

UNM-Gallup Dental Assisting Program

Acceptance Policy

The dental assisting program accepts 12 students per year. The program selects the students based on the Acceptance Policy below until the program has 12 students. Any students who apply and are qualified after the program is full will be placed on a waiting list.

The dental assisting program starts accepting applications Jan. 15 of each year and starts sending out acceptance letters June 1 of each year.

1. Standardized Scholastic Aptitude Assessment

Because there are no high school or college courses being weighed, the entrance exam (Accuplacer) serves as the primary predictor of a student's ability to handle the biomedical, dental science, and pharmacological aspects of the program.

- **Next Generation Accuplacer**
 - Score Reading/Writing 245 or higher
 - Score Math 244 or higher
- If the student does not meet the Accuplacer scores needed, then they can qualify for the program by having a 2.5 GPA from transcripts within the last 3 years. Emphasis is on Science, Math, and ELA grades with a C or better.

2. Occupational Exposure & Background Experience

This section looks at whether an applicant understands the clinical care and fast-paced workplace layout.

- **Observation at a dental clinic** (Singed by office manager)
 - *Minimum 16 hours to Maximum 32 hours (Lunch and breaks do not count towards hours)*

3. Standalone Interview & Writing Sample

A live screening to judge non-cognitive traits like empathy, manual tracking potential, professionalism, and communication skills under pressure.

- **Structured Interview with Program Director:** using standardized scenario prompts. (This may be done in-person or on Zoom.)
- **Technical Writing Sample:** Evaluated rubric ranking vocabulary precision, argument cohesion, and logic.

Dental Assisting Program Admission Rubric

Total Maximum Points Available: 100 Points

1. Standardized Scholastic Aptitude Assessment (Max: 40 Points)

The Accuplacer serves as the baseline academic predictor for rigorous biomedical, dental science, and pharmacology coursework.

Assessment Metric	Score Range	Points Awarded
Next-Generation Reading & Writing	260 or higher	20 Points
	245 – 259 (<i>Minimum Requirement</i>)	15 Points
	Less than 245	0 Points (<i>Ineligible</i>)
Next-Generation Quantitative Math	255 or higher	20 Points
	244 – 254 (<i>Minimum Requirement</i>)	15 Points
	Less than 244	0 Points (<i>Ineligible</i>)

2. Occupational Exposure & Background Experience (Max: 25 Points)

Evaluates the applicant's real-world familiarity with fast-paced clinical workflows. Hours must be verified/signed by an Office Manager.

- **Fewer than 16 hours:** 0 Points (*Does not meet minimum application threshold*)
- **16 – 23 hours:** 15 Points
- **24 – 31 hours:** 20 Points
- **32 hours (Maximum capped):** 25 Points

Note: Meal breaks and rest periods must be deducted from the total logged hours.

3. Interview & Technical Writing Sample (Max: 35 Points)

Assesses non-cognitive essential skills: empathy, professionalism, communication, and logical reasoning.

Part A: Structured Interview with Program Director (Max: 20 Points)

Applicants are scored across four standardized scenario prompts (ranked 1-5 points each: 1 = Poor, 3 = Solid, 5 = Exceptional).

- **Empathy & Patient Care** (1 – 5 Points)
- **Manual Tracking Potential & Spatial Awareness** (1 – 5 Points)
- **Professionalism & Ethical Judgment** (1 – 5 Points)
- **Communication Under Pressure** (1 – 5 Points)

Part B: Technical Writing Sample Rubric (Max: 15 Points)

Evaluated immediately following the live screening session.

Criterion	Exceptional (5 pts)	Proficient (3 pts)	Developing (1 pt)
Vocabulary Precision	Uses accurate, professional terminology; zero spelling/grammar issues.	Clear language; minor errors that do not disrupt readability.	Vague terminology; frequent errors obscure meaning.
Argument Cohesion	Smooth transitions; perfectly structured introduction, body, and conclusion.	Generally organized; minor lapses in paragraph flow.	Disorganized; thoughts feel scattered or disconnected.
Logic & Problem Solving	Directly answers the prompt with sound, deeply rationalized logic.	Addresses the prompt logically, but lacks deep analysis.	Lacks a clear thesis or relies on circular reasoning.

Score Summary Breakdown

- **Academic Readiness (Accuplacer):** 40% of total score
- **Clinical Exposure (Observation):** 25% of total score
- **Professional Persona (Interview/Writing):** 35% of total score