

Dentist



What do dentists do?

Dentists treat teeth, gums and soft tissues of the mouth.

Dentists may:

- examine the mouth
- take x-rays
- clean teeth
- provide preventive care
- repair decayed and broken teeth with fillings
- extract and replace teeth
- apply anaesthesia
- perform surgical operations
- design, construct and fit dentures, crowns and bridges.

Dentists can specialise to become orthodontists, oral and maxillofacial surgeons, periodontists, endodontists, prosthodontists, paediatric or special needs dentists.

What skills to dentists need?

Dentists need to have good analytical and spatial skills and enjoy working with their hands. They should be able to communicate with people from many different backgrounds and age groups. They must also be organised to work well in a busy environment.

Where do dentists work?

Dentists can work in both public and private settings. Dentists employed in the public sector may work in schools, universities, community health centres, mobile dental vans, hospitals and institutions such as residential care facilities. Dentists in the private sector may work for other dentists or managers, or own a practice alone or in partnership with other dentists.

Dentists can also be employed in research, management, education and policy development roles.

What are the working conditions and career prospects?

Dentists are always in demand. There are many career opportunities in metropolitan and rural Victoria in the public and private sectors.

'There's a real focus on teamwork in public community dentistry. The clients can be challenging but there's always a sense of fun and achievement.' Helen, dentist, Inner South Community Health Service

How do I become a dentist?

In Victoria, the University of Melbourne offers the five-year Bachelor of Dental Science. Dental students learn the manual and theoretical skills needed for contemporary dental practice. Areas of study include anatomy, biology, chemistry, microbiology, pathology, pharmacology and neuroscience. The current prerequisite VCE subjects include physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and English.

Prospective students must undertake the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admissions Test (UMAT). Selection for the course is based on a combination of the applicant's ENTER, performance in the UMAT and performance in prerequisite subjects. See detailed information published by the University of Melbourne at www.dent.unimelb.edu.au or telephone (03) 9341 1500.

Want more information?

More information is available at the following websites:

- **Dentistry in Victoria:** www.health.vic.gov.au/dentistry
 - Find out what Victorian dentists have to say about their jobs
 - Find more fact sheets about other careers in dentistry
- **Dental Health Services Victoria:** www.dhsv.org.au
 - Find out about Victoria's public dental service
 - Find more information on dental careers
- **Australian Dental Association:** www.ada.org.au
 - Find more information about working as a dentist
- **University of Melbourne:** www.dent.unimelb.edu.au
 - Find out more about the dental science course.

Your careers adviser can also provide further information.