

WISCONSIN INDIANHEAD TECHNICAL COLLEGE
DENTAL ASSISTANT
STUDENT HANDBOOK

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEARNER

The courses in the Dental Assistant program are designed for active participation by students and the instructor who share the responsibility for the learning process. Various modes of teaching/learning activities will be employed during these courses, including lecture/discussion, small group work sessions, simulation and clinical laboratory experiences.

Each person is responsible for her or his own learning. Course competencies stated in the course outline set minimum standards for what learners should be able to do at completion of the course. Learners are responsible for thinking and working in this program.

- The instructor is a facilitator for the course who will guide the learners through the course or subject content. The instructor's responsibilities are:
 - ✓ To present, introduce, and guide discussion of topics, ideas, or concepts and challenge the learners to think.
 - ✓ To provide own ideas and opinions during discussions and listen and learn from learners.
 - ✓ To work diligently to have **all** learners actively participate, learn about the topics, share and exchange ideas and information, reach course competencies, and develop their thinking ability.
 - ✓ To hold learners responsible for their own learning.

- The learner is an active participant in the teaching and learning activities. The learner's responsibilities are:
 - ✓ To actively listen to others, think, make comments, discuss ideas, ask questions, read, write, talk, observe and listen for understanding.
 - ✓ To respect others' ideas, work to understand others' points of view, encourage others, learn from others, use and build on ideas and opinions.
 - ✓ To contribute to learning of the group by using past experience and knowledge and sharing information and relevant life experiences.
 - ✓ To do the **best** work possible in all course work by active participation, writing tasks, pre-work (homework), individual study, contribution to class learning and group work effectiveness.

- ✓ To avoid relying on the instructor for learning ... learning is an individual responsibility.
- ✓ To complete pre-work. This is work done to prepare one's self for each class or session. It may be reading, studying, thinking and/or writing. The quality of this "pre-work" usually determines how well a person can contribute to the class and group work discussions and activities. Most pre-work assignments will be made at the conclusion of each session and will usually include written and reading assignments. Pre-work is preparing for what each person needs to do to be ready for each session, discussion and class activities. It is expected that all learners will do what is needed to be ready for each session.
- ✓ To critically consider subject or course content. This means that learners do not "blindly" accept what is written in the text or what the instructor and others say ... as "the only way." Learning is difficult to comprehend but it does include listening to and thinking about a statement or idea, then developing one's own conclusions about the idea or statement. Learning requires one to ask questions such as:
 - "What is being said/being written?"
 - "What is meant by that?"
 - "What do I think about it?"
 - "What does it mean to me?"
 - "Can I modify or change it in any way?"
 - "How can I use it?"
 - "What are my conclusions about it?"

Dental Assistant classes are not designed to present "answers." It is intended to have each learner work through and develop their own "answers." This is a crucial element in learning. The instructor works to facilitate this learning process.

- Learner activities during various teaching/learning activities are:
 - ✓ **Class Discussion** – Instructor will facilitate a discussion of a specific topic related to dental assisting.
 - **The instructor** – Presents and discusses ideas, topics, and concepts – makes comments and expresses own ideas/opinions – asks questions to generate learner thinking about the issue.
 - **The learners** – Think about their ideas, discuss the ideas, topics, and concepts presented – make comments and express opinions – ask questions for understanding and clarification – discuss their own experiences related to the topic. (The pre-work assignment will generally prepare each participant for contributing to this discussion.)
 - **The activity** - This activity is an exchange of ideas, thoughts, and comments between everyone – it *is not* a "straight lecture" with the instructor doing *all* the talking. It is "sharing" in the discussion by all.
 - ✓ **Group Work Activity** (4-7 members) – A sharing of ideas to create a collaborative point of view – the tasks will be to develop a group response or solution to an assigned task, project or question.

- Each member will be active in the discussion and will present ideas, comments or opinions. This is usually developed individually during pre-work. All members will work to think about and understand the **meaning** of each person's ideas or opinions during this discussion.
 - The team is effective when the response created by the team includes all good ideas of members, but is better than any one member could have done alone—this is a “synergistic” effort.
- ✓ Simulation and clinical laboratory experiences.
- Successful participation in these activities depends upon the learner's completion of assigned pre-work to include viewing of AV materials, critical study of procedures, and preparation of patient related materials (including patient education).
 - The learner must demonstrate critical thinking in problem solving.