Dental Assisting

SCHOOL OF HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Overview

Dental assistants are key players in the dental health team.

Our Dental Assisting program emphasizes patient-centered practices to enhance oral health and well-being and is tailored to ensure you're ready to work in various settings, including private practices, specialist offices, and community health centers.

In this program, you will:

- learn the principles of providing compassionate care that respects the individual needs of patients
- learn how to perform intra and extra-oral imaging
- perform laboratory procedures
- learn about infection prevention as well as control and safety protocols
- practice management skills.

You will combine classroom theory with hands-on learning in a dental clinic setting at SAIT campus, as well as complete a practicum to apply your dentistry assistant skills in a real-world dental office environment.

At graduation, you will emerge as a skilled dental assistant, ready to positively impact patient health and confidently step into your professional role to meet the demands of the dental industry.

Traits, skills and aptitudes

Dental assistants tend to be methodical, social and objective.

You need:

- attention to detail
- fine motor skills
- the ability to put patients at ease
- good communication and people skills
- the ability to remain calm under pressure
- critical thinking skills
- the ability to be organized and manage time well
- to be comfortable sitting for long periods
- the ability to work as part of a team
- professionalism and the ability to regulate your emotions
- to be comfortable around human blood and tissue
- knowledge of disease transmission and infection control.

Dental assistants must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) for long periods. This includes tolerating latex and other disinfection chemicals.

Some dental assistants work extended hours and shifts, including nights and weekends.

You are strongly encouraged to refer to the ALIS website for career, learning, and employment information for dental assistants to ensure you can successfully meet the occupational requirements for the program and profession.

SAIT program pathways

Graduates of SAIT's Pre-Health Sciences program may meet the admission requirements for this program.

Practicum, Co-op and Work Integrated Learning

In this program, you will complete a required practicum in a dental office, where you will apply the skills you have learned in class in a

real-world setting.

You will be assigned practicum placements with consideration given to your preference of location. However, due to limited availability in Calgary, it might be necessary for you to travel or relocate outside the city.

The healthcare field has a strong focus on health, wellness, and fitness to practice due to the demanding nature of the work and Occupational Health and Safety requirements. As such, special considerations will not be granted based on individual circumstances or preferences, except those stated as protected grounds when an accommodation has been approved.

In compliance with the practica agreements with our clinical partners, you will be required to provide specific documentation before you can participate in your practicum. Find out what requirements you need for this program.

Your pre-practicum requirements and dental health examinations are required by the first day of class.

Accreditations, designations and certifications

This program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of Canada.

You must write the National Dental Assisting Examining Board (NDAEB) exam to be registered in Alberta. Graduates are eligible to obtain a provisional licence upon completion of the program.

Credentials

Upon successful completion of this program, you'll be awarded a SAIT Dental Assisting certificate.

Admission requirements

Applicants educated in Canada

All applicants must demonstrate English language proficiency and have passed the following course requirements or equivalents, with an overall average of at least 60%:

- Math 30-1 or Math 30-2, and
- English Language Arts 30-1 or English Language Arts 30-2, and
- Biology 30, and
- Chemistry 30

SAIT accepts high school course equivalents for admission for applicants educated outside Alberta.

Applicants educated outside of Canada

All applicants who were educated outside of Canada must demonstrate English language proficiency and provide proof they meet the program admission requirements with an international document assessment. Find accepted educational documents and assessment options.

SAIT may also accept courses completed at certain international post-secondary institutions.

Costs

2026/27 tuition and fees

The following estimated costs are effective as of July 1, 2026.

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees is based on the suggested schedule of study. Following a modified schedule will impact the fees you pay per semester and may alter final costs.

Domestic Students

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year

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1	3	$10,370.43	$2,265.50*	$12,635.93
			Total cost:	**$12,635.93**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for domestic students is based on the recommended course load per year.

If you began this program prior to July 2026, the following tuition and fees apply:

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	3	$8,788.50	$2,265.50*	$11,054
			Total cost:	**$11,054**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for domestic students is based on the recommended course load per year.

*You will be ineligible for the UPass during your third practicum semester.

Why are there two tuition rates for domestic students? Learn more about ETI adjustments.

International Students

The program total is based on the estimated amount you will pay if you enter this program during the 2026/27 academic year. The program total amount listed on your letter of admission may appear higher. This amount is your maximum tuition guarantee for the program. SAIT will not exceed this maximum, regardless of changes in tuition and fees between academic years.

Year	Number of semesters	Tuition fees	Additional fees	Total per year
1	3	$25,029	$2,265.50*	$27,294.50
			Total cost:	**$27,294.50**

The estimated total cost of tuition and fees for international students is based on the recommended course load per year.

*You will be ineligible for the UPass during your third practicum semester.

Books and Supplies

Books and supplies are approximately $1,000 - $1,500 per full-time year.

This is a bring-your-own-device program with a standard computer hardware and software requirement. See the specific requirements on our computers and laptops page. An Apple or Windows laptop is required, and tablets or phones are not suitable alternatives.

Find your booklist on the SAIT Bookstore's website. Booklists are created by semester and available approximately two weeks before classes begin.

Required personal protective equipment (PPE) and uniform

The industry-approved PPE and uniform you'll need will be discussed during your orientation. Depending on your requirements, these will cost $100 or more.

Dental assistants must wear safety glasses or face shields during dental procedures. Safety glasses must have solid side shields and cannot be regular prescription glasses. Prescription lenses can be placed in safety glass frames, or you can wear safety glasses which fit over prescription glasses or a face shield over safety glasses.

Additional fees

- A fee is associated with obtaining a police information check, including a vulnerable sector check, payable to the police or the

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

- The School of Health and Public Safety strongly recommends that students meet Alberta Health Services' Standard for Immunization of Post-Secondary Health Care Students. Fees for completing immunization requirements start at $85, however, may increase, depending on your vaccination history, and any new immunizations you choose to acquire.
- A fee of approximately $50 to $100 is associated with an electronic student permit checking submission required for clinical practicum placements, payable to Synergy Gateway through the Verified software platform.
- Basic Life Support (BLS) Provider (Level C) CPR annual updates are required.
- You are responsible for additional expenses related to your practicum, including pre-practicum requirements and relocation costs to practicum sites outside of Calgary.
- The National Dental Assisting Examining Board exam fee is approximately $730. The annual dues of the College of Alberta Dental Assistants are approximately $300.