

# Dental Assisting Program



2020

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PROGRAM DATA



UNIVERSITY of HAWAI'I®  
**KAPI'OLANI**  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## **1. Program or Unit Description**

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The Dental Assisting Program at Kapi'olani Community College provides the education and training to prepare students to work in dental offices, clinics, and government agencies as both clinical and administrative dental assistants. Students receive intensive instruction in dental operative procedures, office administration, and laboratory skills. Graduates are eligible to receive a Certificate of Competence upon successful completion of the Fall semester DENT courses (100 level). They can go on to receive a Certificate of Achievement after successful completion of the Spring semester DENT courses in addition to the required general education courses (13 credits).

The 2-semester Certificate of Achievement (CA) program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). Graduates of the CA program are eligible to take the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) exam to become Certified Dental Assistants (CDA).

Clinically dental assistants work with dentists during the examination and treatment of patients. Assistants prepare patients for and assist with the delivery of various procedures. They use a variety of dental instruments and materials; collect diagnostic records such as x-rays, impressions, and photographs, and implement OSHA-recommended infection control procedures. In addition, dental assistants fabricate a variety of dental appliances, restorative and prosthetic devices, and provide instructions to patients on oral health and pre and post-treatment care according to a dentist's prescription.

Dental Assistants also perform administrative functions in the dental office, such as filing insurance claims, making appointments, and assisting with billing, payroll, accounts receivable and payable functions.

### **Dental Assisting Program Mission Statement**

The mission of the Dental Assisting Program is to follow the Health Education Unit as well as to serve the needs of the Dental health community by:

- Preparing students to meet patients' needs in the dental office
- Preparing students to apply basic dental operator and laboratory skills
- Practicing and implementing OSHA-recommended infection control procedures
- Understanding and implementing basic dental radiology
- Assisting in population health by providing clients with oral health information

The typical target student or service population has primarily been persons seeking to become nationally certified as a dental assistant. Military spouses and dependents make up about half of the student population because 38 states require this. About 25% of students express a desire to career ladder to dental hygiene or dentistry. Because this program has no prerequisites, about 10% of the student population comes with no prior college experience directly upon high school graduation.

## 2. Analysis of the Program/Unit

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### DEMAND INDICATORS: HEALTHY

2.*	New & Replacement Positions (County Prorated)	158	165	167
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The numbers reflected for this three-year period averaged 163 and showed a trend of growth. This could be attributed to a combination of two factors: many Dental Assistants in the workforce are transitioning into retirement and a high turnover rate due to incumbent assistants going to higher-paying jobs in other fields.

Hawai'i is one of only 13 states that do not regulate dental assistants; thus, the majority of working dental assistants in Hawai'i are not formally trained. Legislation has been introduced over the last four sessions requiring regulation of Dental Assistants. As the state's sole American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredited training program, KCC's Dental Assisting Program is poised to meet the changes in rules/laws of Oahu county's dental community. Graduation from the program qualifies students to take the Dental Assisting National Board (DANB) exam to become a Certified Dental Assistant (CDA).

### EFFICIENCY INDICATORS -- HEALTHY

10.*	Fill Rate	79.8%	79.8%	79.1%
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The Program's proposal to remove GEN ED requirements for the CA was approved for AY 20. This will increase the number of CA completers and hopefully also result in an increase in the number of applications.

Since becoming CODA-accredited, most applicants have been military spouses who plan to become Certified Dental Assistants to work on the mainland since the majority of the states require certification/registration. About 25% of applicants are interested in pursuing Dental Hygiene as their ultimate career goal, and about 10% are interested in dentistry.

Program graduates' compensation has seen an increase to about \$37,000 annually. Still, this falls below living wage standards for this state. Hawai'i continues to have one of the nation's lowest unemployment rate. Other jobs that pay a higher wage and require less training are attracting potential students.

Enrollment starting Fall 2020 will increase from 12 students to 18 students each semester with the construction of the third operatory using Title III funds. The construction began November 2019 and was set for completion in Spring 2020, but faced delays due to COVID. CODA Accreditation standards limit the number of students in terms of student-teacher ratios and physical space and resources. CODA sets a 6:1 student-teacher ratio and five students per operatory. If demand

increases, the program could conceivably accept up to 30 students per cohort. This is contingent on support from the college to hire additional lecturers.

12.*	Majors to FTE BOR Appointed Faculty	8	11	5
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Dental Assisting is the only Health Sciences program with a solitary G-funded FTE position. The current FTE has been assigned to duties as the Health Sciences Department Chair since 2013. She also performs duties as the Dental Assisting Program Director and Clinical Coordinator. Lecturers are teaching all courses. Requests were made through the PAIR process for a second FTE position since AY2017. With increased enrollment, the program's teaching equivalencies exceed 63 TE's, which could support two 9-mo FTE-at 27 TE's per person with the remaining courses covered by lecturers.

The Hawai'i Revised Statutes- Dental Practice Act requires a licensed dentist to provide direct supervision when a dental assistant sees patients. CODA accreditation standards require students to expose radiographs on a variety of patients. Many patients are seen at the program's campus facility. As with many other health professions, it is difficult to attract lecturers from industry to part-time positions because it takes away from their higher-paying full-time positions in the industry. With the three current faculty approaching retirement age, it is important to develop a succession plan that includes a licensed dentist.

**EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS -- CAUTIONARY**

19.*	Persistence Fall to Spring	100%	83%	100%
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Since being awarded CODA accreditation in Spring 2015, persistence has improved, and it is anticipated that this will be sustained going forward. As previously stated, it is the goal of most students to become CDA's after program completion, and one eligibility requirement is graduation from a CODA-accredited Dental Assisting Program.

Persistence rates for continuing from Fall to Spring have improved to 100% in AY17 and 18. AY19 it dropped to 83%. A student had to exit the program after the Fall semester, earning just the Certificate of Competence; she had to leave the state to care for a sick family member. Many of our students' reasons for exiting after earning the CO are personal reasons, like this, and do not reflect their academic performance.

20.*	Unduplicated Degrees/Certificates Awarded	10	10	8
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Now that the GEN ED requirements have been removed, it is expected that there will be an increase in the Certificate of Achievement completers.

**PERKINS INDICATORS**

31.	3P1 Student Retention or Transfer	86	66.67	Not Met
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The actual average retention rate of Dental Assisting students for the period of this report is 94.3%. If this is combined with transfer rates, this could explain the low number. Once Dental Assisting students complete the DENT courses, they will change their major to Liberal Arts. Even if students continue their education and transfer to a 4-year college, they are counted as a Liberal Arts major and not a Dental Assisting major. One of the main reasons for changing their major designation is to avoid being charged for Program Fees that are tied to the major.

### 3. Program Student Learning Outcomes or Unit/Service Outcomes

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a) List of the Program Student Learning Outcomes

**Program Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of the Certificate of Competence in Dental Assisting, the student should be able to:

- Assimilate and apply relevant knowledge necessary to function competently in the profession of dental assisting.
- Perform technical and clinical skills necessary to function competently in the profession of dental assisting.
- Maintain professional and ethical behavior as a healthcare provider.
- Communicate and interact appropriately and effectively.
- Incorporate knowledge of multicultural perspectives to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- Implement plans to achieve standard of patient care in a variety of clinical settings.
- Perform at the entry-level job description of a dental assistant.

**Program Student Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of the Certificate of Achievement in Dental Assisting, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate competency in the knowledge and skill required to systematically collect diagnostic data.
- Demonstrate competency in the knowledge and skill required for business office procedures.
- Develop competence in taking diagnostically acceptable radiographs on a variety of patients.
- Utilize materials learned in classes to prepare for the Dental Assisting National Board Certification exams.
- Perform at the entry-level in a specialty practice as a dental assistant.

b) PLO's will be assessed after the 2021 Academic Year in preparation for submission of the next CODA Self-Study in Spring 2022.

c) Assessment Results-NA

d) Changes will be made if indicated by Assessment outcome after AY 21.

## 4. Action Plan

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Plans for the Dental Assisting program are guided by the college's Strategic Plan. [https://www.kapiolani.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/KapCC\\_Strategic-Plan-2015-2021-Revised\\_2018\\_05\\_01.pdf](https://www.kapiolani.hawaii.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/KapCC_Strategic-Plan-2015-2021-Revised_2018_05_01.pdf)

- Program completion rates remain high and support Strategic directions IA and IB.
- Program's Fall to Spring persistence has improved with the CODA-accredited CA offering. (III.A)
- Because students can enter the program without any prerequisite coursework, about 10% of students are recent high school graduates. (III.E.)
- Program serves a diverse ethnic population, and have seen many Pacific Islanders as well as Native Hawaiian. (III.H.)
- CODA requires program faculty to regularly attend conferences related to dental assisting, as well as education methodology. Furthermore, it is required for faculty to maintain licensure/certification by earning a minimum number of Continuing Ed credits with each biennial renewal. (IV.F & M)
- The Dental Assisting clinical space has been renovated in order to mimic an efficient, modern workspace meeting industry standards for patient care delivery. (IV H-K)
- The program has a vibrant Advisory Committee with members from different tiers in the dental profession. The committee provides the program with relevant, current information on industry trends. (IV.N)
- In response to COVID, the program transitioned into hybrid delivery and acquired software using Perkins redirected funding. (IV.O)
- The program must complete annual reports for CODA, including annual assessment data. (IV.P)

In addition, planning aligns with the Perkins Core Indicators, in particular 1P1- Technical Skill attainment. Skills attainment is the primary area of assessment to demonstrate compliance with CODA standards. These program goals also align with CODA Standard II. The single Perkins indicator that the program has not met was 3P1- Student Retention or Transfer, but retention rates, in fact, average above 90%. Once the student completes the CA in DENT, they would do a change of major to Liberal Arts in order to do additional coursework towards an associate's or bachelor's degree. This is the reason Dental Assisting Majors are not counted in the college's transfer data. The main reason to do a change of major is to avoid being charged the program fee- which is attached to the Health Program major.

The focus of the program for the period of this report is to prepare for the continued CODA accreditation Certificate of Achievement program, with the next cycle taking place in 2022. (It has been delayed one year due to COVID). The program received approval through the Curriculum change process to eliminate all general education requirements in 2018. The Dental courses remain mostly unchanged since the program was accredited in 2016. The CODA standards have been updated for the next accreditation cycle, so the program anticipates updates to courses after completion of the 2022 site visit and direction provided by the commission's board.

The program is poised to respond to an anticipated increase in demand based on the impending legislation that will regulate Dental Assistants. It highlights the importance of program-completers being immediately eligible to take the Dental Assisting National Board's Certified Dental Assisting exam. Renovation to the Dental Assisting classroom's clinical area, with the addition of a third operatory, provides the capacity to increase enrollment by at least 50%. The plan to increase enrollment was communicated to and approved by CODA in 2020.

The program's Professional fees are being tapped to cover more recurring expenses, such as the CODA annual accreditation. For this reason, a proposal to increase student-paid Program Fees by \$100 - a total of \$450 per student per term is planned.

A proposal to update faculty Minimum Qualifications to mirror CODA standard three was sent to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs for approval in Spring 2020. The program's teaching faculty and Program director are all approaching retirement age. It will be a challenge to locate a candidate with the CDA credential or a licensed dentist in accordance with CODA standards.

## 5. Resource Implications

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The Program received grant monies from the Hawai'i Dental Service Foundation to purchase equipment for the renovated spaces. The program's foundation account has also been key in providing funding for faculty development and other costs related to compliance with [CODA Accreditation standards](#).

This renovation and expansion of the program's clinical space assure compliance with CODA Standard 4.

Given the state's economic challenges, assurances that adequate resources be provided to ensure compliance with CODA standards to maintain the program's accreditation status.

CODA Standard 3 addresses the number and nature of Faculty positions and student-teacher ratios:

**The faculty/student ratio during radiography and clinical practice sessions must not exceed one instructor to six students. During laboratory and preclinical instruction in dental materials and chairside assisting procedures, the faculty/student ratio must not exceed one instructor for each twelve students.**

An increase in enrollment will require an increase in the number of lab sections- so program Teaching Equivalencies will rise. The DENT program is the only Health Sciences program to function with a single FTE position, which is currently assigned to Departmental duties in addition to program administration. Stable, committed full-time faculty is key for student success. Limiting the number of courses taught by lecturers is in line with academic policy and student success initiatives.

The college changed its practice of covering all accreditation-related costs resulting in the annual accreditation fees funding source changing to Program Fees. The proposal will be an increase of \$100 per student per semester for a total of \$450/ student/ term. DENT annual CODA costs are

currently more than \$1890 and will increase annually (\$2050 in 2020). The focused Site Visit fee in Fall 2022 will be more than an additional \$5000, which should be covered by the college.

Other CODA standards that relate to Financial resources follow:

### **Financial Support**

**1-2 The institution must demonstrate *stable financial resources* to ensure support of the dental assisting program's stated mission, goals and objectives on a continuing basis. Resources must be sufficient to ensure adequate and qualified faculty and staff, clinical and laboratory facilities, equipment, supplies, reference materials and teaching aids that reflect technological advances and current professional standards.**

### **STANDARD 3 – ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY AND STAFF**

**3-1 The program must be a recognized entity within the institution's administrative structure which supports the attainment of program goals.**

**Intent:**

*The position of the program in the institutions administrative structure should permit direct communication between the program administrator and institutional administrators who are responsible for decisions that directly affect the program The administration of the program should include formal provisions for program planning, staffing, management, coordination and evaluation.*

**Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:**

- Institutional organizational flow chart
- Short and long-range strategic planning documents
- Examples of program and institution interaction to meet program goals
- Dental assisting representation on key college or university committees
- Institutions program review

### **Program Administrator**

**3-2 The program administrator must have a full-time commitment to the institution and an appointment which provides time for program operation, evaluation and revision.**

**3-9 Opportunities must be provided for program faculty to continue their professional development.**

**Intent:**

*Time is provided for professional association activities, research, publishing and/or practical experience.*

**Examples of evidence to demonstrate compliance may include:**

- Each faculty member is provided release time and financial support to attend at least one national or regional conference or workshop related to dental assisting education each year.
- Formal in-service for full and part-time faculty are held regularly.
- The program/institution provides periodic in-service workshops for faculty designed to provide an orientation to program policies, goals, objectives and student evaluation procedures.

**3-10 Faculty must be ensured a form of governance that allows participation in the program and institution's decision-making process.**

**Intent:**



*There are opportunities for program faculty representation on institution-wide committees and the program administrator is consulted when matters directly related to the program are considered by committees that do not include program faculty.*

**3-11 A defined evaluation process must exist that ensures objective measurement of the performance of each faculty member.**

**Support Staff**

**3-12 Institutional support personnel must be assigned to facilitate program operation.**