing and scoring essays to reduce bias.

Please ensure that your application essays are written independently in your own words. Essays generated by AI tools or copied from other sources will not be accepted as they do not reflect your authentic experiences or readiness for the Dental Assistant Program. Prior to submitting your essays, we recommend you utilize the free [Grammarly](#) online software to check your spelling and grammar.

Essay 1: (What are your goals for completing the Dental Assistant (DA) program?)

Note: We are asking this question because we want to train students who are motivated to become dental assistants and ready to invest the time and effort required to be successful in the DA program.

CRITERION	RESPONSE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS (5 POINTS)	RESPONSE MEETS EXPECTATIONS (4 POINTS)	RESPONSE INDICATES AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOR GROWTH AND REFLECTION (3 POINTS)
Candidates expresses job and/or professional goals for completing the DA program.	Response provides a clear, strong and detailed statement about the candidate's goals for completing the DA program.	Response provides a clear statement of the candidate's goals for completing the DA program.	Response shows an opportunity for the candidate to think deeply about their future job and professional goals.

Essay 2: (250 words or less) Describe in detail a work or training experience in which you used problem solving or critical thinking skills. What did you learn?

Note: We are asking this question because students in the DA program need to use critical thinking skills to be successful.

CRITERION	RESPONSE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS	RESPONSE MEETS EXPECTATIONS	RESPONSE INDICATES AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOR GROWTH AND REFLECTION
The candidate describes an experience where problem solving/critical thinking skills were used in a work or training experience.	Response provides a clear, strong and detailed statement about a situation when problem solving or critical thinking skills were used in a work or training experience. (5 POINTS)	Response provides a clear statement about a situation when problem solving or critical thinking skills were used in a work or training experience. (4 POINTS)	Response shows an opportunity for the candidate to reflect about a time when they used problem solving or critical thinking skills in a work or training experience. (3 POINTS)
The candidate is able to recall and write about what they learned from the experience.	Response provides a clear, strong and detailed statement about what they learned from the work or training experience. (5 POINTS)	Response provides a clear statement about what they learned from the work or training experience. (4 POINTS)	Response shows an opportunity for the candidate to reflect about what they learned from the work of training experience. (3 POINTS)

Dental Assistant Essential Functions

To be successful in the Dental Assistant program and become employable, the student must be able to perform essential functions expected of the DA (see list below). Please contact the DA program regarding questions or concerns about these requirements.

Students must have the physical, intellectual and emotional abilities to provide safe patient care; visual acuity, hearing, speech, manual dexterity, physical strength and endurance must be maintained as well. The practice of dental assisting requires the following functional abilities with or without reasonable accommodation:

Essential Function	Example
Visual acuity (clearness of vision)	With or without corrective lenses sufficient to assess patients and their own environments. Detect changes in skin color or condition; collect data from recording equipment and measurement devices used in patient care; detect a fire in a patient area and initiate emergency action; reading and following instructions pertaining to dental materials; ability to perform oral procedures involving fine detail, including the use of indirect field of vision.
Hearing ability	With or without hearing aids to hear a patient's call for help, to auscultate a patient's vital signs, and their own environment. Detect sounds related to bodily functions using a stethoscope; detect audible alarms within the frequency and volume ranges of sounds generated by mechanical systems that monitor bodily functions; gear clearly during telephone conversations; effectively hear to communicate with patients and other healthcare team members.
Olfactory ability (smells)	Detect smoke from burning materials; detect odors from hazardous material spills.
Tactile ability (sense of touch)	Read and record patient vital signs; detect unsafe temperature levels in heat-producing devices used in patient care; perform intra-oral patient care procedures; detect anatomical abnormalities.
Strength and Mobility	Ability to lift 25lbs; prolonged time sitting and/or standing on feet (8-12 hours); repetitive bending and twisting.
Ability to speak, comprehend, read, and write in English	Able to questions the patient about his/her condition; accurately relay information about the patient both verbally and in written communication to others.
Fine motor skills (ability to make movements using the small muscles in your hands or wrists)	Demonstrate eye/hand coordination; safely dispose of needles in sharps containers; manipulate small equipment and small dental instruments; manipulation of dental materials; handling and passing of dental instruments; placement and movement of instruments in oral cavity.
Emotional stability to function effectively under stress	Ability to adapt to changing situations, and to follow through on assigned patient care responsibilities.

Cognitive ability (reasoning and/or thinking)	Ability to collect, analyze, and apply information. Ability to make clinical judgments and manage decisions that promote positive patient outcomes.
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ADA Accommodations: The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 (ADA) mandates that reasonable accommodations must be made for individuals with disabilities. Any student who may need an accommodation for a disability should make an appointment with the Program Director and the Disability Resource Center.

Program Contacts

Admissions

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