



BISMARCK
STATE COLLEGE

**North Dakota's
Polytechnic Institution**

DENTAL PATHWAYS

Qualified Dental Assisting (QDA) Program Frequent Asked Questions

This FAQ is designed for prospective students exploring the Qualified Dental Assisting (QDA) Program offered through Bismarck State College Continuing Education. Many questions about clinical training, documentation, and competencies are explained in detail after enrollment in the QDA Student Success and Reference Guide.

PROGRAM BASICS

DO I NEED TO BE A BSC STUDENT TO ENROLL?

- No. This is a non-credit continuing education program and does not require admission to BSC, placement testing, or immunization records submitted to the college.
- Clinical sites may require proof of certain immunizations before you begin on-the-job training.

WHAT ARE THE AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROGRAM?

- Students must be 18 years of age or older at the time of enrollment.

HOW SOON CAN I ENROLL?

- Open enrollment, students can enroll at any time.

WHAT COMPUTER OR TECHNOLOGY DO I NEED?

- All coursework is completed online through Bismarck State College's learning management system, Blackboard Ultra.
- Chromebooks, iPads, and mobile devices do not support required course functions. A laptop or desktop computer is strongly recommended.

DOES COMPLETING THE PROGRAM MEAN I AM LICENSED?

- No. Completing the program provides documentation that you completed a board-approved equivalent course.
- Students must still apply for licensure through the North Dakota Board of Dental Examiners (NDBDE) and meet all licensing requirements.

DOES COMPLETING THE PROGRAM GUARANTEE A JOB?

- No. BSC does not place students for permanent employment.
- However, students may receive job offers from their clinical sites or through contacts made during training.



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TIME COMMITMENT AND COURSEWORK

HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK SHOULD I PLAN FOR?

- The program is self-paced, but most students balance 10–20 hours per week between coursework and clinical training.
- Clinical hours must take place during regular clinic business hours, typically Monday–Friday.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

- **Full QDA:** Self-paced + 300 hours of chairside + radiograph submissions (within 1-year of enrollment)
- **LRR:** Self-paced + radiograph submissions (within 6-months of enrollment)
- **LRR to QDA:** Self-paced + 300 hours of chairside (within 6-months of enrollment)

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T FINISH ON TIME?

- Students who do not complete all program requirements within their 1-year (QDA) or 6-month (LRR/LRR-to-QDA) enrollment period must re-enroll and repay course fees to continue.

WILL THE ONLINE COURSE TEACH ME ALL CHAIR SIDE SKILLS?

- No. The online coursework provides the foundational knowledge required for dental assisting, including infection control, dental anatomy, and radiology safety.
- Many hands-on assisting skills are learned during on-the-job clinical training under the supervision of a dentist or experienced dental team members.

CLINICAL REQUIREMENTS

CAN I START MY CLINICAL HOURS RIGHT AWAY?

- Yes, as soon as the required clinical site paperwork is submitted and approved by the program coordinator.
- Students may complete coursework and clinical hours at the same time.

CAN I USE CLINICAL HOURS I EARNED BEFORE ENROLLING?

- Possibly. Up to 100 hours earned within one year prior to enrollment may be considered, if signed by a supervising dentist.
- At least two-thirds of your total 300 hours must be completed after enrollment at the recommendation of the NDBDE.

WHAT COUNTS TOWARD MY 300 HOURS?

- Hours must be clinical in nature and involve hands-on patient care.

- Front desk work, sterilization-only roles, or extended observation do not count.

WHAT IF MY CLINICAL SITE IS A SPECIALTY OFFICE?

- Specialty offices are allowed, but you must still complete all required competencies.
- If your site cannot provide certain radiographs, they may need to arrange an alternative location where you can complete them.

CAN I COMPLETE HOURS IN MORE THAN ONE DENTAL OFFICE?

- Yes. Clinical hours and radiology competencies may be completed in multiple dental offices. A separate verification and competency form must be completed for each site.

DO I NEED TO NOTIFY THE PROGRAM IF MY CLINICAL SITE OR JOB CHANGES?

- Yes. Students must notify the program coordinator if there is a change in employment, supervising dentist, or clinical training site.
- This ensures documentation and clinical agreements remain accurate.

CAN MY CLINICAL HOURS BE PAID OR UNPAID?

- Some students are paid employees of the dental office while completing training, while others complete unpaid internship hours.
- Regardless of registration pathway compensation is determined by the dental clinic and is not required by the program.

WHO PROVIDES INSURANCE COVERAGE DURING CLINICAL TRAINING?

- **Unpaid Non-Sponsored students:** Will be covered under Bismarck State College liability insurance and Workforce Safety & Insurance (WSI) if proper paperwork is completed prior to a student starting on-the-job training hours.
- **Paid employees:** Are covered under their employer's liability insurance and WSI.
- **Dentist Sponsored students:** Are the responsibility of the dental office in which they registered under regardless of compensation.

WHAT RADIOLOGY REQUIREMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED?

Students must successfully complete and submit the following radiographic competencies:

- Two Full Mouth Series (FMX)
- One Bitewing Series
- One Panoramic Radiograph

All radiographs must be taken during the student's enrollment period and verified by a supervising dentist.



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PATHWAYS AND REGISTRATION OPTIONS

DO I NEED PRIOR DENTAL EXPERIENCE?

- No. Many students enter the non-sponsored pathway with no prior dental experience.
- Students with dental experience may choose the dentist-sponsored pathway if they are currently employed or working in a North Dakota dental office.

WHICH PATHWAY IS RIGHT FOR ME?

- **Full QDA Program:** The full program has two pathways; both containing the same coursework.
 - Dentist Sponsored for those who are working in a dental clinic or have secured a site to complete internship requirements
 - Non-Sponsored for those who need assistance finding an internship site
- **Limited Radiology Registrant (LRR) Course:** Start with the Radiology-only portion of the program.
 - Requires Dentist Sponsorship
- **LRR to QDA Program:** Complete the remaining two modules of the program.
 - Requires Dentist Sponsorship

HOW DO I FIND A CLINICAL SITE?

- **Dentist Sponsored Pathway:** Designed for students who are already working in a dental office or have a dental office willing to host them for their on-the job training hours.
- **Non-Sponsored Pathway:** If you don't have a dental clinic lined up, no worries! Bismarck State College can help facilitate placement with an approved North Dakota dental office for completion of the required chairside training hours. Placement is based on available opportunities and cannot be guaranteed in a specific office, location, or timeframe.

WHAT DOES "DENTIST SPONSORED" MEAN?

- Sponsorship confirms the dental office agrees to serve as the student's primary clinical training site.
- Sponsorship does not require the clinic to pay tuition or wages, although some offices choose to do so.

LOCATION, LICENSING AND TRANSFERABILITY

CAN I COMPLETE THE PROGRAM IF I LIVE OUTSIDE NORTH DAKOTA?

- Coursework can be completed from anywhere, but all clinical hours must take place under a North Dakota licensed dentist in a dental office located in North Dakota.
- BSC cannot guarantee placement in specific cities or regions.

CAN THIS PROGRAM TRANSFER TO OTHER STATES?

- The QDA credential is specific to North Dakota.
- Dental assisting regulations vary by state.
- Students planning to work outside North Dakota should contact their state dental board to verify requirements.

CAN BSC GUARANTEE A CLINICAL SITE IN MY HOMETOWN?

- Clinical placement depends on clinic availability, staffing, and patient volume.
- BSC cannot guarantee placement in a specific city or region. Students should be prepared to travel within the state of North Dakota if needed.

SUPPLIES

DO I NEED TO BUY TEXTBOOKS OR CLINIC SUPPLIES?

- Yes. Required course materials include the *Modern Dental Assisting* textbook, available for purchase through the BSC Bookstore.
- Students should also confirm uniform and supply expectations directly with their host clinic. Items such as scrubs, closed-toe shoes, and a lab jacket are typically the student's responsibility.

ARE HEALTH REQUIREMENTS DETERMINED BY BSC?

- No. Health requirements such as immunizations, TB testing, or vaccination documentation are determined by the individual clinical site, not Bismarck State College.
- Students must comply with the policies of the clinic where they complete their on-the-job training hours.

PROGRAM SUPPORT

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH TECHNICAL ISSUES?

- For Blackboard or course access issues, contact:
 - BSC Distance Learning Department at 701-224-5715.
 - Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (CST).
- For program or enrollment questions, contact:
 - BSC Continuing Education at 701-224-5600.
 - Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (CST).

IS CPR A REQUIREMENT OF THE PROGRAM?

- CPR certification is not required to complete the QDA program; however, it may be required by your host clinical site.
- CPR certification is required prior to applying for Qualified Dental Assistant (QDA) licensure through the North Dakota Board of Dental Examiners (NDBDE).

WHO CERTIFIES THE COURSE?

- This program has been approved by the North Dakota Board of Dental Examiners. This program meets the educational requirements for Qualified Dental Assisting licensure in North Dakota.

WHAT IF I NEED HELP FINDING A CLINICAL SITE?

- Students enrolled in the non-sponsored pathway will receive assistance from BSC in identifying potential clinical training opportunities.
- Final placement depends on clinic availability, patient volume, and approval by the dental office.

PAYMENT

CAN I USE FINANCIAL AID:

- These non-credit courses are not eligible for financial aid.
- The QDA programs are WIOA approved. Contact your nearest job service workforce center and speak with a WIOA advisor to determine if you're eligible. [Workforce Centers | Job Service North Dakota](#)

DO I NEED TO PAY WHEN I REGISTER?

- Your registration and payment must be provided together in one transaction.
 - Registration available 24/7 online at: [Dental Classes - Bismarck State College](#)
 - You may also register by phone, in person or by mail. If you need assistance, please contact BSC Continuing Education at 701-224-5600 or by email at bsc.training@bismarckstate.edu