

# Dentist: Alternative Careers

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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## 1. Dentist: Alternative Careers

You may find that your international training and experience as a dentist are not immediately accepted in B.C. The skills you have acquired as a dentist (detail oriented, fine motor coordination, finger dexterity, creativity, good communication skills) can be used in these alternative careers:

- Dental Assistant
- Dental Technician, Dental Laboratory Bench Worker
- Technical Sales Specialist

## Alternative Careers

### Dental Assistant (NOC 3411)

*Also look for these job titles: dental aide, dental clinical assistant, preventative dental assistant, licensed dental assistant, registered dental assistant, certified dental assistant.*

You help dentists during the examination and treatment of patients and may do clerical functions.

#### Duties include:

- prepare patients for dental examinations and help the dentist during the examination
- sterilize and maintain instruments and equipment
- prepare dental instruments and filling materials

- schedule patient appointments and record dental procedures performed
- invoice patients for dental services
- take and develop X-rays
- take preliminary impressions for diagnostic casts
- make temporary crowns and restorations
- place and remove dental dams
- do teeth whitening

### Requirements:

In B.C., there are two types of dental assistants – Level I and Level II.

#### Level I dental assistants:

- do not need to be certified and do extra-oral and office duties only
- are generally required to have a secondary school diploma and complete on-the-job training

#### Level II dental assistants:

- licensed to perform intra-oral duties, such as polishing teeth, applying fluoride and sealant and taking preliminary impressions
- must be certified by the College of Dental Surgeons of British Columbia (CDSBC) (<https://www.cdsbc.org/registration-renewal/certified-dental-assistants>). This includes completing an approved Level II dental assisting program and completing the National Dental Assisting Examining Board Exam
- if you are an **internationally-trained** dental healthcare professional with National Dental Assisting Examining Board (NDAEB) certification, you may be eligible for CDSBC certification pending an assessment of your credentials (<https://www.cdsbc.org/registration-renewal/certified-dental-assistants/cda-coming-from-another-country>)

### Skills:

- must have an approachable, relaxed and trustworthy manner
- should have strong communication and interpersonal skills in order to explain procedures to patients and make them feel comfortable

- should have well-developed fine motor skills to manipulate devices such as rubber dams and X-ray film

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$24.00

<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3411>

**Dental Technician, Dental Laboratory Bench Worker (NOC 3223)**

*Also look for these job titles: dental technologist, dental technician assistant, denture finisher, ceramic denture moulder, dental ceramist, orthodontic band maker, Registered Dental Technician (RDT) or Certified Dental Technician (CDT)*

**Dental technician:** design and make dentures and dental devices as prescribed by dentists and other specialists

**Dental laboratory bench worker:** assist dental technologists and technicians in preparing and making dentures and other dental devices

**Duties include:**

- *Dental technician:* design, make or repair dental devices (including dentures, crowns, bridges, inlays, etc)
- *Dental laboratory bench worker:* prepare plaster models and moulds from dental impressions, prepare wax bite-blocks and impression trays, cast gold or metal alloys for bridges and denture bases, make metal orthodontic bands

**Requirements:**

- *Dental Technician:* graduation from a Dental Technician Education Program approved by the College of Dental Technicians of British Columbia (CDTBC)

**OR**

at least 5 years experience as a dental technician AND the combination of knowledge, skills and abilities, which, in the opinion of the Registration Committee, satisfy the education requirements

([http://www.cdtbc.ca/dental\\_technicians.html](http://www.cdtbc.ca/dental_technicians.html))

- *Dental Laboratory Bench Worker (also called dental technician assistant)*: must work under the supervision of a registered dental technician;
- have graduated from Grade 12 or equivalent  
([http://www.cdtbc.ca/dt\\_assistants.html](http://www.cdtbc.ca/dt_assistants.html))

**Skills:**

- potential to develop skill with small hand instruments
- an interest in doing precision work
- excellent hand-eye coordination
- an ability to focus on small details
- creative artistic inclinations
- good colour perception

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$25.08

<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/3223>

**Technical Sales Specialist (NOC 6221)**

*Also look for these job titles: dental sales specialist, sales support specialist*

You sell a range of technical goods and services, such as scientific and industrial products, to governments and businesses in Canada and abroad.

**Duties include:**

- promote sales to existing clients
- locate potential new clients
- assess clients' needs and recommend the appropriate goods or services
- provide input into product design where goods or services must be tailored to suit clients' needs
- estimate costs of installing and maintaining equipment or service
- prepare and administer sales contracts

**Requirements:**

- usually four-year college or university program in a relevant field
- experience in sales or in a technical occupation related to dentistry may be required

**Skills:**

- Ability to track trends and changes in dentistry and marketing
- Computer use including spreadsheet, scheduling and tracking software
- Listen well and be able to explain and/or sell your product
- Be accountable, attentive to detail, professional and punctual

**Wages:**

- median hourly wage: \$25.38

<http://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/6221>

## 2. Employment Outlook

### Dental Assistants (NOC 3411)

Job opportunities for **dental assistants** remain strong as B.C.'s growing population continues to increase the demand for dental services. The growth in awareness about good dental hygiene has increased the level of dental care in the general population. As people keep their natural teeth longer, older people will require more dental care than previously required. Cosmetic dental procedures, such as laser whitening and caps are also gaining popularity.

Since Level II (certified) dental assistants may perform a wider range of duties than Level I dental assistants and they are generally in higher demand.

### Job Opening Outlook in BC for Dental Assistant (NOC 3411)



Chart from WorkBC

### Dental Technologists, Technicians and Laboratory Bench Workers (NOC 3223)

There is expected to be a shortage of skilled Dental Technicians in BC, particularly in the area of crown and bridge, ceramics, and orthodontics, until 2020.

Improvements to employee dental plans and an aging population have been credited for the increase in demand for dental procedures that require dental technicians.

### Job Opening Outlook in BC for Dental Techs and Lab Bench Workers (NOC 3223)

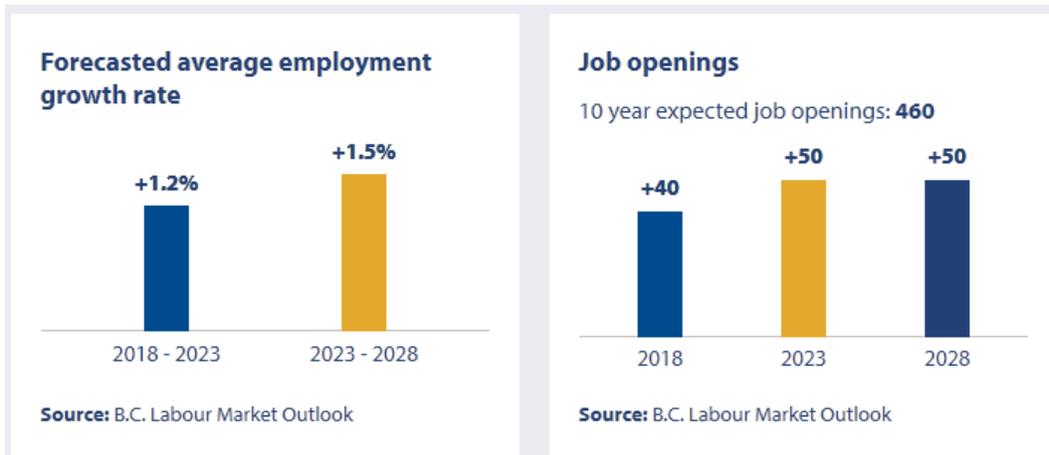


Chart from WorkBC

### Job Opening Outlook in BC for Technical Sales Specialist (NOC 6221)



Chart from WorkBC

### 3. Retraining

You may want to consider upgrading your skills to increase your employment options in this field. The following courses may improve your current skill set:

#### **Vancouver Community College – Certified Dental Assisting for International Students**

Ten month, full time certificate program: Upon completion of the program, you are eligible to take the National Dental Assisting Board examination. The exam is for certification and registration with the College of Dental Surgeons of B.C., the regulatory body for certified dental assistants.

<https://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/health-sciences/dental-assisting---certified/>

#### **Vancouver Community College – Certified Dental Assisting – Distance Delivery**

Part-time distance learning (1.5 – 5 yrs), train from home to work as a member of a dental health team. This program provides education leading to a career as a certified and registered certified dental assistant.

<https://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/health-sciences/dental-assisting---certified-distance-delivery/>

#### **Vancouver Community College – Dental Reception Coordinator**

Full time (five months) certificate program; you learn to run a dental office, learn dental terminology and office skills as well as dental radiography.

<https://www.vcc.ca/programscourses/program-areas/health-sciences/dental-reception-coordinator/>

## 4. Searching for Jobs

### **B.C. Dental Association**

<http://bcdental.org/yourdentalhealth/> [click on 'Job Postings']

### **Dental Technicians of BC Job Board**

<http://www.dentaltechniciansofbc.com/our-services/job-board>

### **Indeed.ca**

<http://www.indeed.ca>

### **Neuvoo.ca**

<http://neuvoo.ca/en>

## 5. Volunteering in the Field

Volunteering in health care facilities and with service organizations can help you to explore a new career in BC. You will meet new people and build a network of contacts that can lead to information on job openings and inside connections with potential employers.

### **College of Dental Surgeons of BC**

A network of dentists, certified dental assistants and members of the public who are interested in participating in the work of the College

<https://www.cdsbc.org/about-cdsbc/volunteering>

### **Canadian Red Cross**

<http://www.redcross.ca/where-we-work/in-canada/british-columbia-and-yukon>

### **Vancouver Coastal Health Authority**

<http://www.vch.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>

### **Fraser Health Authority**

<https://www.fraserhealth.ca/about-us/volunteer-opportunities>

### Providence Health Care

<http://www.providencehealthcare.org/volunteers>

### Volunteer BC

<https://volunteerbc.bc.ca/>

## 6. Helpful Resources

### College of Dental Technicians of BC

<http://www.cdt.bc.ca/>

### College of Dental Surgeons of BC

<https://www.cdsbc.org/home>

### Fastest Growing Industries: Health Care

Go to <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca>

[Search: Fastest growing industries health care]

Click on 'Job Search Resources at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca> for help on:

- resumes & cover letters
- getting Canadian work experience
- networking for employment
- online social networks
- Canadian workplace culture

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff in the Central Library, Vancouver Public Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.

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