**TITAN PLACEMENT GROUP**

Healthcare recruiting | Sarasota, Florida

CANDIDATE INTERVIEW GUIDE

# Dentist

## Interview Preparation Guide

Your playbook for phone screens, working interviews, on-site visits, and offers.



YOUR RECRUITER _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

START HERE

# Your interview roadmap

Interviewing is a two-way decision. They're assessing your clinical judgment, communication, and fit. You're assessing the patients, the team, the support, and the terms.

1

## Recruiter conversation

Be candid about your goals, licensure, location, schedule, and pay so we only bring you roles that fit.

2

## Phone screen

A practice manager, HR, or a DSO talent team checks interest, qualifications, and logistics. Your goal: earn the next conversation.

3

## Virtual interview

The owner, lead dentist, or dental director wants to see how you think and how you treat patients.

4

## On-site or working interview

Meet the assistants, hygienists, and front office, and see the real workflow for yourself.

5

## Offer and credentialing

Licensure and payer enrollment take time. Get every term in writing before you resign.

PRO TIP

Ask your recruiter who you'll meet and what the format is before every round. We often know what past candidates were asked.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Skim it a week before your first interview. Reread the page for each round the night before, and use the checklist on the last page that morning.

STEP 1 | PREPARE

# Prepare like a pro

A little prep goes a long way. Here's what to do before every interview, whatever the format.



**BEFORE ANY INTERVIEW**

- ✓ Confirm the date, time zone, format, and who you'll meet.
- ✓ Pick 3 to 5 duties from the job description that you can connect to your experience.
- ✓ Research the practice's patients, services, and current priorities.
- ✓ Practice a 60 to 90 second introduction out loud.
- ✓ Prepare 3 to 4 short stories about your work. Page 5 shows you how.
- ✓ Have honest answers ready on schedule, start date, licensure, and pay.

## Your 60-second intro formula

This is your answer to "Tell me about yourself." Keep it to 60 to 90 seconds and hit these four beats in order.

**1**
**Your focus**
Your type of dentistry and the setting you work in now.

**2**
**Your experience**
Years in practice and the procedures that fit this job.

**3**
**One strength**
A specific contribution you can back up.

**4**
**Why this role**
Tie it to something specific about them.

**81%**

DID YOU KNOW?

of healthcare job seekers in a 2025 Adobe survey said they'd frozen or blanked on their achievements during an interview. The fix: practice out loud.

STEP 2 | RESEARCH

# Know the practice setting

The same question can mean something different in a DSO than in a community health center. Here's what each setting tends to value, plus a question worth asking.

## Private practice

Fit with the owner's philosophy, loyal patients, and a dentist who may one day help lead.

ASK

**Is there a path to partnership, and how is a buy-in valued?**

## DSO or dental group

Consistent systems, efficient scheduling, and dentists who work well within shared processes.

ASK

**How much say do dentists have on treatment, labs, and materials?**

## Community health center (FQHC)

Access for underserved patients, comfort with Medicaid and sliding-fee care, and teamwork with medical.

ASK

**Is the site NHSC-approved, and what is its dental HPSA score?**

## Specialty or hospital

Advanced clinical skill, strong referral relationships, and comfort with medically complex patients.

ASK

**Where do referrals come from, and is hospital call required?**

## Bonus: FTCA coverage

At FTCA-deemed health centers, covered staff are treated as federal employees for malpractice, including dental care.

ASK

**Is the organization deemed, and how does coverage apply to me?**

## Bonus: loan repayment

Dentists at NHSC-approved sites in dental shortage areas may qualify for loan repayment in exchange for at least two years of service. Many states run programs too. Confirm current terms with HRSA.

STEP 3 | PRACTICE

# Build your story bank

Most dental interviews include “Tell me about a time” questions. Have 3 to 4 stories ready and you’ll never get caught flat-footed. Use this five-part recipe:

**S**
**Situation**
Set the scene in a sentence or two.

**R**
**Responsibility**
What you personally owned.

**A**
**Action**
What you did, step by step.

**R**
**Result**
What happened, told honestly.

**L**
**Learning**
What you’d repeat or change.

## Story prompts to get you started

1. An anxious or fearful patient you helped complete care
2. A surprise mid-procedure, and how you handled it
3. A patient who declined treatment, and what you did
4. A time you referred out or asked for a consult
5. A day the schedule fell behind and you adjusted
6. A disagreement with a team member you resolved
7. A process you improved, like recall or sterilization
8. A patient facing cost, language, or transport barriers

**GROUND RULES**

- Never share details that could identify a patient.
- Say “I” for what you did and “we” for what the team did.
- Use numbers only when they’re accurate and you can explain them.
- Include one story where things didn’t go to plan, and what you learned.

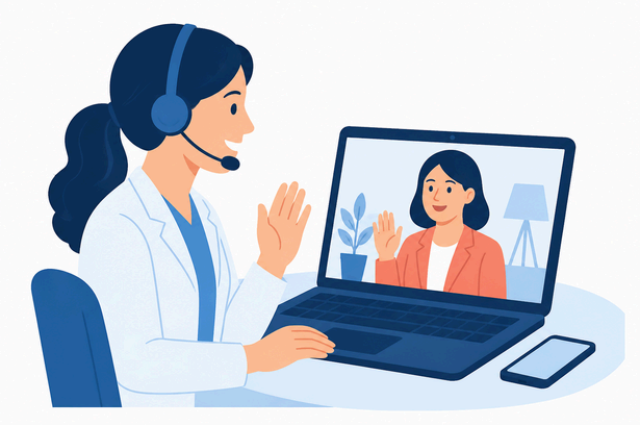
**WHY IT WORKS**

Research on job interviews has found that structured, consistent questions predict job performance better than casual ones. Employers know it, so expect them.

STEP 4 | SCREENS

# Phone and video interviews

Treat a screen like the real thing. Most problems are easy to prevent.



## On the phone

- Find a quiet spot with good reception.
- Keep your resume and questions in front of you.
- Answer first, add one example, then pause.
- Need a moment to think? Take it.
- Ask about next steps before you hang up.

## On video

- Test the link the day before.
- Camera at eye level, light in front of you.
- Use headphones to cut the echo.
- Silence every alert and close other apps.
- Join 5 to 10 minutes early.
- Keep a backup phone number handy.

## Questions you'll hear on a phone screen

**"Walk me through your background."**

Use your 60-second intro, then stop and let them ask follow-ups.

**"Which licenses and credentials do you hold?"**

Have your state license, DEA, and any sedation permits ready, plus anything pending.

**"Which procedures do you perform, and which do you refer?"**

Be precise. Overstating your scope here creates problems later.

**"What are your pay expectations?"**

Share the range you discussed with your recruiter, or ask to see the full pay structure first.

**PRO TIP**

Caught off guard? It's fine to say you'll follow up. Then tell your recruiter so we can help close the loop.

STEP 5 | ON-SITE

# On-site and working interviews

Your best look at how the practice really runs. Handle the logistics early.



## What to bring

- Several copies of your CV.
- License, DEA, and BLS/CPR card copies.
- Sedation permits, if applicable.
- Three references with current contact info.
- Your questions and a notebook.
- Loupes, only if a working interview calls for them.

## Working interviews

- Ask if you'll observe or treat patients.
- If you treat, confirm supervision, malpractice coverage, and pay.
- Ask what attire and instruments to bring.
- Stay within your scope and follow infection control.
- Notice how the day really runs.

## What to watch for while you're there

| | |
|---|---|
| **Team and culture** | How staff talk to each other and to patients, and how long the team has been there. |
| **Clinical support** | Assistants per dentist, hygiene coverage, and who turns over operatories. |
| **Equipment and tech** | Condition of operatories, imaging, digital scanners, and practice software. |
| **Schedule** | How the template is built, where emergencies fit, and how often the day runs behind. |
| **Leadership** | Who makes clinical and business decisions, and how easy they are to reach. |

**PRO TIP**

Front desk, sterilization, and assistant staff often share their impressions with the hiring team. Treat every conversation as part of the interview.

STEP 6 | ANSWER

# Questions they'll likely ask



Here's what a strong answer shows for each one. Use a story from your bank when you can.

## 🎯 Motivation and fit

**"Why are you interested in this practice?"**
Your reasons connect to their patients, model, or mission.

**"Why are you leaving your current job?"**
A forward-looking reason, with no criticism of your employer.

## 🧠 Clinical judgment

**"Something is outside your scope. How do you consult or refer?"**
Honest limits and patient safety first.

**"How would you handle a medical emergency in the chair?"**
A calm, protocol-driven response.

## 💬 Patient communication

**"A patient declines a recommended procedure. What do you do?"**
Empathy, clear options, respect for their choice, and good notes.

**"How do you present a big treatment plan to a worried patient?"**
Phasing, alternatives, and no pressure.

## 👥 Team and practice flow

**"The schedule is behind and a patient needs extra time. What now?"**
Clear communication, smart priorities, and respect for the next patient.

**"How do you balance productivity with quality of care?"**
Efficiency without cutting corners.

## 🤝 Community health

**"Why do you want to work in community health?"**
A real connection to the mission.

**"How would you treat a patient who hasn't seen a dentist in years?"**
Urgent needs first, then trust and a realistic, phased plan.

## 💡 If you get stuck

- Pause. A few seconds of quiet is fine.
- Ask them to repeat or clarify the question.
- Say what you'd do, then how you'd check.
- Be honest about what you haven't done yet.

**PRO TIP**
Practice out loud. Answers sound different spoken than they do in your head.

STEP 7 | ASK

# Questions to ask them

Your questions show how you think about the work. Pick the five or six that matter most to you. Your recruiter can often get answers to the rest.

## Clinical work

- What is the typical procedure mix and patient volume?
- How are autonomy, treatment planning, and second opinions handled?
- What equipment and technology will I use?

## Support and schedule

- What assistant, hygiene, and front-office support will I have?
- What do the schedule and new-patient flow look like?
- Why is this position open?

## Pay and terms

- Is pay based on production or collections, and can I see an example?
- What CE support is provided?
- Who pays for malpractice, including tail coverage?

## Growth and success

- What does success look like in the first 90 days?
- How are quality and patient experience measured?
- Who will I go to with questions?

CLOSE STRONG

## End every interview with these two

**“What are the next steps, and when should I expect to hear back?”**

**“Is there anything about my background I can clarify for you?”**

LET US ASK FOR YOU

Not comfortable asking about pay in the room? Your recruiter can raise it for you, so you can keep the interview focused on the work.

STEP 8 | OFFER

# Weigh the whole offer

Two offers with the same headline number can pay very differently. Get a written example first.



**Base or daily guarantee**
The amount, days covered, and whether it's a true minimum or a draw repaid later.

**Production or collections**
Which one applies, what adjustments come out, and how often pay is reconciled.

**Lab fees and supplies**
Whether they're deducted from your pay, split, or covered by the practice.

**Ramp-up period**
Whether pay is guaranteed while your schedule builds, and for how long.

**Bonuses**
Sign-on, retention, or quality incentives, and repayment terms if you leave early.

**Benefits and malpractice**
Tail coverage, health, retirement, PTO, CE, and license or DEA fees.

**Loan repayment and relocation**
Amounts, service obligations, and what you owe if you leave early.

**Restrictive covenants**
Non-compete or non-solicit radius and duration. Get a legal review.

## How a collections-based month can work

One hypothetical month for an associate paid 30% of collections, with half of lab fees deducted.

STEP 1 | COLLECTIONS

### $60,000 produced

| | |
|---|---|
| Less adjustments | −$9,000 |
| Net production | $51,000 |
| **Collected (96%)** | **$48,960** |

STEP 2 | YOUR PAY

### 30% of collections

| | |
|---|---|
| Associate share | $14,688 |
| Less half of lab fees | −$1,500 |
| **Pay for the month** | **$13,188** |

If the agreement pays the greater of this or a daily guarantee (16 days at $700 = $11,200), this month pays $13,188. Some treat the guarantee as a draw repaid later. Ask which applies.

STEP 9 | FOLLOW UP

# After the interview

Call your recruiter the same day, then send a short thank-you within 24 hours.

1 **Same day**
Debrief with your recruiter

2 **Within 24 hours**
Send a short thank-you note

3 **When an offer comes**
Compare, accept, then resign

## Call your recruiter

Do it while it's fresh. The sooner we hear from you, the sooner we can follow up. Be ready to share:

- Who you met and their roles
- What went well and what felt uncertain
- Any pay, schedule, or start-date details
- Questions or concerns you still have
- Your honest interest level

Not sure about the role? Tell us. Honest feedback helps us find a better fit.

## Thank-you note

**Subject: Thank you for speaking with me about the [role]**

Hello [Name],

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the [role] at [organization]. I appreciated learning more about [specific topic]. Our conversation strengthened my interest, particularly because [reason].

I look forward to hearing about next steps.

Best,
[Your name]

### BEFORE YOU GIVE NOTICE

- Accept the written offer and confirm pay, start date, and contingencies.
- Make sure credentialing and background checks are on track.
- Check your current notice and repayment terms.
- Plan a handoff that protects patients. Never copy patient information.

### IF THEY COUNTEROFFER

- Compare it with the reasons you started looking. A raise may not fix workload, schedule, or culture.
- Ask for the terms in writing.
- Don't bluff or accept two offers. Give a clear answer on time.

YOU'VE GOT THIS

# Interview day checklist

Tear this page out, or keep it open on your phone.

## 🌙 The night before

- Confirm the time, time zone, format, and who you'll meet
- Review the job description and your research
- Practice your intro and two stories out loud
- Test your tech, or plan your route and parking
- Lay out professional attire

## ☀️ The morning of

- Re-read your top three stories
- Review your questions for the employer
- Charge your phone and laptop
- Join 5 to 10 minutes early, or arrive 10 to 15 minutes early on-site

## 🎒 Bring with you

- CV copies
- License, DEA, and BLS copies
- Reference list
- Questions and a notebook
- Your recruiter's phone number

## ✅ Right after

- Write down names, key topics, and open questions
- Call your recruiter to debrief
- Send a thank-you note within 24 hours
- List anything to verify before an offer

## Questions at any point?

Call your recruiter. We're in your corner from the first call to your first day.

YOUR RECRUITER _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

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Sources: Adobe, "Interview Prep Tips: What Candidates & Hiring Managers Want," 2025 (page 3). HRSA, Health Center Program FTCA, bphc.hrsa.gov (page 4). HRSA, National Health Service Corps Loan Repayment Program, nhsc.hrsa.gov (page 4). McDaniel et al., "The Validity of Employment Interviews: A Comprehensive Review and Meta-Analysis," Journal of Applied Psychology, 1994 (page 5). Pay figures on page 10 are hypothetical examples.