



**GREAT FALLS
COLLEGE**
MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY

DENTAL ASSISTANT *Program*

**Student Information and
Application Packet**

Fall 2024



Updated Feb. 14, 2024, for Fall 2024 Intake
(Application is subject to change year to year)



Dear Prospective Dental Assistant Student,

I am pleased by your interest in the Dental Assistant program at Great Falls College MSU. I graduated from this Dental Assistant program in 1987 and have found dental assisting to be a very rewarding career. In the coming years the demand for skilled dental assistants is expected to rise significantly. In fact, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, job openings for Dental Assistants are expected to increase by 7% in the next few years.

Great Falls College MSU's Dental Assistant program is accredited through the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), and upon graduation from the program, students are eligible to sit for the Dental Assisting National Board certification exam to become a nationally Certified Dental Assistant (CDA.) In addition to general chairside assisting duties, graduates are qualified to perform all functions allowed by the Montana Board of Dentistry rules, including (but not limited to) taking oral radiographs, taking preliminary dental impressions, performing coronal polishing, placing dental sealants, performing topical fluoride treatments, placing dental dams, and fabricating temporary crowns.

The Dental Assistant program has a limited enrollment capacity. **Eighteen new students are enrolled in the fall of each year.** The small class size is advantageous to students, allowing them more individualized attention and more opportunity for hands-on experience. The Dental Assistant program selects students on a first come, first served basis from the pool of completed applications received by the application priority deadline. In addition to a traditional delivery option, a hybrid delivery option has been developed for students outside of the Great Falls area who are unable to relocate full-time. If you are interested in this option, please contact the college recruiter or me for more information.

Information regarding the profession and the program, as well as application materials for fall 2024 entry are enclosed in this packet. **Please read the materials carefully.** For additional information, answers to specific questions, or to set up an appointment please contact Great Falls College Student Central at (406) 268-3700 or Robin Williams, Dental Assistant Program Director at (406) 771-4351.

Sincerely,

Robin R. Williams, MS, CDA
Director, Dental Assistant Program
Great Falls College Montana State University
2100 16th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405
(406)771-4351
rwilliams@gfcmsu.edu

**GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
DENTAL ASSISTANT
ONE-YEAR CERTIFICATE OF APPLIED SCIENCE PROGRAM**

Job Description and Occupational Outlook

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. The Dental Assistant performs a wide variety of tasks requiring both interpersonal and technical skill. Most of the time, Dental Assistants work clinically with the dentist delivering patient care; although, at times they may also work independently or in the business aspect of the dental office.

The dental assisting profession provides a rewarding career in service to the public. It calls for individuals who are flexible, responsible, intelligent, and caring. General dentists or dental specialists employ most Dental Assistants; however, other opportunities for employment exist in public health settings, insurance or supply companies, and educational institutions. Because dentists often employ two or three Dental Assistants, employment opportunities are excellent. The approximate average hourly wage for most entry-level Dental Assistant graduates in Montana is currently \$17.13 - \$22.44 , with a mean annual salary of \$40,670 (https://lmi.mt.gov/_docs/Publications/LMI-Pubs/Labor-Market-Publications/OEWS-2022-Pub.pdf) National data can be found at: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare>). Various benefit packages may be available, depending on location and demand factors.

Program Description and Expectations

The Great Falls College MSU Dental Assistant program is a one-year (11 month) limited-enrollment program accepting up to 18 students each year. Interested students must complete a current application to the program (**separate from the institution's application**) for acceptance and are urged to contact Student Central or advisors for student advising specific to program admission requirements. Following acceptance to the program, the Dental Assistant program is three semesters in length, concluding with a summer semester in which students are enrolled in full-time clinical practice. Dental Assistant program students receive their training through a variety of methods including classroom lecture, practice mock procedures, actual clinical experience in selected clinical sites, and service-learning activities. All Dental Assistant program coursework must be completed with a "C-" or better to continue in and/or graduate from the program. All Dental Assistant program dental-specific coursework must be successfully completed prior to enrollment in DENT 195 Clinical Practice and Seminar. Students will also be required to purchase uniform attire, pay for their certification examination, and provide their own transportation and lodging costs (if necessary) during clinical office practice.

Students can expect to commit to a full week at Great Falls College MSU or clinical sites each week. Most dental courses also include assignments that require the students to commit time outside the scheduled class time to program duties, responsibilities, and community-based activities. Duties include clinical cleaning and maintenance as well as clinical rotations. These assignments are a required part of the dental curriculum, so personal activities will need to be scheduled around these responsibilities.

There are a variety of learning activities in and outside of regular class time within the program, which make for an exciting and challenging student experience. Students should read assigned material and complete any other assignments prior to class attendance. A good rule of thumb is that for every class hour, a student will spend *at least* 2 hours outside of class in preparation for class and/or completion of assignments.

The American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation accredits the Dental Assistant program at Great Falls College MSU. Ninety days prior to graduation, eligible students will apply to sit for the national certification examination administered by the Dental Assisting National Board to become Certified Dental Assistants upon program

completion. Program students are also strongly encouraged to become student members of the American Dental Assistants Association.

Graduates are also qualified to perform all functions allowed by the Montana Board of Dentistry. In addition to the college's admission requirements, program applicants must be certified in healthcare provider CPR (American Red Cross and American Heart Association are two of several instruction providers) and be current on all immunizations including the Hepatitis B series. In addition, students will need to meet specific immunization and background check requirements in order to participate in clinical activities at certain clinical site location options..

Program Goals

The Dental Assistant program will:

- I. Maintain an instructional curriculum that meets the standards of the American Dental Association Council on Dental Education and of the local dental community.
- II. Deliver relevant learning experiences and curriculum sequencing to assure graduates achieve adequate knowledge and skill to become Certified Dental Assistants and become employed in the field as entry-level Dental Assistants.

Technical Standards for the Dental Assistant Profession

We are providing a listing of our technical standards and exit criteria with this application so that all students will understand the broad scope of the program and its expectations.

To successfully complete the dental assistant program, students must demonstrate their competency in carrying out tasks necessary for safe and effective practice in the field, including:

1. Accurately perform dental assisting procedures such as positioning patients, setting up and operating dental equipment.
2. Accurately perform expanded function dental assisting procedures such as taking dental radiographs, dental sealant placement, coronal polishing, topical anesthetic placement, and using dental instruments in the oral cavity.
3. Accurately assess the condition of the oral cavity.
4. Maneuver patients and themselves within the dental clinic operatory & dental facility.
5. Effectively communicate and interact with faculty, staff, peers, patient/clients, families, and healthcare workers in a culturally sensitive manner.
6. Accurately perform CPR and other basic life support functions and assess medical emergencies in the clinical setting.
7. Consistently adhere to standard precautions for infection control by:
 - a. sterilizing and disinfecting contaminated equipment
 - b. sterilizing dental instruments
 - c. breaking down and setting up dental operatory for patient treatment
 - d. maintaining asepsis throughout patient treatment
8. Accurately document treatment information in patients' charts.
9. Accurately check quality of radiographic images.
10. Demonstrate understanding and adherence to the professional standards of the American Dental Assistants Association and the state of Montana.
11. Effectively communicate critical information in oral and/or written form to faculty, staff, peers, patients, families while adhering to HIPAA standards.

Copies of all program policies on safety and infection control are available to students and the public upon request at the Great Falls College MSU Dental Clinic office or through the program website.

Admission to Great Falls College MSU

Students must be admitted to the college and in good academic standing prior to the submission of the Dental Assistant program application. Dental Assistant program applications will not be reviewed until applicants have been admitted to Great Falls College MSU.

Acceptance to Great Falls College MSU requires a completed admissions application file. An application may be obtained by visiting the campus, calling the college Admissions Office (406-268-3700), or completing the online application at <https://admissions.gfmsu.edu/applynow.html>

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all requirements are met by the established deadline. Deadlines, guidelines, and policies apply equally to all students; thus, there can be no exceptions.

Dental Assistant Program Admissions Process

All eligibility forms and documents are enclosed in the Dental Assistant Program Information and Application Packet, Fall 2024.

The Dental Assistant Program Admissions Committee reviews submitted application packets. Although not required, it is recommended that students complete most, if not all, general education core coursework prior to entry into the Dental Assistant program. The **confirmed date** of submission (postmark or stamped receipt date) of a complete application packet will be the decisive factor for accepting up to 18 students to the program. Only students in Good Academic Standing will be eligible for program acceptance. The earliest documented receipt date will be given the highest priority and only complete applications will be accepted for evaluation purposes. **Please only submit copies of the original documents.**

The **complete** Dental Assistant program application must be submitted via mail or hand delivered to:

Great Falls College MSU Dental Clinic Coordinator
Dental Assistant Program
2100 16th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405

by **May 31, 2024** for priority selection to the program.

Priority applicants will be notified via e-mail of their admission acceptance by June 21, 2024 for Fall 2024 semester entry to the program. A 'letter of intent' will be enclosed and will need to be returned by the specified date. The Dental Assistant Program Admissions Committee will consider applications received after the priority deadline of May 31, 2024, if any of 18 admission positions remain open. Again, the earliest documented receipt date on complete applications will determine admission for any of these remaining openings.

Equal Opportunity Policy

Great Falls College MSU is committed to the provision of equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in all college programs and activities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), veteran status, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

The college's Equal Opportunity Officer is the Executive Director of Student Services, 2100 16th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405. Telephone: 406-771-4300.

Program Curriculum

Students who apply to the Dental Assistant program must place into the program-required math and writing courses (M 105 and WRIT 101 or 121). Students may also complete any or all of the general education coursework (non-DENT) prior to entry to the Dental Assistant program if they choose to do so, but the required general education courses may also be taken during the program. If you have any questions, please contact the Program Director. The program course sequence is as follows:

Fall Semester 2024

Course	Title	Credits
DENT 110	Theory of Infection Control & Disease Prevention	1
DENT 115	Head, Neck, & 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
Choose from one of the following:#		
WRIT 101**	College Writing I	
WRIT 121**	Intro to Technical Writing	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS		17

Spring Semester 2025

Course	Title	Credits
DENT 125*	RadiologyII/Lab	2
DENT 124*	Chairside Theory and Practice II	5
DENT 140*	Dental Sciences/Preventive Dentistry	4
DENT 145*	Dental Specialties	3
M 105**	Contemporary Mathematics or higher	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS		17

Summer Semester 2025

Course	Title	Credits
DENT 195*	Clinical Practice and Seminar	7
COMX 115	Intro to Interpersonal Communications OR	
PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology	3
TOTAL SEMESTER CREDITS		10

Total program credits (including general education coursework) 44 credits

* Indicates program prerequisite needed (see catalog for details)

Highlighted courses are new changes that will go into effect Fall 2024, pending CODA approval.

Statement about Disability Services

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Instructors must receive an official letter from the Academic Success and Accessibility Office in order to provide accommodations. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Success and Accessibility or call 406-771-4311 to schedule an appointment.

<http://students.gfcmsu.edu/disabilityservices/index.html>

Information Regarding Transferable Courses

Coursework taken at other educational institutions may be designated as equivalent courses for Great Falls College MSU. For a current listing of approved equivalent courses, visit the Transfer Guide under Student Information at:

https://prodmyinfo.montana.edu/pls/gfagent/hwzkxfer.p_selstate

If you have additional questions about transferability of courses, send a written request for evaluation of your prior transcripts to the Registrar at Great Falls College MSU. Please include appropriate course descriptions and official transcripts from former colleges with your request for evaluation. All transfer work has to be from an [appropriately-accredited](#) institution.

Registrar's Office
Great Falls College MSU
2100 16th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405
406-771-5128

Dental Assistant Program Expenses

The Dental Assistant program is a relatively expensive program. Students should begin planning early for financial aid or other arrangements to meet their educational needs. The college offers students a variety of opportunities to participate in fundraising efforts; however, it is recommended that a student not rely on these funds to meet educational expenses.

Beyond tuition and fees, students will be required to purchase the following:

- Books, classroom, & clinic supplies (approx. \$1330)
- Two professional uniforms (approx. \$250)
- Comfortable, professional shoes
- Certification examination fee (approx. \$425)
- Student medical insurance (approx. \$3700)
- Transportation and lodging for hybrid option students and distant clinical experience or service-learning sites, if applicable

Student Health Insurance

Program students entering the clinic setting are strongly advised to carry their own medical health insurance. Students will be financially responsible for their health care if they become ill or injured in the clinical setting.

Student Health Insurance Option (*Subject to change*)

All Great Falls College MSU students enrolled for 6 or more credits are required to have health insurance. For students without coverage, Great Falls College MSU offers a program developed especially for students by Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Montana. This plan provides coverage for injuries and illnesses on or off campus. Please contact Student Central for more information. **Please see <http://students.gfcmsu.edu/insurance.html> for more information.**

Student Central, Great Falls College MSU, 2100 16th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT Phone: 406-771-4324

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**Great Falls College Montana State University
Dental Assistant Program
APPLICATION PACKET COVER & CHECK-OFF SHEET**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ST _____ Zip Code _____

TELEPHONE (Home) _____ (Cell) _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

Great Falls College MSU STUDENT ID NUMBER: _____

Preferred Program Option:

_____ On-Campus Option

_____ Hybrid Delivery Option (see page 13)

Check-off List

√	Item
	Application Packet Cover & Check-off sheet (<i>personal information must be complete and legible</i>) (page 8)
	Completed Admissions File. A completed admissions file includes a completed application, copies of high school/GED/HiSET transcripts or diplomas, proof of 2 MMR shots, and completion of placement testing or submit official college transcript(s) verifying placement. Complete admissions files will be verified by the Registrar’s Office and applicants with incomplete files will not be admitted to the program. Students are encouraged to check with the Admissions Office to confirm that their admissions file is complete. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send official transcripts to Great Falls College MSU Registrar – <i>do not include in program application packet</i> • If you are already attending Great Falls College MSU, you are already admitted.
	In Good Academic Standing All students must be in good academic standing which means they are not on academic probation/warning OR academic probation/warning continued, OR academic suspension. Good academic standing will be verified by the registrar and any applicants who are not in good academic standing will not be admitted to the program. Students are encouraged to check with the Registrar’s or Admissions Office to confirm that they are in good academic standing.
	Completed Student Immunization and Verification form (page 9)
	Photocopy of current CPR certification card (must be <i>Healthcare Provider CPR</i> or equivalent) Applications can be submitted with a copy of a CPR class registration receipt before the course has been completed, but a copy of your official CPR certification card must be provided to the program director prior to the start of Fall 2024 classes.
	Completed a meeting with Program Director, list date completed: _____ Please schedule a face-to-face or phone meeting: Robin Williams (406) 771-4351 at Great Falls College MSU 2100 16th Ave S Great Falls, MT
	Completed Job Shadow Experience Verification Form (<i>details for Job Shadow experience follow on pages 10-12</i>)

GREAT FALLS COLLEGE MSU
Dental Assistant Student Immunization and Verification Form

Name _____

**IMMUNIZATIONS: PLEASE LIST DATES and
provide proper documentation of the following:**

Measles, Mumps, Rubella 1) _____ 1) _____ Diphtheria _____

Tetanus (within last 7-10 years) _____

Hepatitis B Series dates (proof of test results also required)

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

Hepatitis B Titer _____ (Optional, but strongly recommended by OSHA, CDC, and Great Falls College MSU)

VERIFY THE FOLLOWING

	YES	NO	Initials
CPR for Health Care Providers verification, completed and current upon admission: <i>Online courses are not accepted.</i> (Photocopy of certification card, showing applicant's name, card expiration date, and instructor's signature).			
I have read the Technical Standards in the program of application.			
I have provided/attached proof of all immunizations or test results required.*			

*** Clinical/practicum/internship sites may require other documentation/proof of vaccination besides those required by the college or this program.**

JOB SHADOW INSTRUCTIONS

In order to ensure that you are aware of what is involved in the job of a dental assistant, we require that you complete a job shadow experience prior to application. This experience should be carried out **with a dental assistant** at the **general** dental office/clinic of your choice. You should select a facility large enough to provide you with a full range of dental procedures. You are required to complete a minimum of **four (4) hours** of observation time. You are encouraged to ask the individuals you shadow pertinent questions related to dentistry and observe as many procedures as possible. It is essential that you become aware of what you will be participating in if you are accepted to the Dental Assistant program. Fill out the included confidentiality statement prior to your job shadow and provide it to the facility personnel when you arrive for your job shadow. *The confidentiality statement remains at the dental office for their records.* After you have completed your job shadow, have the staff member(s) that you observed complete and sign the attached Job Shadow form. Include the completed form in your application packet for the Dental Assistant program at Great Falls College MSU.

When preparing for your job shadow experience, be mindful of the image you are presenting.

- Dress professionally. No blue jeans, low-cut tops or open toe shoes.
- Minimize odors such as perfume, tobacco smoke, etc.
- Chewing gum is not appropriate during your job shadow experience.
- Minimal jewelry should be worn (ex: a watch, wedding set, and one pair of earrings.)



**Great Falls College Montana State University
Dental Assistant Program
JOB SHADOW VERIFICATION**

The individual who is providing this form is in the process of creating an application to the Dental Assistant program at Great Falls College Montana State University. We feel that it is essential that all applicants are aware of what is involved in the job performance of a dental assistant. We request that you have this individual observe your employed dental assistants for as many different procedures as possible in your office/clinic. The student will document on this form which procedures they were able to observe. If you have any questions regarding this request or the form, please feel free to call the individual listed below. We thank you for your assistance in providing this opportunity for this applicant. **Please return the completed form to the applicant.**

APPLICANT NAME: _____

DATE OF OBSERVATION: _____

TIME OF OBSERVATION: _____

Dental Office/Clinic OBSERVED: _____

Please legibly print name(s) of the dental practitioner(s) observed:

PROCEDURES OBSERVED: _____

Dentist/Dental Assistant SIGNATURE: _____

If you have any questions, please contact: Robin Williams (406)771-4351



**Great Falls College MSU
Dental Assistant Program
JOB SHADOW
Confidentiality Statement
(Form to be left with the facility)**

I thank you for this opportunity to job shadow in your facility. I understand that everything that I observe, hear, or read during this time **must be kept confidential** to protect patient privacy. By signing below, I agree to keep this information confidential while at your facility and afterward.

Healthcare Observer/Student: _____
Please Print Name

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Hybrid Delivery Option

Students living 30 or more miles from the Great Falls College MSU campus have the option of applying for the hybrid delivery option for the program. Hybrid delivery students attend classes in real-time via 2-way video conferencing and attend on-campus lab and clinic sessions 2-3 times per month during the fall and spring semesters. Summer clinical rotations are completed in the student's local area.

Dental Assistant program hybrid delivery students must be on campus for:

- Dental Assistant program orientation (1 full day)
- Dental Assistant program hybrid student orientation (1 full day)
- DENT 122, DENT 125, DENT 123, DENT 124 laboratory sessions 2-3 times per month. Tentatively scheduled for 8 AM- 8 PM Friday and 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM on Saturday.

Checklist for hybrid option qualification:

- Hybrid option students **MUST** live 30 or more miles from the Great Falls College MSU campus,
- Hybrid option students **MUST** attend lecture sessions through video conferencing, at the same time on-campus lectures are scheduled, in a location with no distractions.
- Hybrid option students **MUST** have a reliable computer with audio and video capability and access to a printer-scanner. Chromebooks are not compatible with testing applications used in the program. If you have a Chromebook, you must have access to a computer that is compatible with the application used for quizzes and exams.
- Students are required to have their video on during the majority of lecture time and participate in lecture discussions using audio. Because of this, students **MUST** have easily accessible and reliable high-speed internet access. This is vital for hybrid delivery option success.
- Hybrid option students **MUST** have reliable transportation and lodging for all mandatory on-campus sessions. Transportation should be appropriate for safe winter travel.
- Hybrid option students **MUST** have access to an approved test proctor and test proctor site,

Questions regarding the Dental Assistant program hybrid delivery option should be directed to the Dental Assistant program director, Robin Williams. Phone: 406-771-4351 or rwilliams@gfcmu.edu