

## Frequently Asked Questions about Academic Dentistry for Practitioners

1. *What are some of the advantages to participating in academic dentistry?*

It's a perfect blend -- teaching, research and patient care and an opportunity to influence young minds and mentor young practitioners to help them grow into the profession. Teaching provides a variety of interesting challenges and an opportunity to interact with other colleagues. Other advantages include being on the cutting edge of what's new in research and technology, access to many lifelong learning opportunities and opportunities to travel and lecture at other dental schools/dental meetings.

2. *Is it realistic to seek a faculty position from a background of private practice?*

Yes, in fact, according to the most recent data from dental schools, private practice is the number one source of faculty appointments, both full-time and part-time.

3. *Can I still practice dentistry if I become a full-time faculty member?*

Most dental schools include practice opportunities for their clinical faculty either within or outside the dental school. This generally also allows generation of income above salary.

4. *Do I need to get another degree before I can teach?*

Broadening qualifications and capabilities through graduate education or advanced training in addition to the dental degree can often help a dental professional to do well and advance in academia. The greatest numbers of faculty openings are in general/operative dentistry, for which a dental degree and practice experience may be good qualifications. Advanced or graduate education may be required for some types of positions, as in specialty departments, and is generally the case for faculty who conduct independent research.

5. *How do I prepare a resume to reflect skills and strengths in a given area?*

In contrast to your curriculum vitae (CV), which may be quite lengthy, your resume should be very brief. Your CV quantifies what you did and

are doing, whereas your resume, in a capsule form, qualifies your experiences and should articulate your goals. In addition to the basic information, a CV includes research and teaching experience (if any), publications, grants and fellowships, professional associations and licenses, awards and other information that you believe is relevant to the position for which you are applying. The following publications can help you develop a viable CV and/or resume.

"Your Curriculum Vitae, Your Resume and You" Compendium of Continuing Education in Dentistry, Vol. XII, No.6, June 1991; "A Curriculum Vitae: Your Professional Passport" by Mary Byers, CAE, Journal of the Michigan Dental Association, January 2003; "Expert Resumes for Health Care Careers" by Wendy S. Enelow and Louis M. Kursmark, JIST Works America's Career Publisher, 2004.

6. *What steps do I need to take toward academic promotion?*

Non-tenure track positions generally are for defined specific purposes, usually one or two, but not all three of the academic triad of teaching, service or research. These appointments generally are renewable contractual arrangements between the institution and the faculty member. Tenure track positions are probationary appointments intended to lead to tenure, and generally require productivity in all three of the principal academic areas of teaching, service and research. The probationary period is usually for six years at which time a decision for or against awarding tenure is made.

7. *What kind of resources should I review that might help me to become familiar with new trends in dental education and adult learning?*

The ADA/ADEA has compiled a list of resources that you might find useful in preparing for academic dentistry. These resources can be found online at [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org) or [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org).

8. *What types of positions are available in academic dentistry? What do dental schools need?*

There are many different types of opportunities in dental education, including both full-time and part-time positions, in predoctoral programs as well as in advanced education programs in general dentistry and the dental specialty areas. Positions are also available for dentists in allied dental education programs. Many dentists are involved in teaching and supervision of students in basic preclinical and clinical courses. However, needs are greatest for highly qualified individuals with advanced degrees or specialty training and for those with special training in research

and educational theory who are willing to make a full-time commitment to an academic career involving teaching, research and participation in university and community service activities.

9. *What kinds of benefits does a dental school offer to full-time faculty? Part-time faculty?*

Most dental schools offer full-time faculty financial packages that include paid vacation and sick leave, health insurance, retirement plans, tuition benefits for family, etc. Under "cafeteria" benefit plans, many benefits can be on a pre-tax or tax-deferred basis, and employees of public institutions can participate in tax-deferred supplementary retirement plans. Some opportunities for travel exist. Benefits offered to part-time faculty are generally more limited.

10. *How do I find out about available teaching positions?*

You can check the website of the dental school or parent institution in your area for job postings. If you have an interest in a particular discipline or subject area, you might contact the dental school administrator or department head responsible for that area to express your interest and find out about potential openings. Also, open positions are listed on the Academic Dental Careers Network (ACDN), ADEA's web-based employment database and search tool for individuals interested in a faculty position and for dental institutions seeking to fill vacant positions. You can also view a video titled *Academic Careers in Dentistry* that presents the challenges and excitement of an academic dental career. This website can be accessed by a link at [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org). Word-of-mouth is often one of the best ways to learn about opportunities in dental education. Don't hesitate to contact dental colleagues involved in education or individuals who are active in the dental school's alumni association for networking opportunities.

10/07/04