Dental Assisting Application Technical Standards

Introduction

Certain functional abilities are essential for the delivery of safe, effective dental assisting care. These abilities are essential in the sense that they constitute core components of a dental practice. There is a high probability that negative consequences will result for patients and/or co-workers of the dental assistant who fails to demonstrate these abilities. A program preparing students for the profession of dental assisting must attend to these essential functional abilities in the education and evaluation of its students.

This statement of the Technical Standards of the Dental Assisting Program at Chemeketa Community College identifies the functional abilities deemed by the dental assisting faculty to be essential to the practice of dental assisting. Reference materials used in the development of these standards include Division 42 of the Oregon Administrative Rules of the Oregon Board of Dentistry, the Oregon Health Division, the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation, OSHA Standards, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines. The Technical Standards are reflected in the Dental Assisting Program's Performance-based Outcomes, which are the basis for teaching and evaluating all dental assisting students.

Disability Services

Students with disabilities who think they may require accommodation in meeting the Technical Standards of the Dental Assisting Program should contact the Office of Disability Services to discuss the process of identifying reasonable accommodations. This office is located in Building 2, first floor (telephone 503.399.5192 [voice/TTY] or email disability@chemeketa.edu). Students should seek accommodation advising as soon as possible after admission to the dental assisting program so that a plan for accommodation can be in place at the beginning of the program. Applicants seeking admission into the dental assisting program who may have questions about the technical standards and appropriate reasonable accommodations are invited to discuss their questions with the Office of Disability Services. Reasonable accommodation will be directed toward providing an equal educational opportunity for students with disabilities while adhering to the standards of dental assisting practice for all students.

If a student is dissatisfied with any outcomes from Disability Services, they may appeal the decision through the Health Sciences Dean.

Standards

The practice of Dental Assisting requires the following functional abilities with or without reasonable accommodations:

Fine Motor Skills

A dental assisting student must be able to perform all required activities needed for laboratory procedures, clinical practice, patient care and emergency procedures. The ability to safely, accurately and effectively manipulate all instruments, equipment, and materials utilized in the dental assisting process is essential.

Sensory Skills

A dental assisting student must have adequate control of all sensory functions so that the student, patients, peers, and instructors/operators will be able to work and respond in ways that contribute to a safe environment and provide sound evaluation and treatment services. Visual ability, auditory ability and tactile ability must be sufficient to receive directions or instructions and safely participate in the laboratory and/or clinical procedures.

Communication Skills
A dental assisting student must be able to communicate information in oral and written forms effectively, accurately, reliably and intelligibly with individuals, groups and all members of the healthcare team using the English language. Effective communication includes the ability to read, write, speak and comprehend in English and understand body language. The dental assisting student must be able to write inclusive, clear, and legible chart notations and descriptions of clinical findings as dictated by the operator. A dental assisting student is expected to participate and communicate well in teams during the many opportunities in the dental assisting program.

**Cognitive Skills**

A dental assisting student must be able to collect, analyze, synthesize, integrate and recall information and knowledge to participate safely and effectively in laboratory and chairside procedures.

**Physical Endurance, Strength and Mobility**

A dental assisting student must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads that include but are not limited to sitting or standing for long periods of time in one position, or lifting at least 25 pounds. Additionally, fine motor skills are required to safely manipulate instruments, equipment, containers, and dental materials.

**Behavioral Skills**

A dental assisting student must be able to work effectively under stressful situations. He/she must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients. A dental assisting student must be able to use tactful, congenial and personal mannerisms while managing apprehensive patients who demonstrate a range of moods and behaviors. The dental assisting student must work with the dental team and patients in such a way as not to alienate or antagonize anyone. A dental assisting student is expected to be prepared to accept reasonable, instructive, and professional criticism, and to respond with a professional attitude and appropriate modification of behavior. A dental assisting student is expected to abide by The Creed and The Pledge of the American Dental Assistants Association as well as the regulations in the Dental Assisting Program Student Handbook.