

COMPETENCIES FOR THE GENERAL DENTIST

This document presents the Competencies for the General Dentist that was jointly developed and approved by the UTHealth School of Dentistry's Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate, and Administrative Council.

Definition of General Dentist

The general dentist is responsible for the diagnosis, treatment, management, and overall coordination of care related to patients' oral health needs. As the primary clinician for patients of all ages, the general dentist practices collaboratively with dental specialists, dental hygienists, other allied dental professionals, and other health care professionals. A general dentist will also manage oral health issues as they relate to overall health and must be able to practice evidence-based, patient-centered care. This includes the ability to apply problem-solving and critical thinking skills to address current and future issues in oral health care and utilize emerging technologies. The general dentist must always maintain a broad biomedical and clinical knowledge base and be able to demonstrate effective communication and interpersonal skills in a variety of clinical settings. The general dentist must be competent and practice within the scope of one's training and expertise, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, and demonstrate professional and ethical citizenship at all times.

Purpose of Document

This document serves as the foundation to:

- Define the major and supporting competencies necessary for entry into the dental profession as an independent general dental practitioner;
- Serve as a guide and central resource to promote change and innovation in predoctoral dental school curricula;
- Promote adoption of best practices in dental education with aim of producing competent general dental practitioners who are capable of providing safe and quality patient care;
- Uphold periodic review and update, serve as a guide for benchmarking, best practice, and interprofessional collaboration.

To this end, the statements below define the entry-level competencies for the graduating general dentist at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Dentistry.

Domain I: Fundamental Skills

1.1 Critical Thinking.

Graduates must be able, in a scientific and research-oriented manner, to analyze, assess and problem-solve.

1.2 Self-Assessment.

Graduates must be able to understand and apply the need for self-directed, lifelong learning and the application of new knowledge.

1.3 Biomedical Sciences.

Graduates must be able to understand and apply basic biological science principles in patient care delivery.

1.4 Behavioral Sciences.

Graduates must be able to communicate and interact successfully in a culturally diverse health care environment.

1.5 Practice Management.

Graduates must be able to apply practice management concepts, as well as legal and regulatory compliance, necessary in oral health care delivery.

1.6 Interpersonal and Communication Skills.

Graduates must be able to understand their role in the provision and/or support of oral health care services and communicate and collaborate with patients and members of the health care team.

1.7 Ethics and Professionalism.

Graduates must demonstrate principles of ethical, humanistic and professional behavior.

1.8 Evidence-Based Care.

Graduates must be able to integrate their clinical expertise, the patient's needs and preferences, and the most current, clinically relevant evidence when providing care.

Domain II: Patient Care

2.1 Patient Care.

Graduates must be competent in providing patient-centered oral health care in all stages of life within the scope of general dentistry, including:

- 2.1.1 History taking and assessment.*
- 2.1.2 Diagnosis.*
- 2.1.3 Treatment planning, prognosis and informed consent.*
- 2.1.4 Screening and risk assessment for head and neck cancer.*
- 2.1.5 Referral of patient treatment.*
- 2.1.6 Health promotion and disease prevention.*
- 2.1.7 Local anesthesia, and pain and anxiety control.*
- 2.1.8 Pharmacological therapy, including the use of opioids.*
- 2.1.9 Restoration of teeth.*
- 2.1.10 Dental laboratory procedures in patient care support.*
- 2.1.11 Replacement of teeth including fixed, removable and dental implant prosthodontic therapies.*
- 2.1.12 Periodontal therapy.*
- 2.1.13 Pulpal therapy.*
- 2.1.14 Hard and soft tissue surgery.*
- 2.1.15 Dental emergencies.*
- 2.1.16 Malocclusion and space management.*
- 2.1.17 Evaluation of treatment outcomes.*
- 2.1.18 Infection control procedures.*
- 2.1.19 Oral mucosal and osseous disorders.*

2.2 Treatment of Patients with Special Needs.

Graduates must be able to assess and treat patient(s) with diverse medical, physical, psychological, social and/or linguistic needs.