



# Dental Assisting Functions List

*The following is a list of 70 dental assisting tasks developed by the ADA/DANB Alliance in the course of its research. These selected tasks were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.*

Functions in each state that correspond to the national Core Competencies Study functions are **numbered** in the Career Ladder Template, using language directly from the state's dental practice act. Functions listed with **bullets** in the *Career Ladder Template* are part of the state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB research.

1. Perform mouth mirror inspection of the oral cavity
2. Chart existing restorations or conditions
3. Phone in prescriptions at the direction of the dentist
4. Receive and prepare patients for treatment, including seating, positioning chair, and placing napkin
5. Complete laboratory authorization forms
6. Place and remove retraction cord
7. Perform routine maintenance of dental equipment
8. Monitor and respond to post-surgical bleeding
9. Perform coronal polishing procedures
10. Apply effective communication techniques with a variety of patients
11. Transfer dental instruments
12. Place amalgam for condensation by the dentist
13. Remove sutures
14. Dry canals
15. Tie in archwires
16. Demonstrate knowledge of ethics/jurisprudence/patient confidentiality
17. Identify features of rotary instruments
18. Apply topical fluoride
19. Select and manipulate gypsums and waxes
20. Perform supragingival scaling
21. Mix dental materials
22. Expose radiographs
23. Evaluate radiographs for diagnostic quality
24. Provide patient preventive education and oral hygiene instruction
25. Perform sterilization and disinfection procedures
26. Provide pre- and post-operative instructions
27. Place and remove dental dam
28. Pour, trim, and evaluate the quality of diagnostic casts
29. Size and place orthodontic bands and brackets
30. Using the concepts of four-handed dentistry, assist with basic restorative procedures, including prosthodontics and restorative dentistry
31. Identify intraoral anatomy
32. Demonstrate understanding of the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard
33. Place, cure and finish composite resin restorations
34. Place liners and bases
35. Place periodontal dressings
36. Demonstrate understanding of the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard
37. Take and record vital signs
38. Monitor vital signs
39. Clean and polish removable appliances and prostheses
40. Apply pit and fissure sealants
41. Prepare procedural trays/armamentaria set-ups
42. Place orthodontic separators
43. Size and fit stainless steel crowns
44. Take preliminary impressions
45. Place and remove matrix bands
46. Take final impressions
47. Fabricate and place temporary crowns
48. Maintain field of operation during dental procedures through the use of retraction, suction, irrigation, drying, placing and removing cotton rolls, etc.
49. Perform vitality tests
50. Place temporary fillings
51. Carve amalgams
52. Process dental radiographs
53. Mount and label dental radiographs
54. Remove temporary crowns and cements
55. Remove temporary fillings
56. Apply topical anesthetic to the injection site
57. Demonstrate understanding of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines
58. Using the concepts of four-handed dentistry, assist with basic intraoral surgical procedures, including extractions, periodontics, endodontics, and implants
59. Monitor nitrous oxide/oxygen analgesia
60. Maintain emergency kit
61. Remove permanent cement from supragingival surfaces
62. Remove periodontal dressings
63. Place post-extraction dressings
64. Fabricate custom trays, to include impression and bleaching trays, and athletic mouthguards
65. Recognize basic medical emergencies
66. Recognize basic dental emergencies
67. Respond to basic medical emergencies
68. Respond to basic dental emergencies
69. Remove post-extraction dressings
70. Place stainless steel crown



## Levels of Supervision

An important consideration in the discussion of the delegation of tasks to dental assistants is that of supervision of dental assistants by their dentist-employers. The American Dental Association (ADA) has identified four levels of supervision for dental auxiliaries, including dental assistants, which it defines in its “Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel,” (2006: 307) which is part of its *Current Policies*, last updated in 2007. Note that “allied dental personnel” refers to dental assistants, dental hygienists and dental laboratory technicians.

The four levels of supervision defined by the ADA are as follows:

**Personal supervision:** A dentist is personally operating on a patient and authorizes the allied dental personnel to aid treatment by concurrently performing a supportive procedure.

**Direct supervision:** A dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, personally diagnoses the condition to be treated, personally authorizes the procedures, and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel and, before dismissal of the patient, evaluates the performance of the allied dental personnel.

**Indirect supervision:** A dentist is in the dental office or treatment facility, has personally diagnosed the condition to be treated, authorizes the procedures, and remains in the dental office or treatment facility while the procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

**General supervision:** A dentist is not required to be in the dental office or treatment facility when procedures are being performed by the allied dental personnel, but has personally diagnosed the condition to be treated, has personally authorized the procedures and will evaluate the performance of the allied dental personnel.

Furthermore, the ADA’s Comprehensive Policy Statement on Allied Dental Personnel stipulates that intraoral expanded functions should be performed by allied dental personnel “only under the direct supervision of a dentist.”

Because the study of dental assisting core competencies undertaken by the ADAA/DANB Alliance did not address the question of supervision, the ADAA/DANB Alliance does not make any recommendations as to the levels of supervision that should be necessary for the delegation of the tasks included in the study to dental assistants. However, the ADAA/DANB Alliance believes it is important to call attention to the fact that, while the ADA has defined supervision levels in the aforementioned policy statement, which governs the ADA’s own activities and the activities of its members, these definitions have not been uniformly adopted by the dental boards of every U.S. state or district.

**For the purposes of this volume, if a state’s dental practice act specifically defines levels of supervision, the state-specific definition is noted in the template.**



Dental Assisting National Board, Inc. (DANB)

444 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 900  
Chicago, IL 60611  
1-800-367-3262 or 312-642-3368  
Fax: 312-642-1475  
www.danb.org • danbmail@danb.org

Education/Training/ Credential Required	Job Title According to State of LA	Proposed Standardized National Job Titles (see below)	Radiography Requirements	Functions NOT Permitted by Dental Assistants in LA
<p>To perform <b>expanded functions</b> under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist in the state of Louisiana, a dental assistant must earn status as an <b>Expanded Duty Dental Assistant (EDDA)</b>.</p> <p>To qualify, one must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Graduate from a CODA-accredited dental assisting program, providing documentation that training was provided in all functions which EDDAs are allowed to perform. If a dental assistant's training is deemed inadequate, the assistant must undergo remediation in a Louisiana board-approved program <b>or</b> complete an expanded duty dental assistant program approved by the Louisiana State Board of Dentistry</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> A dental assistant who has been employed by a licensed, practicing dentist and has worked as a dental assistant prior to July 30, 1992, may continue performing the following expanded duties (under the direct, on-premises supervision of the dentist) without registering as an EDDA:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place and remove retraction cords</li> <li>Apply cavity liners, excluding capping of exposed pulpal tissue</li> <li>Place and remove periodontal dressings</li> <li>Place, wedge or remove matrices for restoration by the dentist</li> </ol>	<p>Expanded Duty Dental Assistant (EDDA)</p>	<p>Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)</p>	<p>To legally operate dental x-ray equipment and perform dental radiographic procedures in the state of Louisiana, a dental assistant <b>must</b> complete a course in x-ray function and safety approved by the Louisiana State Board of Dentistry and shall perform dental x-ray functions solely under the direct supervision of a licensed dentist who is on the premises of the dental office at the time.</p>	<p>The following functions are <b>not</b> permitted by any level of dental assistant:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The removal of calculus, deposits or accretions from the natural and restored surfaces of teeth or dental implants in the human mouth using hand, ultrasonic, sonic or air polishing instruments</li> <li>Final placement of orthodontic bands or brackets except in indirect bonding procedures in which the dentist has either performed the final placement of the brackets on the model or when the dentist has written a detailed prescription to the laboratory for placement of the bracket</li> <li>Placement or finishing of any final restoration</li> <li>The taking of an impression for a final fixed or removable restoration or prosthesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Periodontal screening and probing, or subgingival exploration for hard and soft deposits and sulcular irrigations</li> <li>Root planing or the smoothing and polishing of roughened root surfaces using hand, ultrasonic or sonic instruments</li> </ul> </li> <li>Placement and removal of antimicrobial agents</li> <li>Comprehensive examination or diagnosis and treatment planning</li> <li>A surgical or cutting procedure on hard or soft tissue including laser and micro abrasion reduction of tooth material</li> <li>Prescription of a drug, medication or work authorization</li> <li>Final placement and intraoral adjustment of a fixed appliance</li> <li>Final placement and intraoral or extraoral adjustment of a removable appliance</li> <li>Making of any intraoral occlusal adjustment</li> <li>Performance of direct pulp capping or pulpotomy</li> <li>Administration of a local anesthetic, parenteral, intravenous (IV), inhalation sedative agent or any general anesthetic agent</li> </ol>
<p>A <b>dental assistant</b> in the state of Louisiana may perform basic supportive dental procedures specified by the state dental practice act (see opposite page) under the supervision of a licensed dentist.</p> <p>There are no education or training requirements for this level of dental assisting.</p>	<p>Dental Assistant</p>	<p>DANB Certified Dental Assistant (CDA) or Registered Dental Assistant (RDA)</p> <p>Dental Assistant</p> <p>Entry Level Dental Assistant</p>	<p>The ADAA/DANB Alliance developed a listing of standardized job titles (left) based on its national Core Competencies Study conducted from 2002-2005.</p> <p>The same study utilized a list of 70 job functions which were determined to be representative of a broad range of dental assisting core competencies.</p> <p>Functions in this state that relate to the national DANB/ADAA Core Competencies Study are numbered to the right, using language directly from this state's dental practice act. (The numbers correspond to the study's task numbering system.)</p> <p>Functions listed with bullets are part of this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB/ADAA research.</p> <p>These state templates reflect the work being done by the ADAA/DANB Alliance to support a uniform national model for one set of dental assisting tasks, levels and requirements, which will serve as a viable career ladder for dental assistants.</p>	

Job Title  
According to  
State of LA

Allowable Functions  
(Functions with numbers relate specifically to Core Competency designations;  
functions with bullets are in this state's practice act but are not specific matches to DANB research)

Expanded  
Duty  
Dental  
Assistant  
(EDDA)

**Under Direct Supervision\***

- Any chairside dental act that a licensed dentist deems reasonable, using sound professional judgement. Such act must be performed properly and safely on the patient and must be reversible in nature.

**Note:** The Louisiana State Board of Dentistry only recognizes the Expanded Duty Dental Assistant (EDDA) Certificate earned through the EDDA course taught at the Louisiana State University (LSU) School of Dentistry and the University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM).

Dental  
Assistant

**With Direct, On-Premises Supervision\***

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1, 2. Chart existing restorations and missing teeth, floss teeth and make preliminary inspections of the mouth and teeth with a mouth mirror and floss only</p> <p>13, 69. Remove sutures, post-extraction dressing and surgical ligature ties</p> <p>15. Place or remove ligatures, cut and tuck ligatures, remove tension devices and any loose or broken bands or arch wires</p> <p>18. Apply topical fluorides following prophylaxis by a dentist or dental hygienist</p> <p>22, 52. Take and develop dental radiographs and intraoral photographs</p> | <p>24. Give intraoral instructions and demonstrations on oral hygiene procedures</p> <p>27. Apply and remove rubber dams</p> <p>30. Serve as the dentist's chair side assistant</p> <p>37. Take and record pulse, blood pressure and temperature</p> <p>39. Receive removable prostheses for cleaning or repair work</p> <p>42. Place or remove temporary orthodontic separating devices</p> <p>43. Place or remove preformed crowns or bands for determining size only when recommended by the dentist and only under his or her supervision</p> <p>44. Make preliminary study model and opposing model impressions</p> | <p>47, 54. Fabricate and remove interim crowns or bridges (interim meaning temporary while permanent restoration is being fabricated)</p> <p>54, 61. Remove cement from dental restorations and appliances, with hand instruments, limited to the clinical crown</p> <p>56. Apply non-aerosol topical anesthetics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply desensitizing agents</li> <li>• Apply non-endodontic oxygenating agents</li> <li>• Make dental plaque smears</li> <li>• Place a removable retaining device in the mouth of a patient</li> <li>• Remove final impressions</li> <li>• Condition teeth prior to placement or orthodontics bands or brackets</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

\*Direct Supervision: A licensed dentist personally diagnoses the condition to be treated; personally authorizes the procedures; is in the dental office or treatment facility during the performance of the authorized procedures; and, before dismissal of the patient, evaluates the performance of the dental assistant, expanded duty dental assistant, or dental hygienist.