



Canadian Dental Assistants Association Salary and Benefits Survey 2013

Final Report

February 28, 2014

Confidential



Overview

The 2013 Salary and Benefits Report is the third in a series designed to facilitate comparisons of compensation and benefit with others having a similar profile of work setting and environment, geography, professional training and experience. Readers who are considering the impact of additional training, years of experience or working in another location might also find the report to be useful for them.

The results are based on the responses of 7,443 members of the participating organizations representing 36% of those surveyed. Overall results are accurate to within less than 1%, 19 times out of 20.

The report draws a picture of respondents' work situations and environments, personal and professional profiles, wages and benefits.

Readers are provided with bookmark navigation to zoom in on the results that are of most interest to them. The pages of this file are divided in two. The left-hand side presents "bookmarks" that can be used to take you directly to specific pages in the document. For example, readers can focus in on the results for their province, years of experience, education or specialty. Clicking on the triangle beside the bookmarks will "open them up" and provide a more detailed set of bookmarks for the section.

If you have had no experience with this type of navigation, give it a try and become comfortable with it before going on.

Participant Profile

- Dental assistants are in demand with an overall unemployment rate of 3.7%. This is about the same as the 3.6% rate in 2009 but up from 2.5% in 2011.
- Sixteen percent of respondents work in more than one office.
- Between 30% and 69% of respondents receive annual performance or salary reviews, or have negotiated a raise with their employer. Depending on the type of review, between 22% and 39% have not, but would like to.
- Nineteen percent of respondents share their job with another dental assistant. Of those who job share, 68% do so by choice; 32% job share but it is not their choice.
- As in 2011, three-quarters of respondents work full-time. A fifth work part-time, with 3% acting as relief or temporary dental assistants.
- According to the results of this survey, full-time employment can start at 30 hours per week and go beyond 40 hours. For most respondents, part-time employment means 30 hours per week or less.
- Sixty-nine percent of respondents in clinical practice described themselves as a chairside assistant. However, this varies with general, specialty or combined work settings.

Wages

- Wages are up from a national average of \$23.25 in 2011 to \$23.97 per hour in 2013; median hourly compensation has increased from \$22.25 to \$23.00.
- The average hourly wage for all respondents working in private practice varies between \$22.69 and \$24.92 per hour. Work setting, years of experience, geographical location and employment position significantly impact compensation.
- In most cases, advanced training is associated with higher wages.

Benefits

- All respondents working in dentistry reported receiving one or more benefits, either from their employer or from another source.
- Dental benefits — for respondents and their families — continuing education, pay bonus and a gift of appreciation are the most common employer provided benefits.

Personal and Professional Issues

- Almost half of the respondents (45%) plan to stay in the profession for more than 10 years; 28% will have to be replaced by new recruits over the next five years.
- In general, respondents like their profession and work environment.
- Advanced training is motivated primarily by personal and professional development, and the chance to do more interesting work. Time, effort and cost are factors that discourage additional training.

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Introduction

Canadian Dental Assistants Association

This study was sponsored by the Canadian Dental Assistants Association (CDAA). It is the national voice for dental assistants, supporting its Organizational Members by placing itself at the forefront of issues such as labour mobility, occupational analysis and workplace health and safety. The CDAA advances the profession of dental assisting by maintaining its involvement in these programs and remaining accessible to its Organizational Members, by offering information to dental assistants.

The CDAA supports formal education for dental assistants, dental assisting program accreditation through the Commission of Dental Accreditation in Canada (CDAC) and national certification through the National Dental Assisting Examining Board (NDAEB).

The CDAA maintains relationships with other oral health care associations, agencies involved in the support of oral health care practitioners and government agencies.

Salary Surveys

The 2013 Salary Survey is the third in a series designed to facilitate comparisons of compensation and benefit with others having a similar profile of work setting and environment, geography, professional training and experience.

The purpose of the report is to help inform decision-making by those considering entry into the field, dental assistants who are currently employed and those looking to upgrade their skills, employers of dental assistants and others who have an interest in the training and practice of dental assistants.

Method

Survey Instruments

The survey instruments — invitation to participate, reminders and the questionnaire — were based on the ones used in the 2009 and 2011 studies. Modifications were made in collaboration with representatives of the participating organizations. To accommodate to local needs, the questionnaire for Ontario Dental Assistants Association (ODAA) members differs somewhat from the one sent to other respondents. The survey instruments sent to dental assistants in Quebec were presented in French.

Data Collection

Participating Organizations

- Association des assistant(e)s dentaires du Quebec
- Certified Dental Assistants of British Columbia
- College of Alberta Dental Assistants
- Manitoba Dental Assistants Association
- New Brunswick Dental Assistants Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Dental Assistants Association
- Nova Scotia Dental Assistants Association
- Ontario Dental Assistants Association
- Prince Edward Island Dental Association¹
- Saskatchewan Dental Assistants Association

Since compensation and benefits for Canadian Forces personnel are pre-determined, they were not included in the survey. For more information about the role of dental assistants in the military, see <http://www.forces.ca/en/job/dentaltechnician-71>. Personnel at Canadian Armed Forces bases can provide details on compensation and benefits. Base location and contact information are available at <http://www.army-armee.forces.gc.ca/en/support-services/bases.page>.

Methods

With the exceptions of the dental assistants in PEI and Quebec-based practitioners who are not members of the Association des assistant(e)s dentaires du Quebec, all dental assistants for whom an email address was available were sent a personalized email with their provincial President or Executive Director as the sender. The message explained the purpose of the study, invited members to participate and provided a unique link to access the survey.

Survey participants were then able to make entries, save their data, go back to work on the questionnaire at another time and submit their questionnaire.

Dental assistants in Prince Edward Island and Quebec-based practitioners who are not members of the Association des assistant(e)s dentaires du Quebec were sent an email from an independent party.

¹ Dental assistants from Prince Edward Island do not have an independent organization. The Prince Edward Island Dental Association coordinates their activities.

Statistical Indicators

Average and Median

Two statistical indicators are used to represent the results for salary and benefits and to help make comparisons with peers: the average and median.

The average is usually the most reliable and valid indicator. However, it can be distorted, especially where very high or low values — outliers — are included in the calculation. For this reason, we also present the median value, the result that is half way between the highest score and the lowest one.

Where the results are normally distributed, the average and the median will be identical. As the differences between the average and the median increase, the reader should consider the median as a result that is the most representative of the group.

Data Analysis

Hourly Wage

Compensation in the 2013 survey was based primarily on hourly wages, with respondents receiving the following instructions:

If your compensation is based on an arrangement other than an hourly wage, please convert your income into an hourly wage equivalent. You might want to consult your T4 slip or a pay stub to help answer the questions about compensation. Hourly wage = annual income (before taxes and other deductions) from your certified dental assistant practice divided by the number of regular (not overtime) hours worked per year. For example, if you worked 52 weeks a year (vacation is included in your work weeks) and you work 30 hours per week, the number of hours would add up to 1,560 hours per year.

Work Settings

The survey asked participants to indicate whether they worked in one or more of 12 pre-determined work settings.² They also had the option of reporting an “other” work setting.

Respondents were assigned in the following ways:

- Those who selected only “general dentistry” and no other category were identified as “generalists.”
- Those who selected a specialty only, or a specialty in combination with general practice, were identified as “specialists.”³
- Those who identified themselves with “teaching” — whether alone or in combination with another work setting — were assigned to a teacher category.
- Respondents identifying themselves as “clinical assistants” — whether alone or in combination with another work setting — were assigned to a clinical assistant category.
- Those who identified themselves as working in a hospital, in the community or in a public health context were assigned to the same group.⁴
- Those who gave the response, “other,” were assigned to an “other” category.

Data Presentation

Salary and benefits results are presented only for those currently working in the field. Additional information is provided separately for those who are not working as a certified dental assistant.

To facilitate comparisons with colleagues, the report presents cross tabulations of hourly wages with respondent characteristics.

Where the number of respondents in a table falls below five, an asterisk replaces the results.

² Private Practice - General Dentistry; Private Practice - Specialty; Private Practice - General and Specialty; Public Educational Facility - Teaching; Public Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant; Private Educational Facility - Teaching; Private Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant; Hospital; Institution such as custodial care or extended care; Community/Public Health; Insurance; Dental Supply

³ Statistical analyses were conducted to ensure that no significant differences in hourly wage were found between sub-groups within the specialist category.

⁴ Statistical analyses were conducted to ensure that no significant differences in hourly wage were found between sub-groups within the hospital, community and public health category.

Study Limitations and Interpretation

When interpreting the results from this study, it is important to keep in mind the following limitations:

- Compensation and benefit means and ranges as well as other data are based on survey responses and are only as accurate as the data provided by those survey respondents.
 - Overall results are accurate to within 1%, 19 times out of 20 (95% confidence). While the overall results have a low margin of error, results for sub-groups (e.g., work environment) should be interpreted with caution due to the smaller sample sizes. On the other hand, the survey sample is very large and the results are impacted by a number of factors. For example, salary and benefits are strongly influenced by the work setting, as well as by personal and professional profiles. The results are presented in ways that reflect these factors. Readers should be careful to make comparisons with their colleagues whose profiles are most similar to theirs. They may also use the results of other profile groups to make decisions regarding a change to another work setting.
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Results

Response Rate and Responses

Overall Rate

Of the 20,577 dental assistants solicited, 7,443 filled out questionnaires for an overall completion rate of 36%. This is consistent with a margin of error of less than 1% (how far off from a “true” score a particular result might be) 19 times out of 20 (the percent of time that the true percentage of the population would lie within the margin of error of 5%).

Response by Province

Table 1 details the number of respondents in each province, the number in the survey sample, the response rate and the margin of error.

Table 1
Response Rates by Province

	Surveyed	Responses	Response Rate	Margin of Error
British Columbia	1,154	376	33%	4.25%
Alberta	5,221	1,697	33%	2.00%
Saskatchewan	1,237	403	33%	4.00%
Manitoba	1,051	344	33%	4.30%
Ontario	8,232	4,194	51%	1.08%
Quebec	2,125	69	3%	*
New Brunswick	419	109	26%	8.00%
Nova Scotia	653	145	22%	7.25%
PEI	200	37	19%	15.00%
Newfoundland	285	69	24%	10.00%

Methodological Note

In an ideal world, all dental assistants in Canada would have responded to the survey. In this case, the results would be 100% accurate. For example, if the average hourly wage were calculated as \$25.00, we would be 100% certain that, on average, dental assistants receive this level of compensation.

In the real world, less than 100% of the population respond so that statistical procedures are used to estimate the accuracy of the results. The margin of error estimates the range of values that best approximate the population. For example, a 10% margin of error means that the estimate of the average wage would vary between \$22.50 (10% lower than the “ideal” average) and \$27.50 (10% above). A 1% margin of error would make estimates between \$24.75 and \$25.75.

The calculation of the margin of error is based on the response rate and the size of the population. It is possible for samples to have the same rate of response but different margins of error due to the size of their populations. In this study, both British Columbia and Manitoba have the same rate of response (33%) but different margins of error. Since the number of dental assistants surveyed in British Columbia (1,154) is slightly higher than the number surveyed in Manitoba (1,051), the margin of error (4.25%) for British Columbia is slightly lower than Manitoba's (4.30%)

A review of Table 1 shows that provinces with smaller populations have higher margins of error. Where it exceeds 6%, some caution should be used in interpreting the results when they are reported on a province-by-province basis only.

As well, the low response rate for Quebec is due to combining members and non-members in the calculation, with the response rate for members being comparable to those in other provinces.



Work Situation

Employed in Dentistry

On average, about 90% of respondents are currently employed in dentistry or in a dentally related field. Table 2 shows that this varies from province to province.

Table 2
Respondents Currently Employed in Dentistry

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
British Columbia	344	91%
Alberta	1,462	86%
Saskatchewan	339	84%
Manitoba	314	91%
Ontario	3,721	89%
Quebec	62	90%
New Brunswick	92	84%
Nova Scotia	129	89%
PEI	33	89%
Newfoundland	57	83%

Seven of ten respondents (75%) employed in dentistry or a related field reported one work setting only, with 16% working in at least two settings.

Primary Work Settings

Table 3 details the distribution of respondents by primary work settings, with 90 % working in private practice.

Table 3
Distributions of Respondents by Primary Work Settings

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Private Practice - General Dentistry	4,542	67%
Private Practice - Specialty	1,005	15%
Private Practice – General and Specialty	543	8%
Public Educational Facility – Teaching	62	1%
Public Educational Facility – Administration	14	<1%
Public Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant	60	1%
Private Educational Facility - Teaching	58	1%
Private Educational Facility – Administration	*	*
Private Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant	13	<1%
Hospital	70	1%
Institution such as custodial care or extended care	7	<1%
Community/Public Health	208	3%
Insurance	7	<1%
Dental Supply	20	<1%
Regulatory body such as the provincial association of dental assistants	5	<1%
Other	183	3%

Table 4 shows the number and percent of respondents by primary work setting for the two main categories of work settings in each province.

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents by Primary Work Setting

	General Practice		Specialty Practice	
	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Number of Responses	% of Responses
British Columbia	237	69%	42	12%
Alberta	1,054	72%	239	16%
Manitoba	215	68%	62	20%
Saskatchewan	253	75%	43	13%
Ontario	2,524	68%	558	15%
Quebec	37	60%	10	16%
New Brunswick	72	78%	10	11%
Nova Scotia	88	68%	23	18%
PEI	22	67%	5	15%
Newfoundland	40	70%	13	23%

Secondary Work Settings

Table 5 details the distribution of respondents by secondary work settings, with 77 % working in private practice.

Table 5
Distributions of Respondents by Secondary Work Settings

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Private Practice - General Dentistry	691	57%
Private Practice - Specialty	92	8%
Private Practice – General and Specialty	142	12%
Public Educational Facility – Teaching	23	2%
Public Educational Facility – Administration	*	*
Public Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant	23	2%
Private Educational Facility - Teaching	19	2%
Private Educational Facility – Administration	*	*
Private Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant	*	*
Hospital	43	4%
Institution such as custodial care or extended care	6	<1%
Community/Public Health	62	5%
Insurance	*	*
Dental Supply	6	<1%
Regulatory body such as the provincial association of dental assistants	*	*
Other	110	9%

Not Employed in Dentistry

In general terms, unemployment is 3.7%, about the same as the 3.6% rate in 2009 but up from 2.5% in 2011.

Unemployment Rate

Of the 3,190 dental assistants surveyed on unemployment, 317 (9.9%) are currently not employed in dentistry. Of the 317, 119 (38%) reported that they were not seeking employment in dentistry. These results combine to show a real unemployment rate — dental assistants who are not employed in dentistry but are seeking work in the field — of 3.7%.

The unemployment rate varies from province to province. However, higher rates were observed only in those provinces where smaller populations produce more variable results.

Months Seeking Employment

Of the 190 respondents who reported the number of months they have been on the job market, three in ten (34%) have been seeking employment for one month or less, or for between two and four months (35%); two in ten (24%) for between five and 12 months; 7% for more than 12 months.

Reasons for Not Seeking Employment

The profile of reasons for not seeking employment in 2013 is similar to the ones reported in the past, with family responsibility, other reasons, poor wages and lack of benefits at the top of the list.

Table 6 lists reasons for not seeking employment, along with the number and percent of respondents for whom the reasons apply. Note that respondents were able to indicate more than one reason for not seeking work in dentistry.

Table 6
Reasons for Not Seeking Employment in Dentistry

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Family responsibility	229	37%
Other reasons	205	33%
Poor wages	126	20%
Lack of benefits	115	18%
No jobs available	105	17%
Retraining for another profession/career	84	13%
Medical disability	36	6%
Retired	32	5%
Working in dental related field	24	4%

Work Environment

The results in this section apply to respondents who work in a dental office.

Number of Years Working in Current Primary Office

Table 7 shows a pattern of “years in current primary office” that is almost identical to the ones reported in the past.

Table 7
Years in Primary Office

Years in Current Office	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Less than one year	435	17%
1	243	9%
2	297	11%
3	246	9%
4 - 5	349	13%
6 - 8	391	15%
9 - 10	147	6%
11 - 15	306	12%
16 - 20	146	6%
More than 20 years	54	2%

Reviews

Table 8 shows that between 30% and 69% of respondents receive annual performance or salary reviews, or have negotiated a raise with their employer. Between 22% and 39% have not, but would like to.

Table 8
Performance and Salary Reviews, Negotiated Wages

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Performance Reviews		
Yes	2,630	38%
No, but I would like to have one	2,019	29%
No	2,204	32%
Salary Reviews		
Yes	2,068	30%
No, but I would like to have one	2,693	39%
No	2,081	30%
Negotiated a Raise		
Yes	3,048	44%
No, but I would like to	1,507	22%
No	2,406	35%

Job Sharing

Nineteen percent of respondents share their job with another dental assistant. Of those who job share, 68% do so by choice; 32% job share but it is not their choice. These results are almost identical to those obtained in the past.

Table 9 indicates that job sharing varies from 7% of respondents in Nova Scotia to more than 21% in Quebec. The provinces with highest populations have about the same job sharing rates: Ontario 14% and Alberta 15%.⁵

Table 9
Job Sharing by Province

Regions	Yes, by Choice		Yes, but not by Choice		No	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
British Columbia	35	11%	22	7%	263	82%
Alberta	216	15%	70	5%	1,153	80%
Saskatchewan	27	8%	8	2%	293	89%
Manitoba	38	13%	15	5%	244	82%
Ontario	192	14%	118	9%	1,027	77%
Quebec	12	21%	6	10%	40	69%
New Brunswick	12	13%	6	7%	73	80%
Nova Scotia	9	7%	8	6%	108	86%
PEI	1	3%	2	6%	30	91%
Newfoundland	5	9%	4	7%	46	84%

⁵ Results showing the percent of respondents who job share "by choice" and "not by choice" in provinces with smaller populations should be interpreted with caution. A small change in the numbers could result in a relatively large change in the percent reported.

Time at Work in Dental Office

Overall, about three-quarters of respondents work full-time (75%). A fifth (22%) work part-time, with 3% acting as relief or temporary dental assistants, results similar to 2009 and 2011.

Table 10 shows that full-time employment is most frequent in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Quebec. It is least frequent in Alberta and British Columbia.

Table 10
Employment Status — Full-Time, Part-Time, Relief/Temp — in Each of the Provinces Surveyed

Provinces	Full-Time		Part-Time		Relief/Temp	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
British Columbia	212	65%	104	32%	11	3%
Alberta	1,036	71%	395	27%	32	2%
Saskatchewan	259	78%	58	18%	13	4%
Manitoba	231	75%	71	23%	5	2%
Ontario	2,846	77%	780	21%	77	2%
Quebec	48	83%	9	16%	1	2%
New Brunswick	74	80%	18	20%	0	0%
Nova Scotia	109	85%	16	13%	3	2%
PEI	28	85%	3	9%	2	6%
Newfoundland	51	88%	7	12%	0	0%

Virtually all respondents work between eight and nine hours per day, with between two-thirds and three-quarters working between 30 and 40 hours per week. This is also the range of hours given by most respondents (73%) who identified themselves as working full-time.

Forty percent of respondents work 52 weeks per year; 40% work between 46 and 51 weeks per year; 17% work 41 weeks per year or less.

Professional Profile

Current Employment Status

Table 11 shows that half of respondents (57%) identify themselves as holding a chairside dental assistant intra-oral position, with another third categorizing themselves as chair side level one (12%), "other" (9%), receptionist (9%) or manager (office/program/department) (5%).

Table 11
Current Primary Employment Position

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Chairside dental assistant intra-oral including specialties	3,984	57%
Chairside Level One	857	12%
Other	646	9%
Receptionist	642	9%
Manager (office/program/department)	356	5%
Treatment coordinator	220	3%
Dental Education	178	3%
Hygienist	41	1%
Financial coordinator	36	1%
Hygienist coordinator	33	<1%
Insurance claims	27	<1%
Dental Sales	19	<1%

Business or Office Manager

In order to establish the proportion of dental assistants who are employed in the business office or as the office manager, respondents were asked to indicate whether they played one of these roles. Of the 1,357 respondents who are employed in the business office or as office manager, 30% report having formal education in this area, i.e. a certificate or diploma.

Designation or Professional Credentials

Table 12 shows the distribution of respondents by the credentials or designations they hold. Note that the total number of responses exceeds the number of participants in the survey. This is because some respondents hold more than one designation or professional credential.

Table 12
Designation or Professional Credentials

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
CDA	1,415	17%
CDA I	89	1%
CDA II	4,455	53%
DA (Saskatchewan)	272	3%
CPDA	198	2%
RDA (includes Saskatchewan)	1,604	19%
CDR	270	3%
CDTC	84	1%
Non-certified	44	1%
Student	36	0%

Table 13
Year in Which CDA Certificate was Awarded

Year	Number of Responses	% of Responses
2000 or before	3,047	51%
2001-2005	871	14%
2006 or after	2,099	35%

Training

Orthodontic Module

Table 14
Orthodontic Module

Completion of Module	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	889	30%
No	2,044	70%

Prosthodontic Module

Table 15
Prosthodontic Module

Completion of Module	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	677	24%
No	2,198	76%

Periodontal Screening and Recording Course (PSR)

Table 16
Periodontal Screening and Recording (PSR) Course

Completion of Module and Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Yes	763	26%
No	2,127	74%

Personal Profile

Age

Table 17 details the number and percent of respondents in six age groups.

Table 17
Age Distribution

Age Groups	Number of Responses	% of Responses
30 or less	1,858	26%
30 - 35	906	13%
36 - 40	944	13%
41 - 45	1,097	16%
46 - 50	952	14%
51 and over	1,269	18%

Virtually all respondents (95%) indicated that they are aware of all the functions they are able to perform. Eight of ten (80%) reported that they perform all the functions for which they have been trained.

Hourly Wage⁶

Hourly wages are up from a national average of \$23.25 in 2011 to \$23.97 per hour in 2013; median hourly compensation has increased from \$22.25 to \$23.00. Private practice CDAs — general and specialty — have seen their wages increase by between 0.9% and 3.4%. It is difficult to accurately interpret the results for other work settings due to the relatively small numbers of respondents. As well, there are cases where comparisons are not applicable (NA) since the categories are new to the survey.

Work Setting

Table 18
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Work Setting

Work Setting	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median	% change
Private Practice - General Dentistry	3,668	67%	\$23.34	\$22.50	3.43%
Private Practice - Specialty	837	15%	\$24.92	\$24.00	3.33%
Private Practice – General and Specialty	421	8%	\$22.69	\$22.00	0.93%
Public Educational Facility – Teaching	50	1%	\$39.23	\$39.00	10.12%
Public Educational Facility – Administration	8	<1%	\$29.69	\$26.49	NA
Public Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant	48	1%	\$26.85	\$25.00	13.07%
Private Educational Facility - Teaching	49	1%	\$27.91	\$27.00	-2.53%
Private Educational Facility – Administration	*	*	*	*	NA
Private Educational Facility - Clinical Assistant	9	<1%	\$24.74	\$20.99	16.23%
Hospital	59	1%	\$27.34	\$25.84	35.45%
Institution such as custodial care or extended care	6	<1%	\$25.74	\$26.50	-7.92%
Community/Public Health	167	3%	\$28.66	\$28.00	-0.73%
Insurance	6	<1%	\$23.79	\$25.38	17.95%
Dental Supply	14	<1%	\$30.53	\$29.84	6.28%
Regulatory body such as the provincial association of dental assistants	5	<1%	\$39.93	\$35.00	NA
Other	121	2%	\$26.36	\$25.00	-14.38%

⁶ The calculation of hourly wage is detailed in the Methods Section, page 5.

Job Sharing

Table 19 shows that respondents who job share— especially those who do not job share by choice — earn a lower wage than those who do not, a gap that is widening when compared to previous results.

Table 19
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Job Sharing

Job Share Status	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Yes and this is my choice	451	14%	\$24.31	\$24.00
Yes but this is not my choice	174	5%	\$22.01	\$21.52
No	2,692	81%	\$25.28	\$25.00

Full-Time, Part-Time, Relief

As in previous years, respondents who do relief or temporary work will earn less than their peers who work full-time or part-time.

Table 20
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Time at Work

Time at Work	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Full-time	3,922	74%	\$24.07	\$23.00
Part-time	1,234	23%	\$23.74	\$23.00
Relief/Temp	119	2%	\$22.86	\$21.10

Hours Worked per Week

In contrast to the results of the 2011 survey, respondents who work more hours per week also earn a higher hourly wage.

Table 21
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Number of Hours Worked per Week

Hours Worked	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Less than 20	561	11%	\$23.58	\$23.00
20 to 29	753	14%	\$23.98	\$23.00
30 to 35	1,914	36%	\$23.97	\$23.00
36 to 40	1,878	36%	\$23.80	\$23.00
More than 40	142	3%	\$27.00	\$26.00

Office Manager

As in the past, respondents who are employed in the Business Office or as Office Manager earned somewhat less if they had formal education in the area than those who didn't.

Table 22
Hourly Wage for All Respondents who are Employed in the Business Office or as Office Manager
by Formal Education in the Area

Formal Education in Area	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Yes	989	28%	\$22.85	\$22.00
No	2,507	72%	\$24.10	\$23.00

Employment Position

Table 23
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Employment Position

Position	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Chairside Level One	665	12%	\$22.40	\$22.00
Chairside dental assistant intra-oral including specialties	3,235	57%	\$23.51	\$23.00
Receptionist	528	9%	\$22.61	\$22.00
Financial coordinator	30	1%	\$25.94	\$24.50
Treatment coordinator	179	3%	\$25.41	\$25.00
Manager (office/program/department)	308	5%	\$28.71	\$28.00
Hygienist coordinator	23	%	\$20.14	\$20.00
Hygienist	26	%	\$28.90	\$30.00
Dental Sales	13	%	\$32.88	\$29.67
Dental Education	145	3%	\$31.50	\$28.00
Insurance claims	22	%	\$25.10	\$25.43
Other	459	8%	\$24.46	\$24.00

Year of Graduation

As in the past, the more experienced the respondent, the higher the hourly wage. These results are detailed in Table 24.

Table 24
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Year of Graduation

Year of Graduation	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
2000 or before	2,515	52%	\$25.92	\$25.00
2001-2005	684	14%	\$23.69	\$23.00
2006 or after	1,619	34%	\$20.99	\$20.00

Training Modules

Table 25 shows that a 7% premium is paid to respondents who have completed the orthodontic module⁷.

Table 25
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Completion of the Orthodontic Module⁸

Completion of Module and Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Yes	738	30%	\$27.48	\$27.00
No	1,706	70%	\$25.65	\$25.00

Table 26 shows that there is a 13% premium paid to respondents who have completed the prosthodontic module.

Table 26
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Completion of the Prosthodontic Module

Completion of Module and Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Yes	584	24%	\$28.64	\$28.00
No	1,821	76%	\$25.40	\$25.00

⁷ Not surveyed in Ontario

⁸ While dental assistants cannot practice orthodontic skills in Ontario, respondents may have taken the course but are not allowed to perform the duties.

Table 27 shows that there is a 6% premium paid to respondents who have completed the scaling or limited scaling course (Preventive Dentistry Module in Alberta).

Table 27
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Completion of the Scaling or Limited Scaling Course

Completion of Module and Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Yes	109	5%	\$27.73	\$28.00
No	2,283	95%	\$26.12	\$26.00

Table 28 shows that there is a 10% premium paid to respondents who have completed the periodontal screening and recording course.

Table 28
Hourly Wage for All Respondents by Completion of the Periodontal Screening and Recording Course

Completion of Module and Practice	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Yes	640	27%	\$28.13	\$28.00
No	1,774	73%	\$25.50	\$25.00

Respondents were asked to indicate the premium that they are paid for having completed one or more of the modules, or indicate that no premium is paid. Surprisingly, 94% of those who answered reported no change. Three percent indicated that their raise was no more than one dollar per hour; 4% got more than a one-dollar per hour raise.

Province

Table 29 shows significant differences between the wages paid in the provinces, with Alberta and British Columbia offering compensation between 31% and 50% higher than New Brunswick.

Table 29
Hourly Wages by Province

Range of Years	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
British Columbia	315	6%	\$25.29	\$24.15
Alberta	1,325	23%	\$28.91	\$28.50
Manitoba	273	5%	\$22.44	\$22.00
Saskatchewan	300	5%	\$25.82	\$25.00
Ontario	3,127	55%	\$22.16	\$21.36
Quebec	44	1%	\$19.57	\$19.69
New Brunswick	76	1%	\$19.34	\$19.00
Nova Scotia	117	2%	\$20.13	\$19.50
PEI	28	<1%	\$19.65	\$17.25
Newfoundland	53	1%	\$18.53	\$18.00

Table 30 shows that the hourly wage paid in urban areas is 6% higher than in rural ones.

Table 30
Hourly Wages by Geographical Location

Range of Years	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Urban	3,238	58%	\$24.46	\$24.00
Suburban	1,392	25%	\$23.59	\$23.00
Rural	971	17%	\$22.98	\$22.00

Reviews

Table 31 shows that, respondents who have a performance or salary review, or have negotiated a raise, earn a higher average wage than those who do not. Importantly, average wages are the lowest for respondents who want a review or salary negotiation but do not have one.

Table 31
Performance and Salary Reviews, Negotiated of Wages and Hourly Wage

	Number of Responses	% of Responses	Average	Median
Performance Reviews				
Yes	2,132	39%	\$25.00	\$24.00
No, but I would like to have one	1,648	30%	\$23.10	\$22.00
No	1,736	31%	\$23.75	\$23.00
Salary Reviews				
Yes	1,667	30%	\$24.76	\$24.00
No, but I would like to have one	2,195	40%	\$23.14	\$22.06
No	1,647	30%	\$24.48	\$23.75
Negotiated a Raise				
Yes	2,484	45%	\$24.68	\$24.00
No, but I would like to	1,201	22%	\$22.13	\$21.13
No	1,890	34%	\$24.25	\$23.15

Adjustments

Figure 1 shows that more than half of respondents had no change in their compensation in 2013. A third (34%) reported an increase; 14% a decrease. The percent of respondents reporting increases is over twice as high as those reporting decreases.⁹

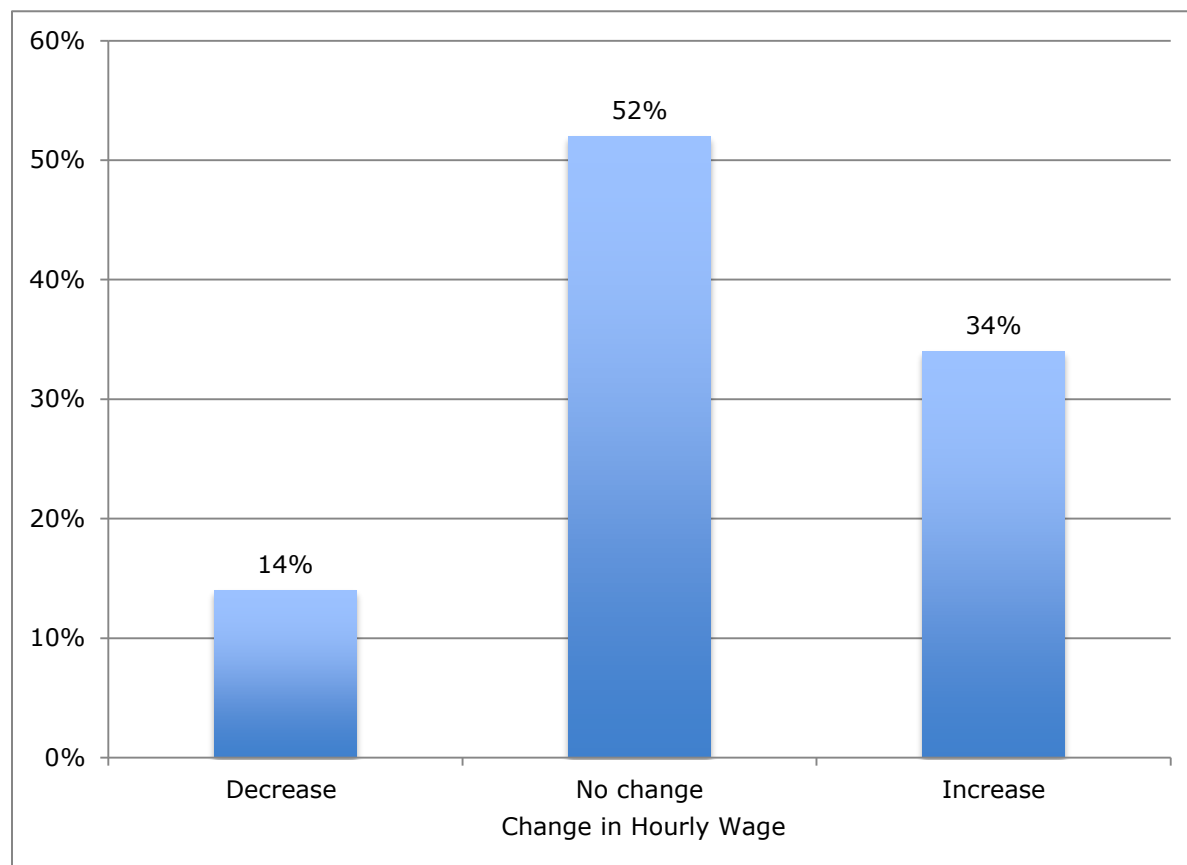


Figure 1 Change in hourly wage.

Table 32
Ways in Which Wage Increases are Determined

	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Employment agreement	699	9%
Based on a union contract	176	2%
Based on cost of living	495	7%
Based on merit	728	10%
Based on profitability	870	16%
No wage increases	1,179	21%
Other	980	17%

⁹ Not surveyed in Ontario.

Overtime

Overall, 52% of respondents work overtime:

- 61% do it by choice; 39% do not;
- 71% of those who work overtime are compensated for it; 29% are not.

Compensation has a significant impact on choice:

- 85% who do it by choice are compensated for it;
- 70% who would not choose to work overtime are compensated for it.

Table 33 shows that half of those who are compensated for overtime are paid at their regular rate; a third get a premium.

Table 33
Compensation for Overtime

Regions	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Paid at your regular rate	1,722	49%
Paid at a premium rate, e.g. time and a half	1,108	32%
Time bank	472	14%
Other	191	5%

Compensation rates also have a significant impact on whether overtime is worked by choice or not:

- 63% who choose to work overtime are paid a premium rate compared to 31% of those who do not;
- 63% who choose to work overtime are paid through a time bank compared to 30% of those who do not;
- 54% who choose to work overtime are paid a regular rate compared to 35% of those who do not.

Dental Assistant Functions

Respondents who are fully aware of all the functions that a dental assistant is able to perform in their geographical area earn, on average significantly more (\$24.07) than those who are not (\$22.82).

Respondents who are able to perform all the functions for which they have been trained earn slightly less (\$23.95) than those who are not (\$24.23). In these cases, dental assistants may not be assigned to do all the functions for which they have been trained. In any event, the differences between the amounts earned are not significant.

Benefits

The survey asked respondents to indicate the source of the benefits listed in the tables in this section. As well, they reported on how the benefit was paid:

- in whole, or in part, by their employer;
- as a contribution from their spouse's benefit package, i.e. being covered as a family member;
- in whole, or in part, by themselves;
- from another source.

The tables provide both the number and percent of respondents. However, since benefits may come from multiple sources, the percentages will not add up to 100%

Table 34
Annual License Fee Benefit¹⁰

	Number of responses	Percent of responses
100% of the annual license fee is paid by my employer	600	19%
Part of the annual license fee is paid by my employer	91	3%
No benefit	2,253	71%

¹⁰ Not surveyed in Ontario using the same parameters.

Table 35
Benefits Provided by Source

Benefit	Employer		Spousal Policy		Another Source		No Benefit	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dental to you	4,103	63%	2,577	39%	922	14%	1,037	16%
Dental benefit to your family	3,070	47%	2,813	43%	419	6%	1,605	24%
Massage Therapy	2,121	32%	2,468	38%	407	6%	3,177	48%
Paid sick leave	1,911	29%	97	1%	208	3%	4,718	72%
Registration for a professional or scientific conference	1,454	62%	5	<1%	83	4%	1,142	48%
Physiotherapy	1,067	16%	2,419	37%	354	5%	3,320	51%
Medical Services Plan (MSP)	1,065	16%	2,461	38%	458	7%	3,161	48%
Chiropractic services	1,036	16%	1,767	27%	327	5%	2,717	41%
Life insurance	948	14%	1,194	18%	2,653	40%	2,714	41%
Disability insurance	889	14%	897	14%	858	13%	4,160	63%
RRSP/Pension	827	13%	596	9%	1,455	22%	4,233	65%
Critical Illness	825	15%	729	13%	562	10%	3,509	63%
Personal malpractice insurance	648	10%	448	7%	1,053	16%	5,107	78%
Professional fees paid	553	23%	36	2%	79	3%	2,220	94%
Physical Training program	295	5%	233	4%	184	3%	5,200	79%

- Four of ten respondents reported receiving a bonus (40%).
- Sixty-one percent of respondents reported receiving a gift of thanks (61%)¹¹; 17% got flex hours as a benefit.
- Two of ten respondents (22%) have 100% of workman's compensation paid by their employer; 5% have it partially paid; 4% get payment from another source. Seventy-three percent report not receiving this benefit.
- Three of ten respondents (27%) have their uniforms fully paid by their employer; 26% get partial payment; 1% get payment from another source. Fifty-two percent report not receiving this benefit.
- Half (48%) the respondents reported a vacation benefit exceeding the required 4%; 8% get a partial benefit from their employer; 1% from another source.

¹¹ Not surveyed in Ontario.

Personal and Professional Issues

Years to Stay in the Profession

Table 36 shows that almost half of the respondents (45%) plan to stay in the profession for more than 10 years. It also indicates that 28% of the group will have to be replaced by new recruits over the next five years.

Table 36
Staying in the Profession

	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Five years or less	1,841	28%
6 – 10 years	1,776	27%
11 – 15 years	884	13%
More than 15	2,122	32%

Reasons to Leave the Profession

Respondents were surveyed on reasons why they would leave the profession. Table 37 shows that three of ten identify retirement, a new career and family responsibility as reasons to leave the profession. Less than 10% report a poor climate in the workplace, a lack of jobs or a move to an area where they would not be certified as reasons for not continuing as a dental assistant.

Table 37
Reasons to Leave the Profession

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of All Respondents
Retirement	1178	36%
New Career	977	30%
Family responsibility	961	30%
Lack of employment benefits	852	26%
Poor wages	742	23%
Medical disability or health issues	658	20%
Maternity leave or extended maternity leave	648	20%
Need for new challenges	638	20%
Unsatisfactory working conditions	497	15%
Retraining/Education	372	11%
My family no longer needs the income that I earn	350	11%
Poor climate in the workplace	301	9%
No jobs available	233	7%
Moving to a location where my certification is not recognized	172	5%

Reasons for a Second Employment

Table 38 shows the reasons respondents gave for taking on a second employment. Money, or money related items, account for 29% of the reasons, quality of working life explains another 29%.

Table 38
Reasons for a Second Employment¹²

	Number of Respondents	Percentage of All Respondents
The income I earn from my primary employer is not sufficient	166	14%
The variety it gives me	151	12%
The flexibility it gives me	139	11%
The hours from my primary employer are not sufficient	115	9%
The benefits I earn from my primary employer are not sufficient	71	6%
It's my way of networking within the profession	70	6%
I had an offer I could not refuse	60	5%
I cannot find one full-time job	44	4%

Reasons to Like the Profession

Figure 2 shows between 80% and 90% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that they like the profession because they are helping people (89%), working with people (88%), have a sense of accomplishment (83%) and the chance to learn (82%). For seven of ten, it's being part of a team (78%) and making a difference (77%). Sixty-two percent gave the same rating for flexibility.

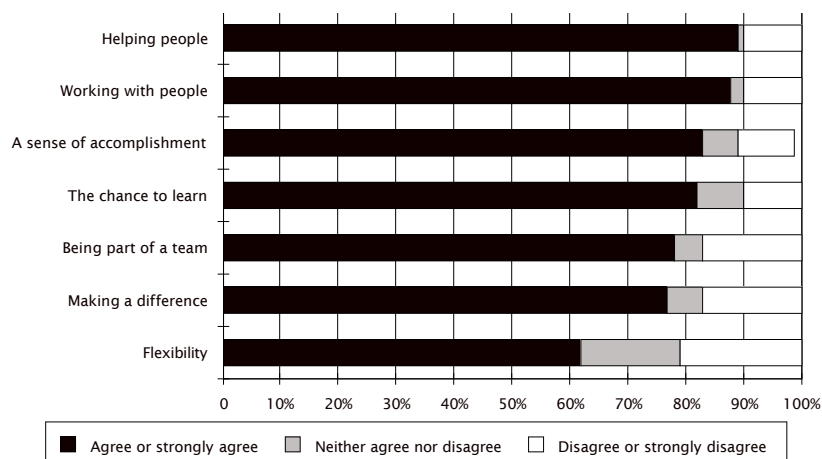


Figure 2 Reasons to like the profession

¹² Not surveyed in Ontario.

Costs and Benefits of Advanced Training

In weighing the costs and benefits, respondents are more likely to pursue advanced training for their personal or professional development and to gain access to more interesting work.

Costs and benefits are about even when the outcome is higher income or better benefits, or when the amount of effort is considered.

The dollar cost of the training (money paid) and the opportunity cost of the training (money the dental assistant didn't earn during the training period) are seen as costs that exceed benefits.

These results are illustrated in Figure 3.

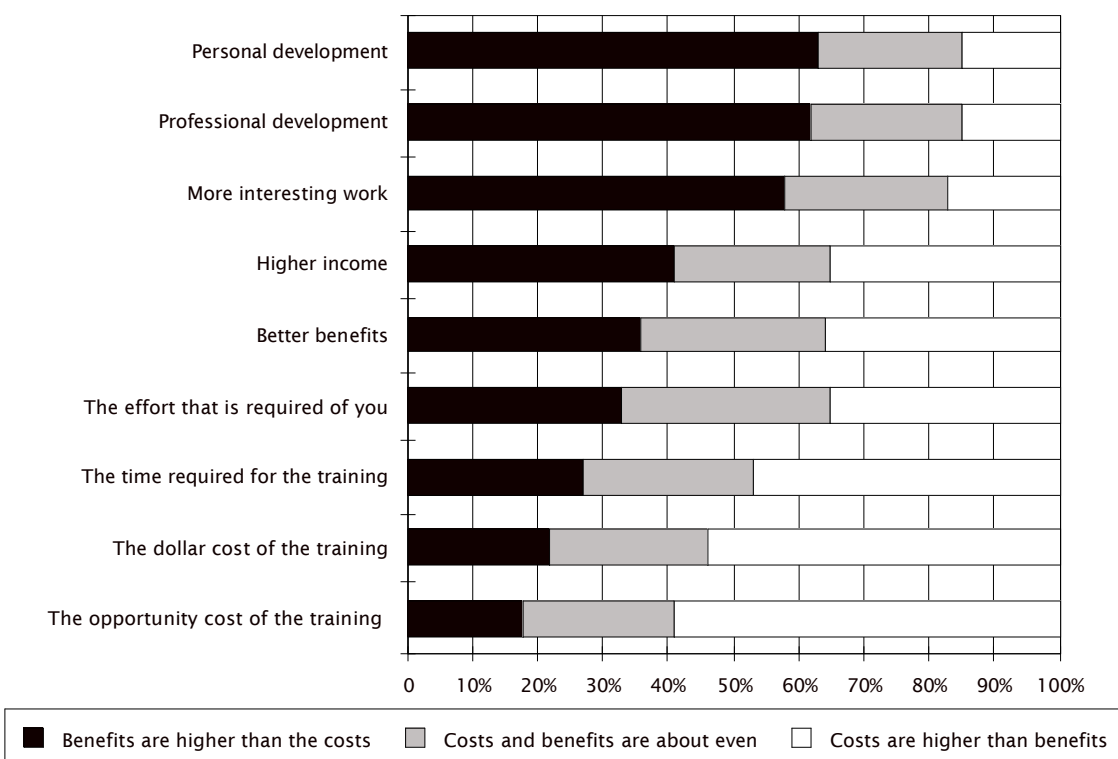


Figure 3 Costs and benefits of advanced training

Almost all (99%) of respondents identified themselves as female.



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