A CHOSEN CAREER IN DENTAL THERAPY
CAREERS CENTRE
INTRODUCTION

The Curtin Careers Centre, working closely with employers and the university community, sources, develops and delivers career development programs and resources. The purpose of these professional and personal development learning opportunities is to facilitate successful career transitions; especially study to employment and further study and to enhance students’ ability to develop lifelong skills in managing their careers. The Careers Centre also provides accurate, current authoritative labour market and graduate recruitment information focusing on society’s needs and aspirations.

The Careers Centre team has written a series of occupation career booklets to enable tertiary students to consider their chosen field in more depth including information on the current labour market, associated professional associations, pertinent job seeking avenues and samples of relevant and related positions.

Whilst students are actively seeking information about a particular field they need also be aware of recruitment and selection methods and the need to develop strategies to be competitive in their field at graduate entry level.

Self-assessment is an essential component of job seeking i.e. a student needs to be fully aware of their interests, skills, attributes and capabilities to be able to convey this on paper (job application documents) and in person (networking/interviewing/promotion).

The purpose of this occupational booklet is twofold. It will assist students to develop knowledge of trends in employment and current opportunities and to identify existing skills and attributes required to successfully pursue a career in this field.

A student may not be aware that whilst using this resource that they are involved in Career Development Learning (CDL). CDL assists students to develop Self Awareness, to Identify Opportunities, to learn how to Make Decisions, to Manage Transition from university and incorporate Lifelong Learning.

This involves Curtin students working with the Curtin Careers Centre towards the attainment of required skills and knowledge at a tertiary level to successfully manage the changing contexts of life; incorporating:

• Personal Management
• Learning and Work Exploration
• Career Building

The Careers Centre hopes you find this a useful resource.

Contacting the Careers Centre...

Feel free to visit us at Building 303
Email us at careers@curtin.edu.au
Give us a call on (08) 9266 7802
Or check out our website at www.careers.curtin.edu.au

Stay connected to the Careers Centre with Jobs and Events Connect. Access new jobs posted daily, workshop information, special events and employer presentations.

Explore • Connect • Grow
A CHOSEN CAREER IN SERIES

A CHOSEN CAREER IN DENTAL THERAPY

Dental therapists examine and provide routine treatment of teeth under the general supervision of dentists. They also help to promote preventive dental practices among school children and the broader community. Dental therapists may perform the following tasks:

- Educate and motivate children to maintain good oral health
- Help to educate the community in the principles of preventive dentistry by addressing adult groups such as parents’ groups, play groups and parents and citizens’ associations
- Provide routine dental treatment for children, including dental examinations and diagnosis, cleaning, scaling and polishing teeth, filling cavities and extracting deciduous (baby) teeth under local anaesthetic
- Treat gum conditions, take X-rays of teeth and jaws, apply sealants and fluoride therapy, and take impressions for mouth-guard construction
- Bring more complex dental problems to the attention of dentists
- Advise managers of school canteens about healthy food
- Liaise with other health care providers.

Dental therapists who work in the public sector may be required to work anywhere in their state or territory, although individual preferences and applications for specific positions are taken into account (My Future, 2010a). Dental hygienists provide preventive oral health care under the supervision of a dentist. Dental hygienists may perform the following tasks:

- Educate and counsel children and adults on dental health, plaque control, oral hygiene and nutrition
- Remove deposits and stains from teeth by scaling and more advanced cleaning
- Assist in the prevention and control of dental caries (decay) and gum disease
- Select and use appropriate fluoride treatments and polish tooth restorations
- Treat gum conditions, take X-rays of teeth and jaws, apply sealants and fluoride therapy, and take impressions for mouth-guard construction
- Make impressions of patients’ mouths for the construction of study casts and mouth guards
- Select and size orthodontic bands (braces), and remove orthodontic attachments
- Apply and remove periodontal packs
- Instruct patients on how to look after their teeth and mouth after surgery.

Personal requirements to be successful in a Dental Hygienist or Dental Therapist role:

- Good hand-eye coordination and dexterity
- Ability to perform precise & detailed work
- Good communication skills
- Interested in health care work
- Ability to establish rapport with children
- Ability to work as part of a team (My Future, 2010b).
WHAT ELSE HAS MY DEGREE TAUGHT ME?

Curtin University policy on graduate attributes outlines the graduate attributes that a student is expected to develop while studying at Curtin in conjunction with specialist discipline knowledge. Not sure what that means? Graduate Attributes are the ‘qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include, but go beyond, the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents for social good in an unknown future” (Bowden et al 2000).

Curtin graduates show evidence that they can:

• Apply discipline knowledge, principles and concepts
• Think critically, creatively and reflectively
• Access, evaluate and synthesise information
• Communicate effectively
• Use technologies appropriately
• Utilise lifelong learning skills
• Recognise and apply international perspectives
• Demonstrate intercultural awareness and understanding
• Apply professional skills

Combine these attributes with existing skills gained from life and work experiences and you will start to form a solid picture of what you are capable of. If you are having difficulty with outlining your skills or recording your achievements login to Resume Express from the Careers Centre Website: www.careers.curtin.edu.au under the heading Current students, My Employment, Applying for work, Application process. See Module 2: Analyse Your Skills, attend a workshop at the Careers Centre or contact careers@curtin.edu.au to make an appointment to see a Careers Consultant.

Curtin University. (2010).
WHERE CAN DENTAL THERAPY TAKE YOU?

WHO IS EMPLOYING IN YOUR FIELD?

Job prospects are strong for Dental Hygienist and Dental Therapists and graduates are in demand (Job Outlook, 2010). Graduates find employment in government clinics and private practices. Students need to know their field: who is employing, what types of opportunities and positions are available and where, is the industry in an area of growth?

Employers want to know what you have also achieved aside from your qualification, how have you added value to your qualification? Have you been involved with student or community groups, are you a member of your professional association, are you working to support your studies in a related or non-related area (transferable skills), what experience have you gained from practical placements, have you documented this experience?

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

Dental Hygienists

- In 2005 there were an estimated 1,046 dental hygienist registrations in Australia, of whom 873 were estimated to be practicing in dental hygiene.

- Since the 2003 labour force collection, there had been an estimated 66% increase in the number of practising dental hygienists.

- The practising rate of dental hygienists ranged from 1.9 dental hygienists per 100,000 population in Tasmania to 10.5 in the Australian Capital Territory.

- Across remoteness regions, the number of dental hygienists per 100,000 population was higher in major cities (5.0) than outer regional areas (2.5).

- The average age of dental hygienist is 36.8 years and only 3.5% were male.

- The majority (80%) of dental hygienists worked in the private sector.

- On average, dental hygienists worked 31.6 hours per week and the majority (53%) worked part time (less than 35 hours per week).

- Dental hygienists aged 20–24 and 25–29 years worked longer hours than those aged 35–39 and 50 years+ (ARCPOH, 2005a).

Dental Therapy

- In 2005 there were an estimated 1,760 dental therapist registrations in Australia, of whom 1,521 were estimated to be practicing in dental therapy.

- Since the 2003 labour force collection, there had been an estimated 22% increase in the number of practising dental therapists.

- The practising rate of dental therapists ranged from 3.9 dental therapists per 100,000 population in New South Wales to 15.9 in Western Australia.

- Across remoteness regions, the number of dental therapists per 100,000 population was higher in outer regional areas (10.9) than major cities (6.6).

- The average age of dental therapist was 40.7 years and only 2.5% were male.

- The majority (79%) of dental therapists worked in the public sector.

- On average, dental therapists worked 29.5 hours per week and the majority (56%) worked part-time (less than 35 hours per week).

- Dental therapists aged 20–24 and 25–29 years worked longer hours than those aged 35–39 years.

- Only a small percentage (5.5%) expected that they would not be practising as an allied dental practitioner in 12 months time (ARCOPH, 2005b).
CURTIN CAREERS CENTRE

OCCUPATIONS AND ROLES

DENTAL THERAPIST

Under the supervision of a dentist, a dental therapists’ role is to examine and treat diseases of the teeth in pre-school, primary and secondary school children. Given the clientele a dental therapist works with, the public sector oral health services are the major employers of dental therapists.

They often work in fixed and mobile clinics promoting oral health care to children. Career opportunities include progression to senior dental therapist positions coordinating health promotion activities in dental health services, and positions in administration, research and teaching (Australian Dental Association, n.d.).

Also see the Curtin Dental Hygiene and Therapy website for information on employment opportunities and roles:


Dental Hygiene Association of Australia- Careers in Dental Hygiene:


DENTAL HYGIENIST

Dental hygienists treat patients in conjunction with a Dentist. They use preventive, educational and therapeutic methods for the control of oral diseases to aid individual patients and groups in achieving and maintaining oral health. They are a registered dental care provider, oral health educator and clinical operator.

Dental hygienists are trained to do specific clinical procedures which aim to prevent dental disease. They should work under the supervision and prescription of a dentist.

They work in private practices, community health centres, dental hospitals and regional clinics. Qualified dental hygienists should not experience difficulty in finding employment (Australian Dental Association, n.d).

Griffiths University. (2010).
GAUGING SALARIES

What are you worth? Students often are not sure of merit and awards and, in some cases, what their qualification has prepared them for. A good indicator for starting salaries is the State Public Sector awards (WAIRC, 2008). If you only look at the top level positions it is unlikely that you have the background to be a competitive candidate.

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** Level 2.5 receives a $1000 up-front sign-on bonus in the first year

Also look at the below organisations for salary information for opportunities in the private sector.


In roles such as academics, researchers and university lecturers salaries will reflect the salaries award scales and collective or enterprise agreement for that industry.

1300Smiles. (2010).
THE JOB SEARCH AND GETTING STARTED

JOB SEARCHING

Set up a Desktop Folder and add a Favorite Internet Explorer folder.

Download jobs of interest for future reference. NOTE: Don’t just save the link as the details will disappear once the position has been filled. Copy the advertisement or any additional files onto Word and keep in your desktop folder; this allows you to keep a track of who is hiring in your field and the types of positions available.

Look at positions available around the country and not just in Perth. This will give an idea of who is recruiting and where and differing salary scales.


Pay scale: http://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Dental_Hygienist/Hourly_Rate (Free Salary Report)

REGISTER WITH WEBSITES FOR SPECIFIC JOB ALERTS

Register with websites for specific job alerts this will ensure that email alerts of appropriate jobs are sent directly to you.

If positions on Seek, Health and Community Jobs (HACs Jobs) or Career one etc., give the name of the recruiting company go directly to their website and check for other employment opportunities. Apply directly from the company website.

JOB BOARDS

www.seek.com.au
www.careerone.com.au
www.jobs.wa.gov.au
www.careerjet.com.au


Go directly to Recruitment Agency websites e.g. Allied Health, Hays Health Care, Hudson, Kelly Services etc. When conducting a job search via job search engines such as Seek you may see a pattern to the agencies most recruiting in your field. Register with these agencies or contact city branches directly.

Byron Employment website gives a comprehensive list of recruitment agencies in WA and Australia: http://employment.byron.com.au/recruiters_western_australia.html


Contact Point Dental: http://www.contactpointdental.com/recruitment.htm
THE JOB SEARCH AND GETTING STARTED

Also look in The West Australian on Saturday’s in the Health and Medical Section. Many private practice opportunities will be published here.

GOVERNMENT POSITIONS


health?a=da&did=3000000


QLD Health: www.health.qld.gov.au/


JOB APPLICATIONS

Review job advertisements and job requirements – the selection criteria.

NOTE: Selection criteria may be included in a JDF as for government jobs or may be ’hidden’ in the advertisement. If no set selection criteria are asked to be addressed – target your letter to the position. Don’t just limit yourself to reviewing entry level or graduate positions, look at the variety of positions in your field at various levels and view the requirements. This will let you discover what will be expected of you at higher levels and the type of experience that you will hope to gain at earlier stages in your career. Consider lifelong learning and developing your career.

JOIN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

This allows you to keep abreast of trends and developments in your field and to check for any employment and networking opportunities. You may find that you are eligible for free; or at reduced fees, for journals, you may also have access to prizes, scholarships, awards and reduced conference/seminar attendance fees. Membership also looks good on your resume or curriculum vitae. Not all Associations are listed here, check out the Links section of the ones listed below for links to other appropriate associations and affiliations.

To practice as a Dental Hygienist or a Dental Therapist you must be registered with the Dental Practice board in the State or Territory you wish to work.

Australian Dental and Oral Health Therapist’s Association: http://www.adohta.net.au/


Dental Hygienist Association of Australia: http://www.dhaa.asn.au/new/home


Membership is not mandatory with the relevant WA branches to enable you to practice, student membership is also available.

International Federation of Dental Hygienists: http://www.ifdh.org/
GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Graduate programs are available to final year students and, in some cases, recent graduates. Students are invited to apply in their final year of study and applications can be open as early as February/March of each year.

Programs can be from one year to three years in duration, dependant on the discipline. Vacation programs are available to penultimate students and can be offered in either Winter or Summer. Winter programs will be approximately four weeks in duration and summer programs can be up to twelve weeks.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A GRADUATE PROGRAM?

Graduate Programs generally offer training and development, job rotation through various departments of the organization, challenging roles, mentoring, and social and networking opportunities.

WHAT EXACTLY IS A VACATION PROGRAM?

Vacation programs offer paid positions and training pertinent to your discipline; the application of theory to the workplace, and may lead to selection onto a Graduate Program. Applications are generally open in Semester I for Winter Vacation Programs and this can tie in with the advertising of the Graduate Programs. Summer programs are often advertised mid-year, June to August.

Not all graduate programs and vacation programs are targeting just Commerce and Engineering penultimate and final year students. Both public and private sector employers target students from all disciplines. Have a look at what they have to offer. See www.graduateopportunities.com.au and www.unimail.com.au for an A-Z listing of employers offering graduate and vacation programs.

Note: You may not wish to apply for a Graduate Program but the position descriptions will give a good indicator of what type of graduate and graduate skills/attributes employers are seeking from prospective candidates. If you believe that you meet this type of criteria, it is likely that you are already in the professional employability stakes.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS - ONLINE APPLICATIONS.

The application process for graduate opportunities is more involved and can take the format of online application forms – online aptitude testing (both short and long answers perhaps covering problem solving and innovation skills, communication and analytical ability, practical numerical skills, personality testing) – assessment centres (meeting staff and other applicants, working in teams on a case study and presenting findings) – to final panel interview.

THE JOB SEARCH AND GETTING STARTED
While dental hygiene and dental therapy graduates are in demand, what will distinguish you from other graduates and make you a more competitive candidate for your preferred graduate position and future positions?

Volunteering is an excellent way to give yourself that competitive advantage for a number of reasons: one, to add to your existing skills and attributes you have developed through your studies, two, the experience will assist when you are addressing selection criteria (this will mainly be for government positions), three, it will provide you with a valuable reference and four, it demonstrates you are a community minded person, which is a valued as personal attribute.

Below is a list of some organisations that facilitate volunteering opportunities.

Australian Dental Association:  

International Smile Power Foundation:  
http://www.smilepower.org/

Wuchopperen Health Service:  
http://www.wuchopperen.com/dental.htm

Filling the Gap in conjunction with the Wuchopperen Health Service:  

Palms Australia Overseas Volunteering:  
http://www.palms.org.au/volunteers/volunteer/14/

Red Cross  
http://www.redcross.org.au/wa/SupportUs_volunteer.htm  Volunteers must attend information sessions, held each month in East Perth.

Volunteering General List Website  
JOIN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

This allows you to keep abreast of trends and developments in your field and to check for any employment and networking opportunities. You may find that you are eligible for free; or at reduced fees, for journals, you may also have access to prizes, scholarships, awards and reduced conference/seminar attendance fees. Membership also looks good on your resume or curriculum vitae. Not all Associations are listed here, check out the Links section of the ones listed below for links to other appropriate associations and affiliations.

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Dental Hygienist Association of Australia: http://www.dhaa.asn.au/new/home


Membership is not mandatory with the relevant WA branches to enable you to practice, student membership is also available.

International Federation of Dental Hygienists: http://www.ifdh.org/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


Includes Metropolitan and Country clinics as well as Emergency or after hours dental care telephone service details.

WA Dental Health Services: http://www.dental.wa.gov.au/


BRIEF SUMMARY OF DUTIES TO BE PERFORMED LISTED IN DESCENDING ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

1. Provides dental care for enrolled children and where necessary refers patients according to the policies and procedures of the Branch.

2. Maintains patient records and centre management records in accordance with Branch instructions.

3. Supervises and gives guide to Dental Clinic Assistants and student Dental Clinic Assistants.

4. Provides information on dental health to individuals, schools, community groups and health professionals and implements preventive programmes in community groups.

5. Provides statistical documentation in accordance with Branch instructions.

6. Maintains instruments and equipment in accordance with Branch instructions.

7. Carries out other duties as required.

SELECTION CRITERIA

ESSENTIAL

• Certificate in Dental Therapy or an approved equivalent qualification registrable with the Dental Board of Western Australia.

• Demonstrated organisational ability.

• Well developed interpersonal and communication skills.

DESIRABLE

• Experience working as a Dental Therapist.

• Knowledge of Health and Dental Acts as applicable.

• Current knowledge and commitment to Equal Opportunity in all aspects of employment and service delivery.

APPOINTMENT CRITERIA

• Current motor vehicle driver’s licence.

• Working with Children Check Required.
DENTAL HYGIENIST

Clifford Yudelman Dental Care is located in Nedlands in the vibrant Broadway Fair Shopping Centre, close to UWA and major bus routes.

We have only one dentist with highest ethics and standards in the fields of preventive, restorative and cosmetic dentistry.

Our office is state of the art with all new equipment and all the latest materials and procedures. Digital x-rays, photography, fully computerised diagnodent laser. We don’t do any surgery or endodontics.

For more about us please see our website and blog.


Our dental hygienist may perform the following tasks:

* educate and counsel children and adults on dental health, plaque control, oral hygiene and nutrition
* remove deposits and stains from teeth by scaling and root planing
* assist in the prevention and control of dental caries (decay) and gum disease
* select and use appropriate treatments and polish tooth restorations
* expose digital dental X-rays
* make impressions of patients’ mouths for the construction of study casts, mouth guards and bleaching trays (deliver bleaching trays and monitor treatment)
* instruct patients on how to look after their teeth and mouth

Your ideal attributes should encompass

• Outgoing personality and independence
• Professional presentation and appearance
• Organised with attention to detail
• Fully computer literate—Experience using the Exact dental program will be very highly regarded.
• Great work ethics and reliable in general
• Enjoy your work and be willing to advance
• Good use of English and excellent customer service skills;

You will receive
We are offering a very competitive hourly rate based on your personal capabilities.

To apply for this job please email your resume/CV to Dr. Clifford Yudelman at info@dentistnedlands.com.au or by fax to 08 6389 2811 or phone 08 6389 2711 or click the apply now button.
DENTAL HYGIENIST

Monday 9am - 7pm - 6 month contract

Leederville location

Immediate start available

My client is an innovative dental practice operating in Leederville. They are urgently seeking an experienced Dental Hygienist for a temporary 6 month contract, working Monday's only from 9am - 7pm.

To be suitable for this position you will be enthusiastic and display a great passion for the industry.

You will have suitable experience and qualifications, and be confident in your abilities to perform the standard tasks of a Dental Hygienist.

In return you will be rewarded with a generous hourly rate, supportive management team, and second to none working conditions!

Don’t hesitate to contact our office for further information on 08 9300 0210.
DENTAL HYGIENIST/THERAPIST

DENTAL THERAPIST REQUIRED - Part Time

If you are newly graduated or graduating end of the year and looking to do a few days of Orthodontics working with a great team, then come meet us!!

YOUR ATTRIBUTES

We are looking for a new graduate from Dental Therapy School, someone warm, friendly, enthusiastic about learning, organised and relate well with children of all ages, who has an interest in building a career in orthodontic therapy.

WHO WE ARE

We are a busy orthodontic clinic with two northern suburb locations - looking for that special someone to work 2-2.5 days with us. We are a small team, have lots of fun working together, and enjoy a laugh or two while we’re at it!!

WHAT THE JOB ENTAILS

The good news - very little cleaning! More work on OHI, monitoring appliance compliance - but full training will be provided.

OUR PACKAGE

- Excellent working conditions
- Top pay rate
- Great and supportive team to work with

To apply, email your Resume to: psmiles@iinet.net.au, with Heading “Therapist Position”
REFERENCES


Contacting the Careers Centre...

Feel free to visit us at Building 303
Email us at careers@curtin.edu.au
Give us a call on (08) 9266 7802
Or check out our website at www.careers.curtin.edu.au

Stay connected to the Careers Centre with Jobs and Events Connect. Access new jobs posted daily, workshop information, special events and employer presentations.

Explore • Connect • Grow