

Dental Assistant

Certificate of Applied Science Degree

Program Director: Robin Williams

Program Website (<https://gfcmsu.edu/academic-program/dental-assistant/>)

Program Application (https://gfcmsu.edu/dental_assistant_application/) (Fall 2026 Application available February 13, 2026)

The Dental Assistant degree is offered both online with limited onsite and onsite.

Dental Assistants are important members of the dental health care team and primarily help to increase the efficiency and productivity of the dental practice by assisting the dentist in delivering patient care. Other employment opportunities and/or responsibilities include dental health education, performing expanded duty dental care on patients, business practice, or working with dental insurance or dental supply companies. Because dentists employ two or three dental assistants, employment opportunities are excellent.

The GFC MSU Dental Assistant program is a one-year (11 month) limited enrollment Certificate of Applied Science program and accepts up to 18 students each year. Applicants are advised to contact Advising or Career Center Advisors or a Program Director for further program information specific to admission requirements.

Interested students must complete an application to the program (separate from the institution application) for program acceptance. These students must place into the program-required math and writing courses (MUS core level math and WRIT 101 or 121) OR their equivalents OR be currently at the competency level for the program-required math and writing courses. Applicants must be in good academic standing for program entry.

Following acceptance to the program, students complete three semesters concluding with a summer semester when the students are enrolled in clinical practice. Students will be required to purchase uniform attire and provide their own transportation (and lodging, if applicable) to and from clinical site assignments.

The Dental Assistant program will:

- Maintain an instructional curriculum that meets the standards of the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation and of the local dental community.
- Deliver relevant learning experiences and curriculum sequencing to ensure graduates achieve adequate knowledge and skill to enable them to be employed in the field as entry level Dental Assistants.

Outcomes

Graduates are prepared to:

- Sit for the national certification examination administered by the Dental Assisting National Board.
- Perform with entry level skill and competence in assigned chairside dental assistant duties and responsibilities (including expanded duty functions as defined by the Montana Board of Dentistry).
- Substantiate the mastery of oral radiography theory and techniques.

- Utilize computer technology associated with the profession of dentistry, including but not limited to digital radiography, intraoral cameras, and dental-specific software for the operation of a dental practice.
- Integrate concepts in the dental sciences, prevention, and oral health promotion to a variety of treatment situations in the dental setting.
- Demonstrate appropriate cultural, legal, ethical, and professional values (including adherence to HIPAA standards).
- Articulate dental language appropriate in business, clinical, and educational situations.
- Apply OSHA infection control standards during all aspects of dental care and practice.

Estimated Cost

Estimated Resident Program Cost*

Tuition and Fees	\$6,216
Lab/Course Fees	\$450
Uniforms	\$250
Program Fee	\$402
Books/Supplies	\$1,079
Total	\$8,379

* Fall 2025 MUS Student Health Insurance Premiums may be changing. Please check the Health Insurance website (<https://gfcmsu.edu/home/current-students/studentengagement/wellness/student-insurance/>) and/or Student Central for confirmed premium rates.

Program Requirements

Many students need preliminary math and writing courses before enrolling in the program requirements. These courses may increase the total number of program credits. Students should review their math and writing placement before planning out their full program schedules.

The Dental Assistant program sequence is as follows:

(The student, however, may complete any or all of the general education coursework (non-DA) prior to entry to the Dental Assistant program, i.e.: M 121 or any math course in the MUS core, WRIT 101 or WRIT 121, and/or COMX 115 or PSYX 100)

A grade of C- or above must be achieved in all courses to advance in the program and to graduate.

Course	Title	Credits	Grade/Sem
First Year			
Fall			
DENT 110	Theory of Infection Control and Disease Prevention *+.	1	_____
DENT 115	Head, Neck, and Oral Anatomy *+.	3	_____
DENT 116	Dental Office Management *+.	2	_____
DENT 119	Dental Anatomy *+.	1	_____
DENT 122	Radiology I/Lab *+.	2	_____
DENT 123	Chairside Theory and Practice I *+.	4	_____
DENT 126	Radiology I Enhancement *+.	1	_____
WRIT 101	College Writing I **+.	3	_____
Credits		17	

Spring			
DENT 124	Chairside Theory and Practice II *,+	5	_____
DENT 125	Radiology II/Lab *,+	2	_____
DENT 140	Dental Sciences/ Preventive Dentistry *,+	4	_____
DENT 145	Dental Specialties *,+	3	_____
M 105	Contemporary Mathematics (OR any math course in the MUS Core) **,+	3-4	_____
Credits		17-18	
Summer			
DENT 195	Clinical Office Practice and Seminar *,+	7	_____
Select one of the following:			
COMX 115	Introduction to Interpersonal Communication +	3	_____
PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology +	3	_____
Credits		10	
Total Credits		44-45	

+ A grade of C- or above is required for graduation.

* Indicates prerequisites needed.

** Placement in course(s) is determined by placement assessment.

All required Dental Assistant program coursework must be successfully (C- or better) completed prior to enrollment in DENT 195, with the exception of Intro to Interpersonal Communication or General Psychology, which may be taken during the summer term.