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# Dental nurse

A dental nurse supports the dentist in all aspects of patients' dental care.

## Working life

You may help with reception work and could help any member of the dental team - dentists, clinical dental technicians/technologists, hygienists and therapists – treat patients of all ages.

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### Kelvin Kamupira

**Dental nurse**

> I think the biggest myth is that most people think it's a female only profession which couldn't be further from the truth. We have male dental nurses from all walks of life in my hospital and most patients like the diversity.

Read Kelvin's story [3]

Some patients will be there for a check-up while others will have more complicated treatment. You'll need to reassure people and put them at ease, while supporting the team in all aspects of patient care.

In a dental practice, you'll welcome patients and provide direct support with the treatment itself:

Apprenticeships logo

- taking responsibility for the decontamination of instruments
- maintaining dental operating equipment
- ensuring that all relevant materials and supplies are in place
- looking after patient records – including making notes when the dentist is examining a patient
- working closely with the dentist [4], responding quickly to requests and generally keeping the surgery ready for use

You'll also be responsible for ensuring high standards of cleanliness and control of infection.

## Entry requirements

You can usually work as a trainee dental nurse without academic qualifications but to progress to being a qualified dental nurse, you'll need to study for a course in dental nursing, either part or full time, that is approved by the General Dental Council [5]. Exact course requirements will vary from provider to provider, but a minimum 2 GCSEs (4/C grade or above) in English language and maths or a science subject are usually required for part-time courses.

Full-time degree level courses may require A-levels or equivalent level 3 qualifications. A level 3 apprenticeship in dental nursing is an additional way to gain the required qualifications in dental nursing.

## Must have skills

Tact and discretion are important qualities for a dental nurse - you will be handling confidential patient information and caring for people who may be anxious. You must be happy to work as part of a team and willing to learn and understand the science behind dentistry. You'll be dealing with a broad range of people, each with their own characteristics and concerns so you'll need to be tactful and friendly and able to offer advice and educate others. You will often need to follow instructions from the dentist.

You also need to be able to demonstrate the values of the NHS Constitution [6].

You'll need to reassure people and put them at ease.

## Career development

With extra training you could take x-rays and clinical photographs, take impressions, make models of teeth and apply fluoride varnish to prevent tooth decay. With experience you could training to be a dental hygienist [7], dental therapist [8] or orthodontic therapists. You can also acquire additional skills such as impression-taking and providing fluoride varnish as part of dental public health programmes.

## Pay and benefits

Most dental nurses in the NHS work standard hours, which are likely to be around 37.5 a week. They may work some evenings. Your starting salary will usually be between band 3 and band 4 of the Agenda for Change pay rates [9] but some senior dental nurses will start at band 5 or higher.

Terms and conditions may vary for those dental nurses not directly employed by the NHS.

## Returning to practice

If you are no longer registered with the General Dental Council but would like to apply for restoration to the register, you can find out more on the General Dental Council's [10]website.

- ## Find your course to become a dental nurse

**Region**
- - Any -

**Type of qualification**
- - Any -

**Full or part time**
Search

Displaying 1 - 5 of 8 matches

## Dental Nursing

University of Portsmouth

View course [11] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  Certificate of Higher Education - CertHE
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  1 Year
  Leading to a career in
  Dental nursing
- Contact details
  admissions@port.ac.uk [12]
  023 9284 5566
- Region
  South East
  Admissions address
  University House
  Winston Churchill Avenue
  Portsmouth
  PO1 2UP
  England

## Dental Nursing

University of Northampton

View course [13] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  Foundation Degree in Science - FdSc
  Study mode
  Full-time
  Duration of the course
  2 Years
  Leading to a career in

Dental nursing
- Contact details
  study@northampton.ac.uk [14]
  0300 303 2772
- Region
  East Midlands

  Admissions address
  Waterside Campus
  University Drive
  Northampton
  NN1 5PH
  United Kingdom

# Dental Nurse Practice

Teesside University, Middlesbrough

View course [15] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  Certificate of Higher Education - CertHE

  Study mode
  Full-time

  Duration of the course
  1 Year

  Leading to a career in
  Dental nursing
- Contact details
  shlsadmissions@tees.ac.uk [16]
- Region
  North East

  Admissions address
  Borough Road
  Middlesbrough
  TS1 3BX
  United Kingdom

# Advanced dental nursing - Level 4

Bangor University

View course [17] Opens in a new window
- Qualification
  CertHE

  Study mode
  Part-time

  Leading to a career in
  Dental nursing
- Contact details
  info@awfdcp.ac.uk [18]

- Region
  Wales
  Admissions address
  All-Wales Faculty for Dental Care Professionals
  Y Wern,
  Normal Site,
  Holyhead Road,
  Bangor,
  Gwynedd,
  UK,
  LL57 2PZ

## Dental Nursing - courses offered across England, Wales and Northern Ireland

City and Guilds

View course [19] Opens in a new window

- Study mode
  Part-time
  Leading to a career in
  Dental nursing
- Contact details
  learnersupport@cityandguilds.com [20]
  0192 4930 801
- Region
  All UK
  Admissions address
  City & Guilds
  5-6 Giltspur Street
  London, UK
  EC1A 9DE
- Load more Load more results [21]

- **Live vacancies**

## Find a vacancy

**Enter your location or postcode**

**Show results within**

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## Other roles that may interest you

- Dental support worker [22]
- Receptionist [23]
- Dental therapist [24]
- Dental hygienist [25]

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**Links**
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/privacy-and-cookies/#CookieDeclarationChangeConsentChange [2] https://www.youtube.com/NHSCareers [3] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dental-nurse/real-life-story-kelvin-kamupira [4] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/dentist [5] http://www.gdc-uk.org/Pages/default.aspx [6] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-constitution [7] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/dental-hygienist [8] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/dental-therapist [9] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/working-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates [10] https://www.gdc-uk.org/registration/your-registration/rejoining-the-register [11] https://www.port.ac.uk/study/courses/certhe-dental-nursing?utm_campaign=ug_ongoing_uop&utm_medium=profile&utm_source=ucas&utm_content=coursepage [12] mailto: admissions@port.ac.uk [13] https://www.northampton.ac.uk/courses/dental-nursing-fdsc/ [14] mailto: study@northampton.ac.uk [15] https://www.tees.ac.uk/undergraduate_courses/nursing_&_health/Cert_HE_Dental_Nurse_Practice.cfm [16] mailto: shlsadmissions@tees.ac.uk [17] https://awfdcp.ac.uk/advanced-dental-nursing-level-4 [18] mailto: info@awfdcp.ac.uk [19] https://www.cityandguilds.com/qualifications-and-apprenticeships/health-and-social-care/dental-nursing/4238-dental-nursing [20] mailto: learnersupport@cityandguilds.com [21] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/printpdf/73?page=1 [22] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/dental-support-worker [23] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/administration/receptionist [24] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dental-therapist [25] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dental-hygienist