

Fellowship in Special Care Dentistry, Certificate

Dean: Elsbeth Kalenderian, D.D.S., MPH, Ph.D.

Interim Program Director: Altaf Shah, D.D.S., MSc., Ph.D.

School of Dentistry website (<http://www.marquette.edu/dentistry/>)

DEGREE OFFERED

Certificate

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Special care dentistry provides essential services to a diverse range of patients, such as those with cognitive dysfunction or intellectual disabilities (e.g., dementia, Down Syndrome), complex medical conditions (e.g., cancer, diabetes), and physical limitations (e.g., muscular dystrophy, paralysis). By addressing unique needs, special care dentistry aims to ensure that every patient has access to necessary dental care, regardless of their health or functional challenges. The mission of this fellowship program is to provide high-quality, accessible dental care that respects the dignity, safety, and well-being of each patient while setting a new standard for compassionate, evidence based, and inclusive care that serves as a model for special care dentistry clinics across the state of Wisconsin.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The fellowship in special care dentistry aims to:

1. Equip dentists with advanced clinical, behavioral, and interdisciplinary skills to provide high-quality oral healthcare to children and adults with special healthcare needs.
2. Prepare graduates to overcome common access barriers through practice adaptations, interprofessional collaboration, and evidence-based care strategies.
3. Develop practitioners who can serve as leaders and advocates for equitable oral healthcare for underserved populations.
4. Foster ethical, professional, and culturally responsive care in alignment with professional principles.
5. Promote scholarship and innovation in the field through research and community engagement.

This 37-credit, 12-month fellowship provides comprehensive training in special care dentistry with an emphasis on managing patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities and other medically complex conditions. The curriculum integrates intensive clinical experiences across three semesters with progressive didactic instruction in disability classification, hospital dentistry, pharmacology, pain and anxiety management, pediatric and geriatric care, and interprofessional collaboration (including speech and occupational therapy). Fellows also develop competency in emergency management, ethics, and public health approaches to care. A longitudinal research component spans all terms, supported by course work in research design and biostatistics, culminating in a capstone project. In addition to on-campus clinical and didactic training, fellows have opportunities to observe and assist with complex cases in community-based and clinical care settings under faculty supervision. The program also incorporates service-learning experiences, including providing sealants to Milwaukee Public School students through a mobile dental program and delivering oral health care and screenings in collaboration with Special Olympics.

At the conclusion of the year-long training program, fellows emerge with the skills to navigate complex medical histories, adapt treatment plans to unique patient needs, and serve as leaders in improving oral health outcomes for underserved populations. With a unique blend of didactic instruction and clinical immersion, this program represents a rigorous, practice-ready pathway for dentists seeking to expand their expertise and impact in special care dentistry.

Program Requirements

Summer

Code	Title	Hours
DENT 6003	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 3 (Practice Ethics)	
DENT 6001	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 1 (Clinical Photography)	
DENT 6001	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 1 (Emergency Medicine)	
DENT 6001	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 1 (Research Methods and Design)	
Clinical Special Care Dentistry 1		
Special Care Dentistry 1		

Fall

Code	Title	Hours
DENT 6003	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 3 (Speech Pathology)	
DENT 6002	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 2 (Biostatistics)	
DENT 6002	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 2 (Pharmacology and Pain/Anxiety Management)	
Hospital Dentistry		
Clinical Special Care Dentistry 2		
Special Care Dentistry 2		

Spring

Code	Title	Hours
DENT 6003	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 3 (Pediatric Dentistry)	
DENT 6003	Dental Graduate Didactic Core Curriculum 3 (Public Health)	
Clinical Special Care Dentistry 3		
Special Care Dentistry 3		

University Policies

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