

Dental Assistant

An Australian School-based Apprenticeship Case Study 

ASBA program helps 'fill the gap' for dentists

Two high school students from Mueller College high school in north Brisbane are set to complete their Certificate III in Dental Assisting by the end of their Year 12 studies, later this year. The College prepares students for their transition to the workplace with a thorough vocational education certificate program and helps coordinate and support Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASBAs, known as SATs in QLD) with local businesses.

Rachel Gough, a year 12 student, who wants to be a Dental Assistant when she finishes school, has been working one day a week at Marty's Dental Clinic for the last 14 months. Her employer, Therese Marty, is very pleased with her decision to take on an ASBA. "I wondered at first whether a teenager would work out, but after only two months, she was very helpful and useful. She is enthusiastic and eager to learn. I am happy to employ her full-time when she finishes school," says Ms Marty.

At a glance

- An ASBA arrangement with one employer, one student and a RTO.
- Students do a minimum of 48 days on-the-job in both Year 11 and 12, and complete their theory work in addition to this, either at school or sometimes during their time at the workplace.
- They can work either one day a week or two split shifts as well as some school holidays on a casual basis.
- Timetabling is modified to allow students to catch up on any schoolwork they miss. Work can also be organised so that students complete a full school study program to allow them to gain a university entry score.
- The Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE is the RTO. Training is by flexible mode, with workbooks, email and phone access to trainers and support. The workplace helps with her learning tasks and school provides support too.

Key outcomes

Rachel Gough and her fellow ASBA will both finish school with a Certificate III in Dental Assisting that will give them direct entry to work in this area of skill shortages.

Rachel plans to work as a full-time Dental Assistant and the other ASBA student plans to go to university, but can use the Certificate III to gain part-time work.

The skills they have learnt are also useful for work in business (reception) and jobs working with people (communication skills etc).

Marty's Dental Clinic is happy with the ASBA program and arrangements and would continue to take ASBA students in the future when need arises.



CAREER FACTS

- *ASBA Qualification: Certificate III in Dental Assisting*
- *Jobs: Work as a Dental Assistant*
- *Career Pathway: Further study Cert IV in Dental Assisting or range of Cert IV Health Technician Courses*

"I enjoy the assisting side of it, especially the fillings and extractions. ...it's the best decision I've made in regards to my career choices."

Rachel Gough, Year 12 ASBA, Dental Assisting

Further information

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