

## **CAREER OF THE WEEK: Dentist**

### **What does a dentist do?**

Dentists are healthcare professionals who specialise in looking after people's teeth, gums, and mouths. They diagnose and treat dental problems, such as tooth decay, gum disease, and broken or missing teeth. A typical day might involve checking patients' teeth, taking X-rays, filling cavities, pulling teeth, or fitting crowns, dentures, or braces. Dentists also give advice on how to keep teeth healthy, including brushing techniques and diet.



Some dentists focus on a specific area, such as orthodontics (straightening teeth), paediatric dentistry (treating children), or oral surgery (like removing wisdom teeth). Dentists work in a variety of settings, including NHS and private dental practices, hospitals, or community clinics.

### **What can I expect to earn as a dentist?**

Dentists in the UK can earn a very good salary, especially with experience. If you work in the NHS as a dental foundation trainee (your first year after qualifying), you'll usually earn £40,776 a year (from 1 April 2024). Once fully qualified, your earnings will depend on where you work and your level of experience.

A dentist working in general practice could earn between £50,000 and £110,000. Specialists or dentists who run their own private practices can earn even more – sometimes over £140,000 a year.

### **What subjects should I study to become a dentist?**

To become a dentist, you'll need to study science subjects at school and college. Most dental schools require the following A-levels (or equivalent):

- Biology – essential
- Chemistry – usually required.
- One other subject – often Maths or Physics is preferred.

Strong GCSE results, especially in sciences, Maths, and English, are also important. Dental schools are competitive, so top grades are often needed.

### **How can I start my career as a dentist?**

To become a dentist in the UK, you'll need to complete a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) degree. This is a five-year university course that includes both academic study and hands-on clinical training. Entry is competitive, so work experience in a dental practice or healthcare setting will really help your application.

After your degree, you'll complete one year of foundation training in a dental practice, where you'll work under supervision. Once that's done, you're officially a qualified dentist.

From there, you can choose to work in general practice, the NHS, or private clinics. You could also go on to specialise further or even teach or do research in dentistry.

To research local education and training opportunities that could lead to a career as a dentist, visit our partner website [www.logonmoveon.co.uk](http://www.logonmoveon.co.uk)

### **Other useful websites to find out more about a career as a dentist:**

Health Careers, Dentist <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/roles-dental-team/dentist>

UCAS, Dentistry <https://www.ucas.com/explore/subjects/dentistry>

British Dental Association <https://www.bda.org/>

Studying Healthcare, Dentistry <https://studyinghealthcare.ac.uk/why-dentistry/>

Prospects, Dentist <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/job-profiles/dentist>

National Careers Service, Dentist <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/dentist>

