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Interview Guide – Dental Assistant

Position: Dental Assistant

Organisation: [Insert ACCHS Name]

Panel Chair: [Name]

Panel Members: [Names]

Date: [Insert date]

Applicant: [Name]

1. Introduction (for the Interview Panel to read aloud)

Thank you for coming in today. Before we start, we would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

This interview is for the position of Dental Assistant with [ACCHS Name]. Today's conversation will help us understand your experience in clinical support, infection control, patient care, cultural safety, teamwork, and how you contribute to a positive and culturally respectful dental service for our community.

We'll ask questions about clinical procedures, sterilisation, patient engagement, documentation, teamwork, oral health promotion, and reflective practice. Please take your time when responding, we may take notes during your answers.

Do you have any questions before we start?

2. Interview Panel Instructions

- Ensure at least one Aboriginal panel member is present.
- Use yarning-style, conversational questioning where appropriate.
- Avoid interrupting or rushing responses — allow silence and reflection.
- Focus on strength-based assessment (what they bring, not just what's missing).
- Note examples and assess responses using the rating scale.

3. Rating Scale (Example)

Score	Description
5 – Excellent	Exceeds expectations, provides strong, relevant examples.
4 – Very Good	Meets expectations, gives clear and thoughtful responses.
3 – Satisfactory	Adequate response, limited examples but some understanding.
2 – Limited	Superficial or incomplete understanding.
1 – Unsatisfactory	No relevant experience or understanding shown.

4. Core Interview Questions

1. Can you tell us about yourself and what led you into dental assisting or oral health work?

- *Prompt:* What values guide how you work in a clinical environment?
- *Indicators:* Motivation for healthcare, teamwork, interest in oral health, patient-focus, cultural humility.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. How do you support Aboriginal clients to feel respected and comfortable?

- *Prompt:* What does culturally safe patient care mean to you in a dental setting?
- *Indicators:* Cultural sensitivity, communication skills, respect for community, reducing fear/anxiety, awareness of historical impacts on health access.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

3. Please describe your experience with chairside assistance during dental procedures.

- *Prompt:* How do you prepare the surgery and support the dentist or oral health therapist during treatment?
- Indicators: Clinical readiness, 4-handed dentistry, organisation, patient comfort, procedural knowledge.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

4. How do you approach sterilisation and infection control?

- *Prompt:* What steps do you take to ensure compliance with standards?
- Indicators: Knowledge of AS/NZS 4815 or 4187, instrument reprocessing, tracking, audits, infection control mindset

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

5. Can you give an example of how you supported a patient who was anxious, in pain, or unsure about treatment?

- *Prompt:* What helped reassure them?
- Indicators: Empathy, communication, trauma-informed approach, cultural respect, calm presence.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

6. This role includes administrative duties. How do you manage patient records, bookings, and data entry?

- *Prompt:* Why is accurate documentation important in a dental service?
- *Indicators:* Attention to detail, privacy, clinical documentation, software competence, accuracy.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

7. Tell us about a time you worked collaboratively in a clinical or multidisciplinary team.

- *Prompt:* How do you support smooth workflow and communication?
- *Indicators:* Teamwork, communication, reliability, shared planning, respect for roles.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

8. Dental Assistants often help with stock control and maintaining equipment. What experience do you have with this?

- *Prompt:* How do you ensure supplies are maintained and equipment is functioning safely?
- *Indicators:* Organisation, proactive restocking, maintenance awareness, problem-solving.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

9. Part of this role may include community or school-based oral health programs. What experience do you have supporting community engagement?

- *Prompt:* How do you make oral health information easy to understand and culturally appropriate?
- *Indicators:* Community engagement, communication, cultural awareness, health promotion.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

10. Dental work can be fast-paced and physically demanding. How do you manage your wellbeing and ensure you stay organised and resilient?

- *Prompt:* What strategies help you stay calm and effective during busy periods?
- *Indicators:* Self-care, time management, coping strategies, reflective practice.

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

11. Why do you want to work with us?

12. What aspects of dental assisting do you enjoy the most?

13. Where do you see yourself professionally in the next few years?

5. Optional Scenario Questions

Scenario 1 – Infection Control Risk

You notice that a sterilisation step has been missed or a staff member is not following infection control procedures.

How would you respond?

Scenario 2 – Anxious Patient

A patient comes in distressed and hesitant about dental treatment due to past negative experiences.

How would you support them and help them feel safe?

Scenario 3 – High Workload Day

The clinic is running behind, the schedule is full, and the dentist needs the next surgery prepared urgently.

How do you prioritise tasks and stay calm under pressure?

Do you have any questions for us?

HR POST-INTERVIEW CHECKS

Item	Notes
References (x2)	
Working with Children Check	
National Police Check	
Start Date Availability	
Confirmation of Role (Fulltime, part time etc)	
Disclose of any health conditions that may affect duties	

5. Scoring

/ 50

Comments and Interview Reflection

6. Panel Summary and Recommendation

Strengths	Development Areas	Recommendation
		[Appoint / Consider / Not Suitable]