

TUCSIN ALUMNI 2013

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Career Focus - DENTISTRY

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Instead of fearing dental check-ups we should really give thanks to Apollonia, the patron saint of dentists, for modern dentistry. Imagine having a tooth yanked without anaesthetic! One doctor states that dentistry and dental technology have advanced a lot in the last 30 years, and today, people have a lot more options. Dental technology continues to progress in leaps and bounds, and who knows what the future holds? Scientists in Japan have even managed to make lab-grown teeth from stem cells, which may one day be used as an alternative to false teeth. But for the moment, take good care of your pearly whites and visit your dentist every six months. As Miguel de Cervantes wrote in Don Quixote, *"Every tooth in a man's head is more valuable than a diamond."*

What is Dentistry ?

The job includes essential tasks such as pain relief to advanced cosmetic procedures. Relieving the pain of somebody with toothache could vary from tooth extractions to doing a root canal, while cosmetic procedures include fixing a broken tooth with a crown, or bleaching teeth.

Dentists provide services aimed at the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of numerous dental problems and diseases of teeth and gums.

The work of a dentist comprises **five basic components**:

Diagnostic work: Examination of teeth and the tissues of the mouth to diagnose diseases or abnormalities

Preventive work: Supplying the patient with information concerning the control of tooth decay, the maintenance of oral hygiene and the removal of plaque

Corrective treatment: The dentist takes X-rays of the oral structure, cleans teeth, fills cavities, treats abscesses and infections of the gums and extracts teeth. The work also entails creating impressions of the mouth to make false teeth, crowns and bridges

Surgical procedures: Includes the removal of teeth and the treatment of jaw fractures

Administrative duties: Bookkeeping and the buying of supplies as well as the supervising and managing of a whole team of co-workers such as dental assistants, receptionists, dental technicians and oral hygienists.

DENTISTRY - Education and Career Paths

Requirements

A dentist should:

- have an interest in and an aptitude for science;
- have good judgment and diagnostic skills;
- be able to inspire confidence and trust;
- be able to concentrate well;
- have manual dexterity;
- have three dimensional abilities (to judge space and shape);
- have good eyesight and visual memory.

School Subjects

National Senior Certificate meeting degree requirements for a degree course

Each institution will have its own minimum entry requirements.

Compulsory Subjects: Mathematics, Physical Sciences

Recommended Subjects: Life Sciences

Training

Prospective candidates undergo selection before admission to degree courses.

Degree: BDS or BChD - UP, UWC, UL, UKZN, Wits

Duration of the course: 5 years full-time study. Practical and clinical work is done in the dental hospital attached to the university.

Dentists must register with the Health Professions Council of Namibia after completion of the required training.

Further studies can be undertaken: honours, masters or doctors degree for specialization in a specific branch of dentistry.

Employer

- Private practice
- Hospitals
- Municipal clinics
- Industries
- Universities
- Research Institutions

Dentists may specialize after a minimum of 5 years' general practice in:

- oral pathology - diseases of the mouth
- maxillo facial and oral surgery
- orthodontics - teeth straightening
- oral medicine and periodontics - treatment of the tissues of the mouth and underlying bones
- prosthodontics - denture prosthesis and crown and bridgework
- community dentistry - preventing and controlling dental disease and promoting dental health through community efforts.

Some satisfying aspects of this career

- a good income
- establishing a practice of one's own
- setting the hours one prefers and choosing a work setting that is comfortable
- working with people
- serving as part of the health care team

Some demanding aspects of this career

- the cost involved in setting up one's own practice
- spending long hours in practice
- dealing with demanding or difficult patients



Where to study Dentistry

University of the Western Cape, Faculty of Dentistry

The Faculty of Dentistry is located over three campuses, and training is undertaken on the Oral Health Provincial Teaching Platform, including the Groote Schuur and Red Cross Children's Hospitals.

Main Campus

The University of the Western Cape's main campus is situated in Bellville. Subjects such as public health, physics and chemistry in the dental degree are typically taught on main campus.

Tygerberg Hospital Campus

The Tygerberg Campus and Oral Health Center is located at and beside Tygerberg Hospital in Belville, Cape Town, roughly 8 kilometers from main campus. The Tygerberg Campus is a principal teaching hospital. The office of the Dean is located here.

Mitchell's Plain Campus

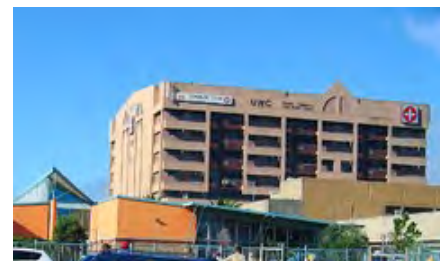
The Deputy Dean and administrative staff for Postgraduate and Research Affairs in the Faculty of Dentistry are based at the Mitchell's Plain Campus, situated approximately 20 kilometers from the main campus in the residential suburb of Mitchell's Plain. The Mitchell's Plain campus at the Melomed Center is a principal teaching hospital, with the state of the art virtual-patient lab.

Groote Schuur Hospital

Groote Schuur Hospital, home of the world's first heart transplant, is located in the center of Cape Town, and trains dental students in several disciplines namely **oral and maxillofacial surgery, general surgery, internal medicine**, etc.

Red Cross Children's Hospital

Red Cross Children's Hospital is a specialist pediatric referral hospital, training students from the University of Cape Town's medical school, University of the Western Cape's Dental School, and the University of Stellenbosch. The hospital is located in Rondebosch, Cape Town, in the vicinity of Groote Schuur Hospital.



UWC Oral Health Center at Mitchells Plain



UWC Oral Health Center at Mitchells Plain

Minimum NSC Subject Requirements for 2014

Pro-gramme	Course Code	English (Home or 1st Additional Language)	Another Language (Home or 1st Additional Language)	Mathemat-ics or	Mathemat-ics Literacy	Life Sci-ences	Physical Science
BChD	5101	4 (50-59%)	3 40-49%)	4 (50-59%)	N/A	4 (50-59%)	4 (50-59%)
B Oral Health	5211	4 (50-59%)	3 (40-49%)	3 40-49%)	4 (50-59%)	4 (50-59%)	N/A

Reference : <http://www.uwc.ac.za/Students/Admin/adminreq/Pages/Faculty-of-Dentistry.aspx>

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