

DENTAL ASSISTANT - FAQ

1 Is there a website with information?

<https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>

2 Who can I talk to about the program?

Elmer Gonzalez, Program Director, DASH 84F/(575) 528-7216/egonzalez@dacc.nmsu.edu
Rebecca Graves, DASH84H/(575) 528-7020/rgraves@dacc.nmsu.edu
Andrew Margarit, DASH 84C/(575)527-7653/Amargarit@dacc.nmsu.edu
Bonnie Rinkels, DASH 84B/(575)528-7072/Brinkels@dacc.nmsu.edu

3 In a nutshell, what does a student need in order to apply?

Successful applicants admitted to the program generally have a GPA of 3.0 or better.

4 How does repeating prerequisites apply to this program?

- a. If a student earns a grade of F in a prerequisite course and repeats the course, how is the new grade used toward consideration of acceptance into the program? Does the new grade replace the previous grade or is it averaged in with the F? What if the student repeats the course a second time?

The new grade replaces the F or the best grade is considered. The F isn't averaged into the GPA. A maximum of two repeat attempts are allowed.

- b. If a student earns a grade of D in a prerequisite course and repeats the course, how is the new grade used toward consideration of acceptance into the program? Does the new grade replace the previous grade or is it averaged in with the D? What if the student repeats the course a second time?

The new grade replaces the D or the best grade is considered. The D is not averaged into the GPA. A maximum of two repeat attempts are allowed.

- c. If a student earns a grade of C in a prerequisite course and repeats the course, how is the new grade used toward consideration of acceptance into the program? Does the new grade replace the previous grade or is it averaged in with the C? What if the student repeats the course a second time?

The new grade replaces the C or the best grade is considered. The C is not averaged into the GAP. A maximum of two repeat attempts are allowed.

- d. Is there a cap on the number of times a student can repeat a course before the student will no longer be considered?

Yes, two attempts. However, students admitted to the program are not allowed to repeat any of the courses within the Dental Assisting Program. If a student fails to meet minimum requirements, the student will be dismissed from the program and will need to re-apply to the program.

- e. Do any prerequisites or other courses have a time expiration? (Example: BIOL 1130G must be repeated if taken more than 7 years prior to admission into the program.) If so, what are these courses and how do the new grade(s) work into the selection process?

Pre-requisites must be taken within the time frame as set by the college course catalog effectiveness - 7 years on the average.

- f. How is transfer credit treated? Do you use the grade from the transcript where they previously attended and consider those grades or just take into consideration the CR, CD, or GR?

Original grade is used if presented on transcript - or cumulative GPA if available.

- g. Are students selected based on their prerequisite GPA alone, or a combination of their prerequisite and cumulative GPA?

Students are scored on both areas, cumulative GPA and pre-requisite GPA. This in turn is added to their essay score as well.

- 5 How does exercising the Adjusted Credit Option (ACO), affect student's application?**

Some selective admission programs add or deduct points for exercising the ACO. This program does not. Students and advisors should, however, be aware of the overall consequences of exercising the ACO. The policy is outlined under the Academic Regulations section of the current DACC catalog.

- 6 What kind of a salary do graduates earn?**

Pay: \$18 - \$25 per hour. Some offices may pay less per hour due to the fact that the positions include full benefits.

- 7 What grades are needed in order to graduate?**

Must maintain a "C" or better in all program courses. Must have earned at least a "C" in all prerequisite and co-requisite classes.

8 Are there any special exams that may be taken upon completion of the program?

In the state of New Mexico, dental assistants can become certified to perform the following expanded duties: radiology (taking x-rays), coronal polishing (polishing of teeth and removal of stains), fluoride treatments (the act of placing fluoride on a patient's teeth), and sealant placement (used to prevent decay). These certifications are obtained through the State Dental Board and are a portion of the Dental Assisting National Board Certification Exam.

9 Does having a felony/misdemeanor prevent students from applying?

Check with program to learn what restrictions apply. Students are required to have a national background check performed which may limit clinical site opportunities but will not exclude students from being accepted into the program.

10 Is there an application deadline?

The application is to be completed on the DACC Dental Programs website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>. Each year it becomes available on January 1, and must be completed by the March 15 deadline.

4/16/2026

11 How many students apply? How many are admitted?

Average number of students applying: 20 Admitted: 12

12 What is the average GPA of students accepted?

On average, students accepted in the program have a GPA of 3.0 or better

Admission process includes: submission of a packet with documentation/information. The following items are among the criteria considered in the selection of program applicants:

- 1) Overall college GPA
- 2) Prerequisite GPA
- 3) Completion of prerequisites/co-requisites
- 4) County of residence
- 5) Completion of essay on given topic

13 Is the program accredited?

The program does not hold specialized accreditation other than the accreditation provided by DACC by the Higher Learning Commission

14 Are there additional program costs?

See tuition costs in current DACC schedule.

Below are some estimated program costs:

National Board Fee	\$270
Scrubs and Shoes	\$200
Name Tag	\$10
Background Check	\$70

Books and supplies approximate costs

Used: \$700 New: \$1,000

15 Are there any special proficiencies students need to have?

None specified