

Dental technician/dental technologist

Dental technicians (or dental technologists as they are often referred to) make the dentures, crowns, bridges and dental braces that improve patients' appearance, speech and ability to chew.

Working life

Working to dentists [1]' or doctors' prescriptions, you'll use a wide range of materials such as gold, porcelain and plastic to design and construct appliances to meet each patient's needs.



Much of your work will be done by hand to fine-tune each piece to exact specifications. You'll also work with specialised equipment in the laboratory. Each patient is unique so no two pieces are the same and absolute precision is essential to make sure the device is comfortable and effective.

You'll use a wide range of materials to design and construct appliances and work in four specialist areas:

- prosthodontic technicians design and make dentures
- conservation technicians specialise in crown and bridge work
- orthodontic technicians make braces to correct tooth positions
- maxillofacial technicians' work is based in hospital oral surgery, ophthalmic, cancer and burns units, helping to reconstruct the faces of patients damaged by accident or disease

Dental technicians may also work directly with patients in a clinic alongside a dentist or clinical dental technician.

Andrea Johnson

Orthodontic & maxillofacial laboratory manager

Working with dental technology has led me to do things I never dreamed I would be doing. My days are never boring.

[Read Andrea's story](#) ^[2]

Entry requirements and training

To work as a dental technician/dental technologist, you must be registered with the [General Dental Council](#) ^[3] (GDC). GDC-recognised courses lead to qualifications such as:

Apprenticeships logo

- the BTEC National Diploma in Dental Technology where you'll normally need at least four GCSEs at grade 4-7 or A-C,
- a foundation degree where you'll normally need to be employed in a trainee dental technician role or apprenticeship
- a BSc (Hons) degree in dental technology where A-levels or equivalent qualifications are usually required

You can take the BTEC National Diploma or foundation degree course on a full-time basis or by obtaining a post as a trainee dental technician and taking the course part time. BSc (Hons) degrees are usually full-time at a university/dental school.

Must have skills

As well as knowing about the properties of the necessary materials to construct dental appliances, you'll need an excellent understanding of dental and facial anatomy. You might also have some artistic ability due to the nature of the work you're doing.

Career development

Clinical dental technicians

Clinical dental technicians are dental technicians who have undertaken specific clinical training to enable them to design, create, construct, modify and fit removeable dental appliances for patients. You'll be able to provide dentures direct to patients with no natural teeth or provide partial dentures for patients with some teeth. This is an interesting career option for dental technicians who would like to have direct contact with patients. An important part of the role is to check on the patient's general dental welfare.

Technicians/technologists use a wide range of materials to design and construct appliances.

There are also opportunities to specialise as orthodontic therapists. Dental technicians can apply for training as healthcare scientists specialising in reconstructive sciences through the NHS Scientist Training Programme ([STP](#) ^[4]).

Pay and benefits

You will typically start your NHS career at band 5 of [Agenda for Change](#) [5] pay scales and work 37.5 hours a week. You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

If you work outside of the NHS, pay and benefits will vary depending on the employer.

Find your course to become a dental technician/dental technologist

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- [Dentist](#) [6]
- [Dental hygienist](#) [7]
- [Medical engineering](#) [8]
- [Medical device risk management and governance](#) [9]

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/dentist> [2]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dental-techniciandental-technologist/real-life-story-andrea-johnson> [3] <http://www.gdc-uk.org/> [4]

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#STP> [5]

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<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dentist> [7]

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