

PGY-1 FAQs by Dental Students

1) What are the benefits of PGY-1 Programs?

- A full year of clinical mentoring by board-certified clinicians.
- Immersion into an educational environment with fellow residents from various dental schools allows you to learn different methods and materials than you may have learned at your own dental school.
- The opportunity to defend techniques and treatment plans using evidence-based dentistry and current literature.
- The opportunity to meet a group of new dental officers with shared goals and experiences.
- The opportunity to expand your clinical experiences well beyond normal PGY-1 levels if you get actively involved in advanced surgical or restorative cases.
- Exposure to and experience in various specialties will make you a more well-rounded clinician and may help you decide if you want to specialize in the future.
- PGY-1 graduates generally get assigned to more challenging duty stations after their PGY-1 program than LTs who complete an Orientation/Credentialing tour.
- Eligibility for 150 hours of CE credit from the Academy of General Dentistry at the end of your PGY-1 program.
- An Additional Qualification Designation (AQD) on your service record which is reviewed at promotion and advanced education training boards.

2) What is an Orientation/Credentialing tour and how does it differ from a PGY-1 program?

An Orientation/Credentialing tour is an assignment to a command for one year in the general dentistry clinic. There is an attempt to rotate first-year dentists through specialty clinics; however, clinical experiences will generally be limited to operative, endodontics, and exodontia. There is very limited (or perhaps no) opportunity to complete comprehensive care on your patients, and no exposure to expanding your evidence-based dentistry skills. However, some very successful Navy dentists have started their careers with an orientation tour. They can be quite rewarding. They tend to be a little less predictable since they don't have a set curriculum.

3) What are the differences between AEGD and GPR Programs?

AEGD = Advanced Education in General Dentistry - these are usually based in a multi-specialty dental clinic.

GPR = General Practice Residency in Dentistry - typically located in a large teaching hospital.

The main difference between GPRs and AEGDs is defined by the ADA. GPR programs must be located in a hospital, must provide residents with an understanding of hospital organization and management of inpatients/same day surgeries, and must include a 2-week anesthesia rotation and a 2-week rotation in another medical department (such as ENT, internal medicine, emergency medicine, or family practice). Other than that, all requirements are the same. However, most Navy GPRs will differ from AEGDs because they include treatment of older, medically-compromised patients. Most Navy AEGD patient populations are limited to active duty personnel.

4) What types of procedures do residents perform in PGY1 programs?

The types of procedures can vary greatly from program to program. All programs have requirements to complete in treatment planning, operative dentistry, restoration of edentulous spaces, endodontics, periodontics, and oral surgery/exodontia. There is a strong focus on delivering comprehensive care for complex patients. Some PGY-1 programs also feature opportunities to practice using the following advanced modalities:

- CAD/CAM Dentistry
- Diode lasers
- Implant placement and restoration
- Full-mouth rehabilitation cases
- Porcelain veneers
- Special Needs Patients

Some PGY-1 programs will also provide experience within the following areas:

- Main Operating Room
- Dentistry Orofacial Pain
- Orthodontics
- Oral Pathology

5) How competitive is it to get selected for a Navy PGY-1 program?

It depends on the year. Some years there are more applicants than PGY-1 slots available. In other years, there are less applicants than PGY-1 slots.

6) What criteria are the applicants typically evaluated on?

Class rank is the #1 factor. If you have a strong class standing, you have a high chance of being selected. Additionally, you will probably get your preferred choice of AEGD vs. GPR (the type of program - not the location). Other criteria include dental school GPA, INBDE (or NBDE Part I) scores, statement of motivation, and letters of recommendation.

7) Is the GRE required or “strongly encouraged”?

You do not need to take the GRE for PGY-1 programs.

8) What other duties do dental officers in PGY-1 programs have besides practicing dentistry?

New LTs are typically not tasked with many additional, or collateral, duties. Your main goal in a PGY-1 year will be to improve your clinical skills while learning to become a naval officer. You will have to stand duty (on-call). Duty generally involves a cell phone watch in which you will be called in to evaluate and or treat any after-hours dental emergencies. Duty can range from 3 to 7 duty days per month.

9) Where are the AEGD and GPR Programs Located?

AEGD Locations

Norfolk, VA
Camp Pendleton, CA
San Diego, CA
Great Lakes, IL
Camp Lejeune, NC

GPR Locations

Bethesda, MD
Portsmouth, VA
Camp Pendleton, CA
San Diego, CA

10) Where are the typical locations for the Orientation/Credentialing Tours?

These are typically performed at larger Naval Dental Clinics, to include Parris Island, SC; Great Lakes, IL; Camp Lejeune, NC; and Twentynine Palms, CA, but can be anywhere depending on the needs of the Navy.

11) Who makes the decision where you will be ultimately located?

The Dental Corps Assignments Officer (Detailer) makes the decision on all assignment locations, to include PGY-1 Programs and Orientation/Credentialing Tours. The Detailer will be your primary point-of-contact in the negotiation of all orders during your Naval career, to include orders after your initial PGY-1 assignment. They will contact you after you have been notified of your acceptance or non-acceptance into a PGY1 Program. The PGY-1 Selection board does not determine where you will be stationed.