

Implantology: The Young Dentist's Guide

Your guide to careers in implantology, covering training opportunities, salaries, and where to get started.



Contents

Introduction	<u>2</u>
What is implant dentistry?	<u>2</u>
The growth of implant dentistry	<u>2</u>
What type of practices cover implant dentistry?	<u>3</u>
Experience and education	<u>3</u>
How long does it take to train?	<u>4</u>
Experience required	<u>4</u>
Salary and Career	<u>5</u>
Career advancement	<u>5</u>
Working at your own independent practice	<u>5</u>
The I word - Indemnity	<u>6</u>
What next?	<u>6</u>

Introduction

Over the last two decades, implantology has grown into a mainstay of dentistry, providing a lucrative way for dentists to further assist patients and improve their quality of life. For dentists in the early stage of their career, implantology is an attractive option to expand skill sets and enter a growing market.

To become an implant dentist however, there are many things that must be considered. [The Implant Hub](#) have assembled this guide to explain the implant industry, the career opportunities within it, and what you need to become an implantologist.

What is implant dentistry?

Implant dentistry is the practice of treating tooth loss with an artificial replacement of a tooth root, usually made from titanium, that is attached to the jawbone. Implants are commonly referred to as a fixed alternative to removable dentures and can replace single or multiple teeth. With well maintained oral hygiene and competent placement, amongst other factors, it is suggested implants have a [95% success rate](#) over the long term.



The growth of implant dentistry

Formerly, implantology was the domain of specialist university practices, who would only perform implant treatment in very severe cases. With a growing geriatric population and wider awareness of dental issues, demand for implants has grown. An unprecedented escalation of research and development has taken place, speeding up technological advances and bringing implant treatment to the masses.

The industry has been forecast to grow by a compound rate of [7.3% a year](#) between 2016 and 2022. The largest growth is expected to be within Europe, meaning a stable and thriving future for the industry.

7.3%

forecast yearly
growth of industry

\$7.57b

global market for
implant dentistry

£2000

average cost of
single implant

Unfortunately, this growth has not translated to educational courses, with no undergraduate degrees and few postgraduate courses available. For some time, there were no academic standards or training routes recognised for implantology. This has changed with the publication of the [Training Standards in Implant Dentistry](#) by the GDC/FGDP, due to be updated, which lays out the qualifications and experience required.

What type of practices cover implant dentistry?

Implants are generally available through private practices only due to the high cost. [The NHS will sometimes cover implants](#) for patients who cannot wear dentures, or if they are needed as a result of accidental damage to the face or teeth but these are rare cases.

Practicing implantology is an investment and not all private practices have trained implant dentists. On the other hand, there are many practices which specialise solely in placing implants, suggesting the profitability of the treatment.



Experience and education

While implant dentistry has grown considerably over the past two decades, routes to becoming an implantologist are few and far between. This means the choices are limited, but reasonably linear. There are currently no opportunities for training as part of an undergraduate course, meaning any training must be completed in a postgraduate setting.

There are several short-term introductory, certificate and CPD courses provided in the UK, such as the [BioHorizons educational courses](#). Universities provide training to MSc, PhD or Diploma levels, although these aren't necessarily required. Alternative courses which provide the necessary training and hands-on experience are starting to appear, such as the [Boyne Dental Implant Year Course](#). These are far cheaper than pursuing a university qualification and get you ready for work in the industry. Among others, implant dentistry further education courses are offered by [FGDP](#), [University College London](#), [University of Cardiff](#), and the [Royal College of Surgeons](#).

Training in implant dentistry requires an investment of up to £40,000, with course costs varying depending on length, course type and institution. University courses can cost upwards of £15,000 a year, while the Boyne Dental Course costs just over £6000. While there are several free or low-cost courses, these act as a supplement to more in-depth training.

How long does it take to train?

Becoming an implantologist is not a quick process. On top of your dentistry qualification, implant training generally takes at least a year. This does not include any extra experience you choose to obtain. See the table below for the average duration of training options:

TYPE OF COURSE	DURATION	QUALIFICATION
Introduction to Implantology	1-2 days	CPD course
Certificate course in Implant Dentistry	7-10 days (60 hours)	Certificate
Boyne Dental Year Course	1 year	
PG Diploma	2 years part time	PG Diploma
MSc in Implantology	1-2 years part time	MSc
PhD	5 years	PhD
Specialist training in oral surgery/periodontics/prosthodontics etc	3-4 years	

[Source](#)

Experience required

It is worth noting that some educational establishments require applicants to have worked as a qualified dentist for a minimum number of years before an application will be considered. It is, of course, a good idea to gain experience in implant dentistry before investing in an expensive, multi-year course.

Implantology requires the dentist to be comfortable and experienced at performing surgery. According to the [FGDP Training Standards in Implant Dentistry](#);

“the skills and knowledge necessary for competence should be developed through a training course in implant dentistry, with a suitably trained and experienced clinician acting as a mentor. Such a training course must constitute verifiable CPD, with concise aims and objectives, anticipated learning outcomes and quality controls.”

Implant dentistry is not necessarily like restorative dentistry, and new skills will need to be learnt to progress. These skills should be learnt through experience and/or mentorship alongside an educational pathway to build confidence and gain hands-on experience.

Salary and Career

Implantology is a lucrative dental specialism and is set to continue its growth over the next few decades. However, there is understandable concern that the costs to train are high and it takes a lot of time to recoup initial investments.

The NHS newly qualified dentist salary [is currently £31,982 \(2018/19\)](#). You'll be required to complete a year of foundation training at this level before advancing your career or going down the route of implant dentistry. Employed by the NHS, you can earn between £39,638 and £84,780 as a dentist. By becoming a specialist consultant, such as an implantologist, this salary increases to between £77,913 and £105,042.

Outside of the NHS, salaries differ but [are generally higher](#). The majority of dentists are self-employed contractors in general practice, combining NHS and private work. Salaries range from £50,000 to £110,000, with some dentists who specialise in private practice implantology earning £140,000+.

£39,638
- £84,780

NHS dentist
salary

£50,000
- £110,000

private dentist
salary

£140,000+

private
implantologist salary

Career advancement

After qualifying as an implant dentist, your career advancement opportunities are similar to that of a normal dentist. You can advance through the ranks, gaining experience and earning better salaries, eventually becoming a consultant.

Other options involve starting your own independent practice. This allows you to earn more, manage your own business and make strategic career and practice decisions but of course comes with increased workload and risks; as well as requiring capital outlay.

Working at your own independent practice

If you choose to go down the route of setting up your own independent practice, you'll have to consider how overhead costs will affect your earnings. By working for someone else, expenditures such as practice staff, equipment, marketing and staff training, to name a few, may be fully or partially absorbed by the practice you work for. However, if you work independently, these commitments can affect your bottom line.

The I word - Indemnity

It is essential to consider there may be occasions where a case does not go as planned. Should a patient be unhappy or intend to sue, you should remember dental indemnity increases for implant placement and restoring implants. This is often seen as a ‘necessary evil’ as it can help ensure a dentist’s skillset is kept to the required level and patients are protected. Be sure to factor indemnity for implants into your decision of pursuing implants as a career.



What next?

Implant dentistry is a rewarding path for any dentist and the industry continues to have great potential for growth. Although training requires a large investment of both time and money, salaries are usually higher for implantologists than general practitioners.

There is a lack of undergraduate support for implantology careers, but this shouldn’t stop you as there are plenty of postgraduate options. [BioHorizons run several courses](#) to introduce dentists to implantology and provide the valuable hands-on experience necessary to successfully practice implant dentistry. They also partner with numerous, educational institutions and dentists to provide further educational opportunities including an [MSc](#) and a [year-long course](#).

the!implanthub

The Implant Hub is a key source for the latest industry information, guides and insights so for more information, make it your first port of call.

[VISIT THE IMPLANT HUB](#)