

CAREER OUTLOOK

Employment opportunities for dental laboratory technicians are expected to grow fairly slowly through the year 2010. The US Department of Labor predicts an increase of only 3%-9% over the next decade. This slow growth is due to the small size of the profession and the improved oral health of the overall population. There are some positives for the profession, however. With more senior citizens retaining their teeth longer, this segment of the population will require more sophisticated prosthetics for longer periods of time. This will increase the demand for experienced dental laboratory technicians and their services.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Association of Dental Laboratories
555 East Braddock Road
Alexandria, VA 22314-2106
Phone: (703) 683-5263
Web: www.nadl.org

American Dental Education Association
1625 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 667-9433
Web: www.adea.org

American Dental Association
211 E. Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: (312) 440-2390
Web: www.ada.org/prof/ed/careers

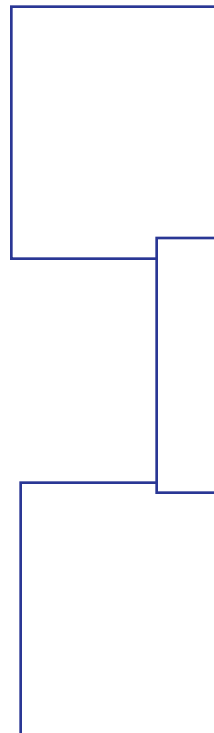


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POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

Dental laboratory technicians make and repair orthodontic devices such as dentures, bridges, crowns, and braces. They use precision instruments and equipment such as small hand drills, in an effort to create practical and esthetically pleasing dental replacements. Using their artistic ability, dental laboratory technicians create these devices using materials such as gold, silver, porcelain, plastics, and stainless steel. They seldom interact with patients, but instead work closely with, and under the direction of, a licensed dentist. They must be able to follow detailed written instructions so that the final product will enable the patient to regain normal function. Dental laboratory technicians use molds and impressions of patient's teeth to create the most accurate dentures and fixed bridges as possible. Dental laboratory technicians can specialize in areas such as orthodontic technician, crown and bridge technician, metal dental technician, and dental ceramist. Anyone interested in this field should be artistically inclined and enjoy working with their hands. Individuals must also be able to precisely follow instructions and be able to sit in one place for long periods of time.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Most dental laboratory technicians work in commercial dental laboratories, which usually employ less than five technicians. Other areas of possible employment exist in dentist's offices, hospitals, dental schools, the military, and other companies than manufacture dental prosthetics. Some dental laboratory technicians may be self-employed.

HIGH SCHOOL PREPARATION

Students interested in a future as a dental laboratory technician should take high school courses in biology, algebra, English, chemistry, art, sculpting, anatomy and physiology, computer skills, health occupations/medical professions education, history, and geometry.

COLLEGE REQUIREMENTS

Individuals interested in becoming a dental laboratory technician should have a high school diploma or equivalent. Most students complete a two-year certificate or associate degree program that is approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. Individuals may also complete a five-year apprenticeship program, which can be substituted for a degree program. To become certified, students must pass an examination given by the National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology. Students interested in dental laboratory technology should contact schools for information on admission and course of study.

EDUCATION

There are many dental laboratory technicians in Mississippi. Schools that include:

Alabama
H. Council
Technical C
Dental Lab
1225 Air B
Montgomer
Phone: (334

Louisiana
Louisiana S
Dental Lab
1100 Florid
New Orlean
Phone: (504

Tennessee
Northeast S
Community
Dental Lab
1000 West I
Elizabethto
Phone: (423

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