

## DENTAL TECHNICIAN

### WHAT DOES A DENTAL TECHNICIAN DO?

Dental Technicians design, build, repair and adjust dental devices for people who have lost teeth or who need help to correct the appearance and performance of their teeth. They specialise in one of 4 areas:

- orthodontics: creating plastic or metal devices, such as braces, to straighten teeth
- crown and bridge work: creating items that can be cemented in place within a mouth
- prosthetics: producing plastic dentures or implants, some of which have metal inserts to help keep them straight
- maxillo-facial prosthetics: helping to reconstruct faces that have been damaged by accidents or by disease.

They work with materials such as gold, porcelain and plastic to design and make specialist devices to suit patients' needs.

### SKILLS REQUIRED

Applicants for Dental Technician courses and jobs will need to demonstrate that they have:

- an ability to concentrate and work accurately for long periods of time
- good practical skills and a steady hand
- an ability to follow complex technical instructions.
- an interest in science
- an ability to understand and interpret complex, technical instructions
- good communication skills
- good eyesight and colour vision
- a degree of artistic flair
- the ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines

### QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED

Registration with the General Dental Council (GDC) is required by anyone wanting to work as a Dental Technician. See the General Dental Council website for a list of course providers: <https://www.gdc-uk.org/professionals/education/recent-inspections/inspections-dental-tech> GDC-recognised courses lead to qualifications such as:

- the BTEC National Diploma in Dental Technology (which usually require at least 4 GCSEs grade C/4 or above, or the equivalent)
- a foundation degree (which usually require applicants to be employed in a trainee dental technician role)
- a BSc (Hons) degree in Dental Technology (for which A-levels or equivalent qualifications are required).

Some people work within a commercial laboratory or dental practice as a trainee, and study part-time for an approved qualification.

Applicants will need to pass a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Check with individual course providers as entry requirements can change.

### UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

There is 1 undergraduate course in the West Midlands.

**Foundation Degree in Dental Technology:** University of Worcester/Birmingham Metropolitan College (<https://www.bmet.ac.uk/>)

**Length of study:** 2 years full-time, or 3 years part-time

**Entry requirements - qualifications:** a minimum of 4 GCSEs grade C/4 or above. The GCSEs must include GCSE English and Maths plus qualifications to the value of 24 UCAS tariff points. Applicants will also be required to take an English diagnostic assessment at Level 2. The institution stated, in April 2018, "we will consider anyone that has the UCAS points that meet the requirements, preferably with an applied science/ technical speciality."

**Entry requirements - work experience:** A significant component of the course consists of work-based learning. If applicants do not have a job within a dental laboratory setting, they will need to secure a placement in a suitable setting, equating to one day a week for the duration of the course or 200 hours in each year.

**NB** Please check with each course provider as entry requirements can change.

## EMPLOYMENT SECTORS

Dental Technicians work in a variety of settings, including private dental laboratories, the NHS and the armed forces: it is possible to join the RAF and Royal Army Dental Corps as a qualified and registered civilian Dental Technician.

Private dental laboratories usually create devices and appliances for a range of dental practices over a wide geographical area - these laboratories range in size from sole traders to large companies with several branches.

Some Dental Technicians are self-employed.

## WORKING CONDITIONS

Dental Technicians usually work around 40 hours a week, although hours may be longer in a commercial laboratory. They are usually laboratory based although, if working in a hospital setting, they will also have direct contact with Dental and Oral Surgeons, and occasionally patients.

## SALARY

Dental Technicians earning £22,128-£28,746 per year. With experience, as a Dental Technician Specialist/Dental Technician Advanced this could rise to £26,565-£41,787 per year. Dental Laboratory Managers can earn £40,428-£69,168 per year. Private sector salaries are roughly comparable to NHS salaries.

**NB** These figures are only a guideline: see NHS pay scales, and job advertisements, for up-to-date information.

## LABOUR MARKET DATA

It is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Dental Technicians working in the UK: 8,000 employed within the commercial sector and 2,000 employed within the hospital service and within salaried primary care dental services. There are more than 6,620 Dental Technicians registered with the General Dental Council.

## INFORMATION SOURCES

- Dental Technologists Association: <http://www.dta-uk.org/>
- General Dental Council: <http://www.gdc-uk.org>
- National Careers Service: <https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/>
- NHS Careers: <http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/>
- Prospects: <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/>
- UCAS: <https://www.ucas.com/>

## VIDEO CLIPS

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-Rjmm9nA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDXjD3ZcENM>

Updated: May 2018