

Dental Laboratory Technician

Build the crowns, bridges and dentures that go in people's mouths. A craft trade with a scanner in it.

TYPICAL PAY

\$49,610

a year, full time

PAY RANGE

\$37k to \$77k

starting to experienced

TIME TO QUALIFY

up to 2 years

after high school

DEMAND

Limited

job outlook

LICENCE NEEDED

No

anyone can do it

WHERE YOU WORK

**Commercial dental laboratories,
in-house labs at dental practices,...**

How you get there

- 1 High school diploma** Grade 12
Art, shop and chemistry matter more than biology here. Bring steady hands and good color vision.
- 2 Get into a lab** Weeks to months
Labs hire trainees with no experience for model work and finishing. Walk in with examples of anything you have made by hand.
- 3 Learn one department** 1 to 3 years
Crown and bridge, ceramics, removable dentures or orthodontics. Technicians specialize early.
- 4 Learn the digital side** Ongoing
Scanning, design software, milling and 3D printing. This is now most of the new work coming into labs.
- 5 Certification, if you want it** After 2 or more years
The Certified Dental Technician credential, through written and practical exams in your specialty.

Pros and cons

- + You get paid from day one and pay nothing for training
- + Quiet, focused work with no patients and no emergencies
- + A genuine craft skill you can still see at the end of the day
- The federal outlook is below average and the field is shrinking
- Overseas labs undercut American prices on routine work
- Pay is modest compared to the clinical side of dentistry

Good to know

The hardest part is matching one tooth

A full set of dentures is easier than a single front crown. If everything is new, it only has to look right together. One crown between two natural teeth has to match color, translucency and surface texture exactly, i...

The lathe is being replaced by a mill

Most crowns today are designed on a screen and cut from a solid disc of zirconia by a milling machine, or printed. The craft has not disappeared, but it has moved: the skill is now in the design file and t...

Optional boosts

Ceramics. Crown and bridge. Removable dentures. Implants.

Where these numbers come from

My Next Move: Dental Laboratory Technicians (51-9081.00)
National Board for Certification in Dental Laboratory Technology
Commission on Dental Accreditation
American Dental Association

Numbers checked September 2026. Pay figures are typical full-time annual amounts in United States dollars, based on Bureau of Labor Statistics wage data and published pay scales. They vary by state, employer and experience. Tuition is for in-state students at public schools unless the card says otherwise. Sources, links and the click-through version: <https://career.help/us/careers/dental-laboratory-technician>



Scan for the full clicker