

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW
FOR CAREER PROGRAMS
THAT CONDUCT SELF-STUDIES
FOR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITING BOARDS**

Dental Assisting

2011 – 2012

**Program Review Committee:
Margaret Bloy, Program Coordinator**

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Academic Program Review

**FOR CAREER PROGRAMS
THAT CONDUCT SELF-STUDIES
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Middlesex Community College

Academic Program Review

FOR CAREER PROGRAMS THAT CONDUCT SELF-STUDIES FOR NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITING BOARDS

Note: This program review is an addendum to the Program Self-Study Report that is required for National Accreditation. The report of the Accrediting Board is included in this addendum. The complete Program Self-Study Report is on file with the Division Dean.

Section I: Summary of Self-Study/Introduction to the Program Review

This is an opportunity to provide background or contextual information, set goals for the program review and/or include any other introductory information that the committee believes will be helpful to the reader. Include information about previously completed program reviews, such as findings, improvements, and unfinished items. Also include a description of the findings in the most recent accreditation self-study, and, if available, the recommendations and/or responses from the accrediting board.

The Dental Assisting Program at Middlesex Community College began in 1970 on the Bedford Campus under the direction of Marjorie Short. The program awarded its first certificate in Dental Assisting in 1971. The college began awarding Associate Degrees in Dental Assisting in 1974. The Associate Degree builds on the Dental Assisting certificate by adding 27 credits of general education courses to the 36 credits contained in the DA Certificate. The dental assisting specific courses are taken in one year. Both the Certificate and Associates Degree students take the dental assisting courses at the same time. There is no duplication of dental courses. Students wanting the Associate's Degree in Dental Assisting can achieve this degree by taking Liberal Studies courses prior to entry into the DA Program and then graduating with an Associate's Degree or they can take the Liberal Studies courses after they finish the one year Dental Assisting Program. Most of the dental assisting students pursuing the advanced degree do it on a part-time basis. In 1993, the Dental Assisting Program moved to the Lowell campus in the Health, Science and Technology Building, better known as the Talbot Building at 44 Middle St. The Dental Assisting Program admits one class of 20 students in September of each year. This class is made up of both Dental Assisting Certificate and Associate Degree students. The Associate Degree students have the flexibility to take their General Education classes either prior to entering the Dental Assistant Program or after they have finished their dental courses. Many Certificate graduates go on to pursue the Degree in Dental Assisting by attending Middlesex Community College part-time while working in their career.

The Dental Assisting Program achieved initial accreditation from the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) in 1972 and has maintained its accreditation since that time. The most recent accreditation site visit was in 2009. At that time, we achieved full accreditation without recommendations. This accreditation will last for 7 years taking us to 2016.

Section II: Program Mission and Goals as they support College's Strategic Plan

1. State the mission of the program. Please indicate if the mission statement is new or has been significantly revised as part of a prior program review process.

The Middlesex Community College Dental Assisting Program provides students with a supportive and challenging learning environment designed to develop competent and compassionate dental assisting professionals. Through learning experiences and service opportunities, students develop the skills, attitudes, and knowledge necessary to serve as an integral member of the dental health team. The program provides the students with the necessary job entry skills to obtain professional credentials, perform community service and have a solid foundation for continuing growth.

2. Middlesex Community College's Strategic Directions are listed below. Describe how your program's mission and the work that is done within your program supports one or more of these directions.

- *Improve access and advance student success by strengthening evidence-based practices and resource allocation.*
- *Foster greater college engagement through improved communication, personal connections and collaborative partnerships.*
- *Drive innovation, enrich community and broaden the learning experience for all by fulfilling our shared responsibility for diversity.*
- *Empower all members of the college community to be educators, mentors, advocates and life-long learners.*
- *Transform learning by integrating academic, workplace and global experiences to meet personal, professional and community needs.*
- *Build partnerships that stimulate innovation and address the educational, social, economic and workforce development needs of our communities.*

When referring to our Mission Statement for the Dental Assisting Program, we feel that we support the College's Strategic Direction to "Drive innovation, enrich community and broaden the learning experience for all by fulfilling our shared responsibility for diversity" in a couple of ways: 1.) We go into local area elementary schools and provide a program of teaching good oral hygiene practices to second grade students. The area's local elementary schools are quite diverse in their student population. Our students, during this project, are completely engaged with this learning activity. Our students first deliver a message to the class, they also must have developed an interactive game between themselves and the students, our students must reach out to the parents of these children through a written letter describing what their child learned in school [today], finally our students provide the students with toothbrushes and toothpaste, which are then taken home by the second graders. 2.) We visit Saints Memorial Hospital in Lowell where the students meet Head and Neck cancer patients. During this visit, students sit with these patients, they converse with these patients, they help them brush their teeth and they apply fluoride varnish to their remaining teeth. It is a very emotionally filled activity, which reaches each student in a very personal and different way.

We also feel that we support the college's Strategic Direction to "Empower all members of the college community to be educators, mentors, advocates and life-long learners", through our Externship program,

primarily. Our externship program allows for the local dental community to become mentors to our students (two of our dentists are actually former graduates of Middlesex Community College), our alumni have been educators in that they teach courses in the program or are guest speakers in our classes. We are always encouraging our graduates to continue on, to stay active in their profession, earn their baccalaureate degree, and then become advocates for the profession.

Section III: Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes

<p>Written and Oral Communication <i>For example...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written assignments • Oral presentations • Use of relevant information literacy skills • Effective use of technology 	<p>Critical Thinking <i>For example...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis • Synthesis • Evaluation • Creative thinking • Development of logical conclusions
<p>Quantitative Literacy <i>For example...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation • Representation • Calculation • Application/Analysis • Communication of quantitative information 	<p>Multicultural and Global Literacy <i>For example...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intercultural knowledge • Global issues • Interactions that build diversity awareness • Diverse forms of creative expression • Aesthetic Appreciation • Historical, political, and economic perspective
<p>Social Responsibility <i>For example...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Civic engagement • Social justice • Ethical frameworks • Social policy frameworks 	<p>Personal and Professional Development <i>For example...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement of academic goals • Career Readiness • Self Assessment • Responsibility for learning and personal development • Professionalism • Leadership • Wellness • Collaboration

2. Please provide your program's timeline for ongoing, annual assessment of the college's ISLOs as appropriate.

2011-12	PPD
2012-13	W & O Comm.
2013-14	SR
2014-15	CT
2015-16	QL
2016-17	MGL

3. If applicable, discuss any changes you have made to your program's support of MCC's ISLOs since your last program review.

N/A

4. As appropriate, map the way in which your program provides opportunities for students to progress towards achievement of MCC's Institutional Student Learning Outcomes, by noting in which courses outcomes are **Introduced (I)**, **Developed (D)**, and where students are expected to demonstrate **Competency (C)**. (Note: at the **Developing and Competency levels, PSLOs should be reflected, directly or indirectly within the course outcomes.**)

**Curriculum Map II:
Program Opportunities for Student Progress toward ISLOs**

	DAS100	DAS101	DAS102	DAS103	DHY152	DAS150	DAS151	DAS152	DAS153
Quantitative Literacy									
Critical Thinking	I	I	D	D	D/C	C	C	D	C
Written and Oral Communication			I	I/D	I/D			D	C
Multicultural and Global Literacy	I/D		I			C			C
Social Responsibility	I		I		D/C	C	D	D	C
Personal & Professional Development	I	I	I/D	D	D/C	C	C	D	C

5. Does Curriculum Map II suggest a need to make changes to the **sequencing of** opportunities for students to develop and achieve any ISLO within the program? If so, please explain.

By reviewing the Curriculum Map II, it appears that the program needs to weave the Strategic Initiative “Quantitative Literacy” into the program. Maybe through the student’s projects, which are requirements in three of the program’s courses, either in the fall semester and/or the spring, we could include the gathering of data so that the students could learn to interpret the information, analyze the information, and then apply the information.

Also, it appears that the course DAS 152, Dental Practice Management, is still in the process of developing students prospective to the Strategic Initiatives. The fact that the ISLO’s are at this level indicates to me that the course would be better served in the first semester. This has initiated a review of the program’s curriculum and course sequencing.

The MCC graduate will demonstrate the capacity for on-going ‘Personal and Professional Development’.

6. Please provide examples of representative course student learning outcomes that include or embed this ISLO from course syllabi where competency of the ISLO is expected.

Course	Semester	Course Outcomes-supportive of ISLO #6
DAS 100 Clinical Practicum I	Fall	-The student is able to correctly select the proper instruments for various dental procedures -Demonstrates proper professional rapport with dental staff and patients while at externship
DAS 101 Dental Science I	Fall	-The student will be able to demonstrate appropriate professional terminology to communicate with other dental professionals
DAS 102 Dental Assisting	Fall	-Demonstrates specific oral hygiene care for orthodontic, periodontic, pediatric and prosthodontics patients -Demonstrates correctly 4-handed dentistry skills
DAS 103 Dental Materials and Procedures	Fall	-Demonstrates proper infection control in the dental laboratory.
DHY 152 Dental Radiology	Fall	-The student will be able to critique exposure, handling, and processing errors and be able to correct them by applying gained foundational knowledge of production, shadow casting, film composition, and processing chemistry.
DAS 150 Clinical Practicum II	Spring	-Demonstrate knowledge and skill while assisting in restorative procedures at externship -Demonstrate professional rapport with staff and patients
DAS 151 Dental Science II	Spring	-Demonstrate basic knowledge in the prevention and management of an emergency situation -Demonstrate appropriate communication skills to staff, faculty & patients
DAS 152 Dental Practice Management	Spring	-Demonstrate telephone etiquette and protocol during various role playing scenarios
DAS 153 Preventive Dentistry	Spring	-Demonstrate and explain to your partner (and then to a patient) in a professional manner, the correct steps to proper oral hygiene care -Collaborate with a partner by developing a “lesson plan” that will be used to teach 2 nd graders the proper way to brush and floss teeth.

7. Referring to Curriculum Map II, describe the process by which this Institutional Student Learning Outcome was assessed for Competency. Include in your description:
- Which courses contributed evidence of student learning and achievement?
 - Which assignments/projects/exams/activities within those courses generated the evidence?
 - How was a sample selected from the full sets of contributed evidence?
 - What criteria were used to assess student learning and achievement?
 - Which faculty members assessed the evidence, and how representative are they of the faculty teaching in the program?
 - How you created a block of time to conduct the assessments of student learning
- Students were assessed for Competency for the ISLO, *Personal and Professional Development*, by reviewing all the courses in the Dental Assisting curriculum. We found that courses, DAS 100, Clinical Practicum I, and DAS 150, Clinical Practicum II, best contributed evidence of student learning and achievement. Students must be prepared to enter the workforce at an entry level at the end of the one year of study. All objectives and outcomes are aimed at preparing the dental assisting student to meet career expectations.
- The activities that best generated the evidence were student's performances while assisting a dentist in their externship assignments. The dentists would evaluate the student's performance while the student was assisting them in dental procedures at their offices. Progression of learning and achievement is reflected in the evaluations from Rotation I to Rotation III.
- We looked at all the evaluations from the dental offices for each of our students from last years' class. From those evaluations, we had our sample. Of the original 18 students who started the program in the fall of 2011, 14 completed the dental courses. Of those students who did not complete the program, one student was deemed not "career ready" as was evidenced by her failing grades in the second semester, as well as poor-fair evaluations from her externships.
- Students were assessed and evaluated on a number of skills and personal attributes that the student assistant is expected to perform or have while at the dental office. Those skills and attributes, located on our Clinical Progress Report, are divided into three main sections with actual performance objectives listed underneath. Those three main sections are: Professional Behaviors, Clinical Performances, and Supportive Procedures/Radiographic Techniques (please see Appendices A. B. and C – Student Progress Reports)

- There were two faculty members who evaluated the student's performances while out at externship. Those two faculty members were the program director and a part-time adjunct faculty member. Both faculty members have many years of experience as a dental assistant. For CODA, the Commission on Dental Accreditation, for the American Dental Association, it is required in the Standards that all faculty teaching within the dental assisting program have current work experience as a dental assistant and should also be currently credentialed as a Certified Dental Assistant (CDA).
 - The dental assisting faculty conduct site visits at the externships where the dental assisting student is interning. These visits are routinely done—one faculty member visits an office every 4-5 days of the externship. Students needing more faculty intervention are visited more often.
8. What did your program learn about student achievement of this ISLO within your program?

The program learned the strengths and weaknesses about a student's ability to act professionally while in the clinical setting through our professional rubric and thus achievement of the Personal and Professional Development ISLO. On our Professional rubric, students are evaluated on their professional behavior while in the clinical setting. There are three grading criteria for ten objectives on our rubric. The grading criterion is: if the student is proficient; if the student is developing; and if the student is not developing (please see Appendix D- Professional Evaluation).

During our clinical portion of the courses, we evaluated the students on Professionalism. Students who did not perform well on the rubric, received information that they must come see me, the program director, and the situation was discussed. In DAS 153, students were evaluated each time that they were in clinic on Professionalism, as well as on other criteria for successful clinical behavior. Of the 14 students from last year's graduating class, only one student received a couple of unsatisfactory Professional Behavior evaluations during the course of the semester, which meant that 93% of the class had acceptable behavior.

9. What curricular and/or instructional changes are planned within the program as a result of this assessment work (if any)?

No instructional changes are planned within the program as a result of this assessment work because 93% of the class passed and were well qualified.

Section IV: Instructional Support

- 10.** Discuss the adequacy of the staffing level in the program to teach and advise students enrolled in the program.

The dental assisting program has 1.5 full-time faculty members to teach and advise 20 students. The program also has 3-4 part-time instructors to help teach in the labs to accommodate Accreditation Standards.

- 11.** How adequate and appropriate are program facilities and equipment? Please be specific about current deficiencies or projected needs.

The dental assisting program has adequate and appropriate facilities as well as the adequate and appropriate amount of equipment for the day-to-day operation of the program. The dental assisting program has a 4 chair dental clinic with a sterilization center. The program also has a laboratory which is equipped with 14 work stations. The dental assisting program also owns a variety of dental instruments and small equipment needed for student use. Day to day wear and tear on the dental operator chairs and cabinetry is taking a toll as our clinic will be 23 years old. Doors on the cabinetry in the clinic and lab are starting to have their hinges break down. While replacement of some parts on our dental operator chairs has already begun. The DA program's plan is to have these items replaced and/or updated within the next two years if grant monies are available. To assist in the attainment of skills, student learning would benefit from the addition of a dental manikin simulator. This is needed as our clinic does not have the benefit of a dentist to perform procedures. Such a simulator offers a computerized simulation of dental practice. Students would be able to practice their skills and test their knowledge of a procedure while assisting a virtual dentist

- 12.** Describe any professional development needs of program faculty or staff.

The program director and the faculty are all required to take continuing education credits in order to maintain their license and/or certification in their respective dental fields. Yankee Dental Congress in Boston is an annual conference that allows the program director and dental faculty to attain CEU's in the field of Dentistry.

Accreditation recommends the participation of the program director to attend national professional and/or educational meetings. Through grants and division funding the program director has had the opportunity to attend these national meetings. MCC also provides professional development opportunities throughout the academic year.

I would also like to have our part-time faculty have the ability (cost) to attend a national or regional educational dental meeting, as well as other professional

development opportunities. I think that it would enhance job satisfaction and the feeling of inclusiveness, as well as to improve their knowledge on outcomes and objective writing.

Support the faculty to serve as a site visitor for the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation. So much can be learned for program strengthening when one serves in this capacity.

- 13.** Describe the sources of program funding. Are the funds adequate to support the program? Is the current use of funds effective to realize program goals? Does the program leadership have input into the program budget?

The fiscal year begins on July 1 of each year. In the spring of each academic year the Dental Assisting Program Coordinator supplies information to the Division Dean as to any anticipated needs for the upcoming fiscal year. The dean prepares a budget request for the division which includes requests for the dental assisting department in order to articulate budget needs for the upcoming fiscal year. The request is submitted to both the college's budget director and the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. Final approval rests with the Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance. With the supplementation of grants, the program has adequate funding to support its endeavors at this time.

Section V: Institutional Data

The Institutional Research Office will provide a significant portion of the data. Your committee is encouraged to request additional relevant information from Institutional Research and to develop and conduct alternative assessments as well. Some examples of assessments that the committee may choose to implement are student focus groups and/or student surveys. Input from relevant internal groups such as Advising, Admissions, and/or connected departments will also be necessary. Please include a copy of the data from Institutional Research and all committee-developed surveys or focus questions in the Appendix of the review.

- 14.** Please note important trends, patterns and issues that emerge as you examine data from Institutional Research office, including:
- a. program enrollment data
 - b. reading, writing and math placement data
 - c. demographic data
 - d. enrollment status data
 - e. course completion data (by method of course offering)
 - f. academic progress data
 - g. retention data
 - h. transfer data

a. Program Enrollment Data (2006-2010)

The dental assisting program currently takes in 20 students. This has been a very manageable amount of students. The dental community is able to absorb our graduates into its workforce. It is noted that the pattern for qualified applicants to the dental assisting Certificate program has been steadily increasing for the last 3 years. However, the trend for new student applicants appears to be fairly steady as well as it represents less than half the number of students that the dental assisting program accepts. I believe this trend is related to the number of students desiring to attain an Associate Degree in the field when they graduate rather than the Certificate.

The Associate Degree pattern for qualified applicants to the dental assisting program has also been fairly steady over the last few years as does the new student count for enrollment. The amount of students enrolled in the Dental Assisting Program who are Associate Degree candidates is more than half of the enrolled students. Again, indicating a desire to attain the AS degree.

b. Reading, Writing, and Math Placement Data (2006-10)

It is noted that the Reading, Writing, and Math Placement scores for new dental assisting Certificate students were higher, and that the dental assisting students were less likely placed in remedial courses than the all college student scores. I interpret this as that many high school students who are interested in a health career are more likely taking college prep classes in high school to prepare themselves for the rigors of a health science program. This interpretation is also based upon admission prerequisites for our health programs. In Writing, the percentage of students placing in English Composition I was almost doubled those placing in Basic Writing, except for fall, 2007 and 2008. This basically followed the Reading scores results.

However, the Degree option new students didn't fare as well as the Certificate candidates when it came to Reading placement scores-1/3 to 1/2 of the new degree students in the dental assisting program scored in the 'Recommended Reading' course category. For Writing, outside of the fall, 2008, the scores were the reverse for the most part of the Certificate seeking students. Interesting, in Math, the Certificate students did better in their placement scores than the college over all, as well as better than the Associate Degree students. Again, I believe it is because of the college prep courses the new students took in high school in order to get into a health science related program. It would be interesting to see the age demographics of who placed into what and from which program, the Certificate or the Associate Degree.

c. Demographic Data (2006-10)

It is noted that the highest percentage of students falls in the 20-21 years old range. This would make sense as this is a common age for those who didn't go to college to realize that they probably should have, so now they are enrolling. Also, newspapers and computerized lists, e.g. Craigslist, show a demand for

dental assistants in the workforce. Dental Assisting is perceived as a quick degree with completion in a year or two. It is also considered to be a good career choice. The other time frame is during the midlife change time, the 30-39 year old bracket. Again, the dental assisting program offers women who are returning to the workforce a fairly quick health career degree, a pleasant work environment, and flexible hours.

In the Associate Degree data, the highest age column is for the 22-24 age group, which makes sense as this is when some students are thinking about their career choices and are making changes. But what was interesting, was the 30-39 age group barely made up 5% of the dental assisting associate degree students. This, to me, reflects the need for a quick degree in order get into the workforce. They are not interested in the degree option.

As far as Gender, most health career jobs are predominantly held by females, and the career of dental assisting is no exception. This has been the case traditionally over the years. Most health career jobs do not pay as well as the business sector, therefore most men do not think of an auxiliary health care job as an option. The Associate Degree bares out the same statistic, more women entering the career than men. And college wide, the number in this program is double the amount of females than the rest of the college.

The matter of Race/Ethnicity appears to reflect the college community at large. The dental assisting program has more white students than any other race, though presently our 2013 class of 20 students is 35% minority.

d. Enrollment Status Data (2006-10)

The dental assisting program's dental courses, whether they are a part of the Certificate or the Associate Degree, are offered only as day-time courses in Lowell. Students are enrolled as full time students in the dental courses. Students may take the adjunct courses for the Certificate or the Associate Degree programs prior to or after entry into the full-time program. The dental assisting program faculty data reflects similarly to the college at large- generally there is a 2:1 ratio for adjunct faculty to full-time faculty.

e. Course Completion Data (2006-10)

This data shows that students who enroll in the dental assisting programs are very likely to complete their coursework, which can be an indicator of career choice satisfaction and/or adequate preparation.

f. Academic Progress Data (2006-10)

Depending upon the year, most students graduated from the dental assisting program. Students of the Certificate program kept an average of 3.04 for a GPA. While students enrolled in the AS degree program averaged 3.06 for their GPA- a negligible statistical difference.

g. Retention Data (2006-10)

Students who progressed through the month of September were typically there till graduation. Mostly all students who have withdrawn over the years have done it in September. September is the month where the faculty do an overview of the program and the expectations are laid out.

h. Transfer Data (2006-10)

Between 2006 and 2010, I do not have transfer data from MCC. I do know from my own records that 3 students transferred to 4 year universities from the DA program and have graduated from those schools. I do know that 2 students from the class of 2008 transferred into our hygiene program but neither of them finished. One of those students withdrew from the hygiene program on the first day of her first year to attend to UMass Lowell, and the other failed due to non-attendance after the first month or so. However, I do have some transfer data for the years between 1983 to 2007. During that time, there have been 38 MCC dental assisting graduates to transfer and graduate from MCC's dental hygiene program.

15. Please identify labor/market trends that may impact current and future graduates of this program, based on input from advisory boards, focus group meetings with recent graduates, and national and regional data. Some possible sources for such data include:

- <http://online.onetcenter.org> (use "Find Occupations")
- <http://lmi2.detma.org/lmi/FPlmiforms1.asp>

Labor/market trends for dental assistants are excellent according to surveys and national projections. Massachusetts Growth Rate Projection for this job is 23% and the employment rate is rated as "much faster than average". Our Advisory committee consists of dentists, dental assistants, hygienists, and dental laboratory technicians. The dentists are always indicating that dentists in their districts are always looking to employ dental assistants and also indicate that qualified dental assistants, such as our graduates, are harder to find. The dental assisting program director reports that she receives at least two calls per month from dental offices looking for a dental assistant to hire. Also, with the new Rules and Regulations becoming Law, our dental assisting graduates should be in high demand for their clinical knowledge and skills.

16. Please summarize findings from student surveys, student focus groups, and/or other types of surveys and focus groups the Committee chose to undertake.

The following chart gives results of our Graduate Surveys:

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Graduates	13	13	15	18	18	19
Working in field	7	6	11	10	11	12
Continuing their education		5	1	4	3	4

By looking at this data, I interpret it to mean two facts: 1. that our graduate numbers are going up, and 2. that our program is doing what it is supposed to be doing, which is producing dental assistants for our dental community. It also appears that in most years, approximately 20% +/- of our graduates have pursued or are pursuing a higher degree.

Section VI: Program Analysis

Additional Curricular Opportunities:

17. Comment on experiential/ work-based learning opportunities in the program (i.e., co-op, internships, service learning). Discuss how the content of the experience **relates** to course credit. How do you calculate the number of contact hours required in relationship to the credit awarded. What percent of students participate in each of these activities? Indicate any problem being faced in incorporating work-based learning.

The externship experience for the dental assisting students is the highlight of the coursework/program. Students are able to put into practice the lessons and techniques they have learned in the lab, classroom, and pre-clinical instruction when they are out in the field. In the fall semester, the Clinical Practicum is two credits for six hours of externship experience. Practicums are given one credit for three hours spent in the practicum. The spring semester's clinical practicum is four credits for eighteen hours of externship experience. This amounts to one credit for each four and a half hours of externship experience. This computation has evolved over time and has been in place for many years. All students in the program participate in the externship experience. The students indicate that they look forward to the experience.

The only 'problem' that might be encountered, though not often, with incorporating work-based learning into the externship experience is the finding of adequate learning environments (dental offices) for the dental assisting students. There are many dental offices willing to take in a dental

assisting student; however the work environment may not be suitable or adequate for student learning. This is determined through a site visit of the dental practice and an interview with the dentist and his/her staff. The program coordinator is the one to conduct the site visit and the interview with the dental office personnel. Based on the information gathered, it is decided whether or not the dental office is adequate for student learning. The criteria used for this determination is based upon the ADA Standards for Dental Auxiliary Programs put forth by the Commission on Dental Accreditation.

- 18.** Referring to the data supplied by Institutional Research, along with any other data available to the Program, comment on the role of developmental courses in the program. Do significant numbers of students in the program take developmental courses? What conclusions are you able to draw about the impact of these courses on students' preparation levels?

N/A

- 19.** Discuss any new strategies being implemented within your program to support student success. This could include efforts to establish consistent expectations for students, scaffolding learning within sequential courses, inclusion of experiential learning, collaborations with Academic Support Services and/or other support areas, curriculum revision, pedagogical sharing and innovation, etc. Please comment on the availability and adequacy of any support services being utilized.

Students in the dental assisting program must maintain a 73% average or better on quizzes and/or exams to stay within the course and ultimately the program. Students who are not maintaining a sufficient level of performance in a course are encouraged to reach out to faculty for academic advice and support. Students can be referred to Academic Support for tutoring needs and/or study skill methods. Students who are falling behind may also receive an "Early Alert" from the dental assisting faculty and/or program director. These students are then contacted and a determination of need is made. In addition, in order to improve student success, I will be embarking on a curriculum revision in order to investigate new program prerequisites, course requirements, and career trends. I am also investigating the possibility of developing an articulation pathway into our dental hygiene program without compromising student success in that program.

- 20.** In the event that there are admissions criteria for acceptance into the program, describe the rationale and process for establishing and reviewing the admission criteria. Do current criteria produce a pool of students who are adequately prepared to succeed in the program?

The current Dental Assisting admission criteria have been adequate for student success within the curriculum. We are in the process of reviewing these admission requirements because of two reasons: One, the laws governing the practice of dentistry are changing, which means that dental assistants will now need to be licensed/registered to work. In order to get the license, these graduates will need to take and pass certain board exams, a criterion that wasn't in place before; Two, in recent years, at least one student withdraws from the program at the beginning due to when asked, "this doesn't seem to be the right career choice for me". After looking at other Admission criteria of other local dental assisting programs, it was noticed that these programs have a mandatory orientation to the profession that must be taken prior to applying. I am reviewing the feasibility of doing this for the Dental Assisting program. Doing a survey of this year's dental assisting class, it was discovered that out of the 20 students accepted only 5 attended the Health Career Information sessions. Of those 5 who attended these sessions, none went to the dental assisting program's overview session, however 2 went to the dental hygiene one. Three students have dropped from the program this year before the second week of school ended, 2 of those students never attended either of MCC's Health Career Information sessions; the other student attended the HCI session but for hygiene. I will be going back a few years to see how many of those students actually attended the HCI sessions and if they did, find out if they came to the dental assisting overview.

External Perspectives:

21. LOCAL: Based on a review of other college catalogs, list the colleges in our general area that have similar programs and comment on significant differences from the ones we currently offer that bear further exploration.

Two community colleges in the general area of Middlesex Community College offer a one-year dental assisting program. They are Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill and Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester. These programs offer a one-year Certificate Program that is accredited by the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation. All programs that are accredited must follow a set of Standards set forth by the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation. Therefore, there are many similarities to our programs in curriculum content. Differences in the programs might be seen around the flexibility allowed for program design. One big difference that we offer, that they do not, is an Associate's Degree option in Dental Assisting, specifically. This option has been well received in the community especially with dental assistants who currently teach at area vocational high schools and do not have a degree in their discipline and need one.

College Day/Eve. Program	Admission criteria	# of FT v. PT Faculty	# of students	# of dental units	Externships
Middlesex Community College (Day)	HS Biology and General Math with a 'C' or better; CPR; CORI/SORI screening	1.5/4	20	4	4 Rotations (1 day/wk. during fall; 3 days/wk. for 3, 5-week rotations during spring) 6 hours each day
Northern Essex Community College (Day)	1 HS science course with a 'C' or better; Completion of mandatory DA Informational Session; Drug Testing, CPR; CORI/SORI screening	2/2	24	5	2 days of observation in fall 2.5 days/wk. for 15-16 weeks of spring semester. 8 hours each full day
Quinsigamond Community College (Day)	HS Biology and Chemistry with a 'C' or better; Attend mandatory Health Information Session; take the HOBET test; CORI/SORI screening with possible finger printing and/or drug testing	1/4	16	Uses their dental hygiene program's Units/clinic	Fall—4 days; Intersession: 60 hours; Spring—3 rotations @ 72 hours, each

The difference in the two programs and ours is as follows:

Northern Essex Community College:

- NECC offers a one-year Certificate CODA approved Dental Assisting Program.
- They do not have an Associate's Degree in Dental Assisting.
- Their clinical externship is in the Spring Semester only. It is composed of a two and a half day clinical experience each week of the spring semester. Sometimes this clinical experience extends into the week after the semester ends depending upon whether or not holidays, snow days, etc. cut into the semester.

- We offer a one day clinical experience in the fall semester for 8 weeks but prior to that, students are in a pre-clinical lab at the school for 6 weeks. During the spring semester, students are out on externship for three days a week for the full semester.
- Their course titles are similar to ours but their course descriptions are quite different. They split some of their courses over the two semesters, e.g. Dental Assisting I, Radiology I, and Dental Science I are scheduled in the fall semester; Dental Assisting II, Radiology II, and Dental Science II are scheduled in the spring semester.
- In our program, Dental Assisting and Radiology is concentrated into the fall semester. The fact that their Radiology course is one year in length and ours is one semester in length does merit reviewing.
- Our Radiology course is accepted into our Dental Hygiene program for our dental assisting students if accepted into the DH program. However, this transfer of credit is only good for two years. Students from our Dental Assisting Program must retake Radiology if they are not accepted within the two year limit. They do have the option and opportunity to challenge the Radiology final exam and test out of the lab.
- As pre-requisites to admission, students at NECC are subjected to a drug screening and CORI/SORI screenings. Students are also required to complete a mandatory Dental Assisting Informational Session. Applicants must have taken one science course in high school and they need to have received a “C” or better. Applicants must have had at least a 2.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale.
- We also require a CORI/SORI screening, but not until after admission into the dental assisting program. Our applicants must have received a “C” or better in high school biology and in a general Math course. Our students must have at least a 2.0 GPA in order to get into the program or to graduate from the program.

Quinsigamond Community College:

- QCC offers, as do we, both a dental assisting program and a dental hygiene program.
- QCC offers a one-year CODA approved Certificate Program.
- They do not have an Associate’s Degree Program.
- One fact that deserves reviewing is that their dental hygiene program reserves two seats each year for qualifying students from the school’s dental assisting program. Their dental assisting students take three DHY (dental hygiene) courses as part of their curriculum: Dental Radiology, Dental Anatomy, and Dental Materials. In order to gain one of these reserved seats to the dental hygiene program, the dental assisting candidate must have an overall 3.3 (or better) GPA, have attained at least a B in those three DHY mentioned courses, and at least an A- in three dental assisting courses. Students must also have

two recommendations from dental hygiene faculty (one needs to be from a full-time person); plus they need to have taken A & P I and II prior to entry and have attained at least a “C” in both of those courses. Other DH admission criteria have been waived.

- Our students must apply in the same manner as other applicants—nothing is waived. Our Dental Radiology course is accepted into Dental Hygiene but as stated before, that is limited to two years from the time the dental assisting student finishes the dental assisting program. No other course from the dental assisting program is accepted into our dental hygiene program.
- QCC offers their clinical externship component throughout the year. Their clinical experience is incorporated into three courses: one course, Dental Assisting I, in the fall; Dental Assisting II, in the spring; and a clinical practicum offered during the winter intersession.
- Our clinical courses are offered in two semesters.
- QCC admissions criteria is high school biology and chemistry with a “C” or better. Applicants must attend a Health Information Session and have a HOBET score of 45% within two attempts. After acceptance, students must undergo CORI/SORI screenings and be possibly tested for drugs and/or be finger printed.
- Again our Admissions criteria are a “C” or better in high school biology and a general math.

22. NATIONAL BEST PRACTICE: Based upon either the committee’s knowledge of or research on institutions beyond our geographical area that have exemplary programs or are known for their ‘best practices,’ comment on significant similarities or differences at MCC and identify areas that bear further exploration.

A dental assisting program that one might consider as having an exemplary program would be

- Harrisburg Area Community College; Harrisburg, PA

This HACC is exemplary in my opinion because the program is laid out well and they offer separate Expanded Functions courses, which are not part of the CODA Certificate Program.

They have an interesting admission policy. Students must apply by May 15th. However prior to that, students must schedule an interview with the program director and have had a 4-hour “shadowing” experience at a dental office. Student applicants must also be cleared for CORI/SORI, Drug and Alcohol, and have taken their CPR. Student applicants are also ranked with points on whether they passed HS Biology, Communication, and English with a C or better (the higher the grade, the higher the points) but if they got a D or worse, then points are subtracted. Applicants get points for completing

another DA program or other health program, and they also receive points on how much education they would be coming into the DA program with (e.g. Associate Degree, Baccalaureate Degree).

Their program of study has a one year (two semesters) Radiology Course. They offer dental management in the fall and this 2 hour lecture course also has a one hour computer component in addition. They split their Dental Assisting course into both semesters; the first semester concentrates in Operative Dentistry and the second semester concentrates in dental materials. This arrangement is quite different than ours. They do not go out to externship until the second semester and it is two full days for the entire semester. However, they do have a summer intersession which is four weeks (4.5 days a week) in length. This starts the Monday after the last day of classes in the spring. All of this, to me, has merit and needs further research.

The Dental Assisting Program offers courses two nights per week in Expanded Functions. Students taking these courses must be a Certified Dental Assistant credentialed by the Dental Assisting National Board. The courses are open to the community and those graduates who have earned their CDA credential. With these courses, it frees up the day program from having to teach procedures that only a CDA can perform. Another area for research.

The College does have a dental hygiene program, as well, but there are no pathways from the dental assistant program into the dental hygiene program.

Please provide any additional information that you consider important in assessing this department/area.

Section VII: Program Evaluation Summary

A. Program Strengths

(Bulleted List with reference to the question(s) numbers in the program review where this strength is explained.)

- Small program size (#15)
- The department has their own dental clinic (#16)
- ADA Accreditation (#22)
- Knowledgeable faculty; Dental Assisting background (#8)
- An Associate Degree in the major is offered (#15,22)
- Real dental office experiences (#18)

B. Program Action Plan for Improvements, Budgetary Implications, Timelines

Action Items (Reference the question in the program review where this need is explained.)	Proposed Plans for Improvement (Bulleted list of suggestions.)	Financial Needs to Make Improvements	Proposed Timelines for Implementation
Question 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterilizer • New dental unit arms • Dental models 	Grants	2012
Question 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New cabinetry in clinic and lab • New dental units 	Grants	2013, 2014
Question 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice simulator manikin 	Grants	2015
Question 6,10, 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum review • Admissions review 		2012, 2013
Question 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an internal articulation agreement with MCC DH program 		2013, 2014
Question 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the possibility of a one year dental radiology course 		2012, 2013
Question 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the possibility of a clinical rotation during the winter 		2012, 2013

	intersession		
Question 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and do a survey with former graduates the possibility of having a mandatory dental assisting information session 		2012, 2013
Question 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-time faculty to attend national or regional educational meeting 		