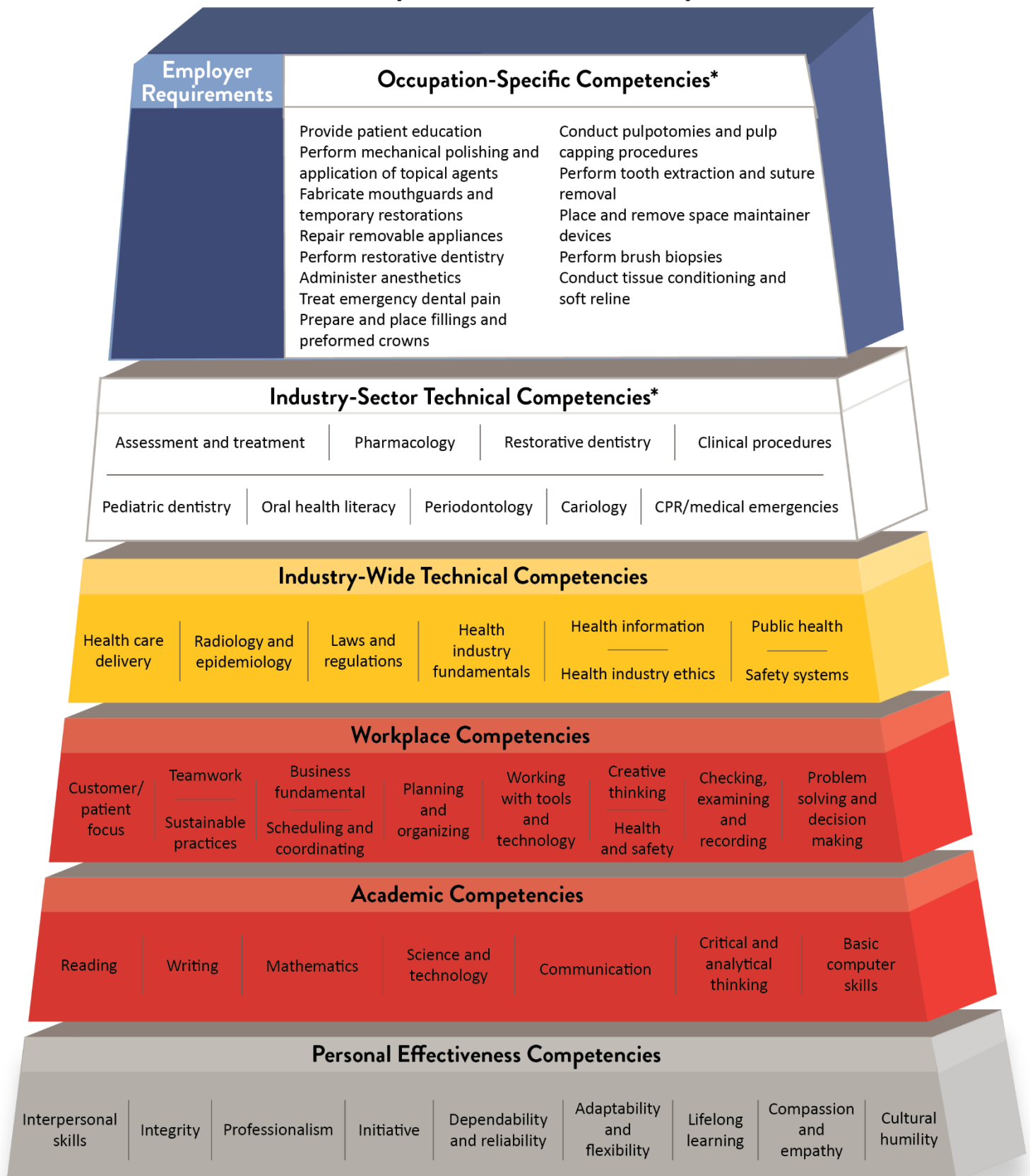


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline

Competency Model for Health Care Services

Occupation: Dental Therapist



Based on: Fundamentals of Health Care Competency Model, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/health-care-services.



Competency Model for Dental Therapist

Dental Therapist – A dental therapist is a licensed oral health professional who practices as part of the dental team to provide educational, clinical, and therapeutic patient services. There are two types of dental therapists in Minnesota; one is a traditional licensed Dental Therapist, and the other is a licensed Dental Therapist that has met certain criteria and achieved certification for Advanced Dental Therapist distinction. Dental Therapists and Advanced Dental Therapists have a specific scope of practice and are required to have a collaborative management agreement with dentists.

*Pipeline recommends the industry-sector technical competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Assessment and treatment** – Know how to implement a comprehensive approach to clinical assessment and treatment. Focus on the effect of systemic and oral diseases related to care.
- **Pharmacology** – Understand the patient's medical/dental health status and pharmacological report to discern appropriate treatment and necessary interventions.
- **Restorative dentistry** – Understand dentistry techniques that restore form, function, and esthetics to teeth with the purpose of contributing to both oral and general health.
- **Clinical procedures** – Know how to do core procedures in dentistry and preventive dentistry, how to accomplish them and the rationale behind them.
- **Pediatric dentistry** – Knowledge of procedures for the pediatric and adolescent patient within the context of the collaborative agreement.

- **Oral health literacy** – Understand health literacy and communication for individuals, families, and communities representing diverse backgrounds with strategies to provide equitable care for populations that may have experienced barriers in the past.
- **Periodontology** – Knowledge of periodontal diseases, assessment and treatment options.
- **Cariology** – Knowledge of dental caries and cariogenesis and how to perform fillings.
- **CPR/ medical emergencies** – Know how to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation on adults, children and infants and perform medical emergency management.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Provide patient education** – Be able to provide oral health instruction and disease prevention education to patients.
- **Perform mechanical polishing and application of topical agents** – Know how to perform application of agents such as fluoride varnishes and pit and fissure sealants. Also, know how to work with desensitizing medication or resin.
- **Fabricate mouthguards and temporary restorations** – Understand the fabrication of athletic mouthguards and soft occlusal guards and placement of temporary restorations.
- **Repair removable appliances** – Understand the process of repairing and fitting of removable appliances so that gums heal and dentures function comfortably and properly.
- **Perform restorative dentistry** – Understand restorative dentistry in which a tooth is reinserted and secured into its socket through dental procedures.
- **Administer anesthetics** – Able to administer local anesthetics and nitrous oxide.
- **Treat emergency dental pain** – Understand and know how to treat dental pain.
- **Prepare and place fillings and preformed crowns** – Be able to prepare teeth and place preformed and temporary crowns and recement permanent crowns.
- **Conduct pulpotomies and pulp capping procedures** – Understand procedures to prevent the pulp from being damaged in all teeth and to remove damaged pulp in primary teeth.

- **Perform tooth extraction and suture removal** – Know how to remove teeth from the mouth and remove the stitches following oral surgery.
- **Place and remove space maintainer devices** – Know how to perform placement and removal of space maintainers.
- **Perform brush biopsies** – Be able to perform a technique to screen the oral cavity of individuals who have a high risk of developing mouth cancer.
- **Conduct tissue conditioning and soft reline** – Know how to perform application of denture tissue conditioners and soft liners to improve denture fit, comfort, and function.

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