

A Career in

Dental Practice Administration and Practice Management



A photograph of a woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned top, smiling and talking to a man in a light blue striped shirt. They are in a dental office. In the background, there is a bookshelf filled with colorful folders, a computer monitor, and a potted plant.

The role and responsibility of Dental Receptionists and Practice Managers

The Dental Receptionist/Administrator and the Practice Manager play a vital role within the dental practice team and can be based within general dental practice or the community dental service.

The role of a Dental Receptionist

Dental receptionists (or sometimes referred to as a dental administrators) play a vital role ensuring the day to day smooth running of a practice. Their work is complex, demanding and intense, involving a high level of customer care, communication skills and commitment to patients, colleagues, and the practice.

Their role impacts directly on patient care and forms the first impression of dental care and the practice. Their main duties include, greeting and dealing with patients and visitors to the practice, making appointments, taking payments, organising patient records and relevant paperwork. An increasing number of dental practices are computerized. Patient records and appointment systems may be stored and functioned through a specialised dental software programme.



The role of a Dental Practice Manager

The **dental practice manager** ensures that all the non-clinical aspects of a practice i.e. the business of dentistry, are managed, so that the clinicians are free to concentrate on clinical issues.

The responsibilities of the practice manager will be defined by their respective practice but their main role is to ensure that the practice delivers the highest standard of care possible to every patient, to maintain an efficiently run practice and to develop and sustain an efficient team. The practice manager will require excellent organisational, communication and leadership skills. They may also be responsible for human resource management, financial management and strategic management within the practice.

Entry requirements and training required

Generally employers look for a candidate with some evidence of formal study to Standard Grade Level especially in the areas of English and Information Technology. Excellent literacy, numeracy and communication skills would enhance the individual's ability to obtain employment and career progression.

Dental receptionists are trained in their workplace and there are now a variety of recognised qualifications to choose from which can be undertaken whilst working in practice. Some of these qualifications can lead to progression towards dental practice management.

Some people entering a career in practice management may come from a dental nursing or dental receptionist background and will be able to study on a recognised training programme to achieve their qualification. Others may already possess a generic business management qualification.

In 2007 NHS Education for Scotland launched Professional Development Awards in both Dental Administration (Reception) (SCQF Level 6) and Dental Practice Management (SCQF Level 8). These awards were designed to develop knowledge and skills to contribute towards the improvement of quality of patient care and the efficient running of a dental practice. Completion of these qualifications leads to a sound basis for applications for further development and progression to other postgraduate programmes, such as the Postgraduate Certificate in Frontline Leadership and Management.

General Dental Council

Ethical Standards and Continuing Professional Development

The General Dental Council (GDC) are the profession's governing body and their role is to protect patients within the United Kingdom by regulating dental professionals, assuring the quality of dental education and setting standards for conduct that all dental professionals must adhere to.

The GDC do not currently register dental receptionists or practice managers, (unless individuals have previously gained a registerable Dental Care Professional (DCP) Qualification) however the information and guidance on their website does provide useful guidance, information and updates for all dental team members and the public.

For more information on the GDC, access their website at www.gdc-uk.org

Contact

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