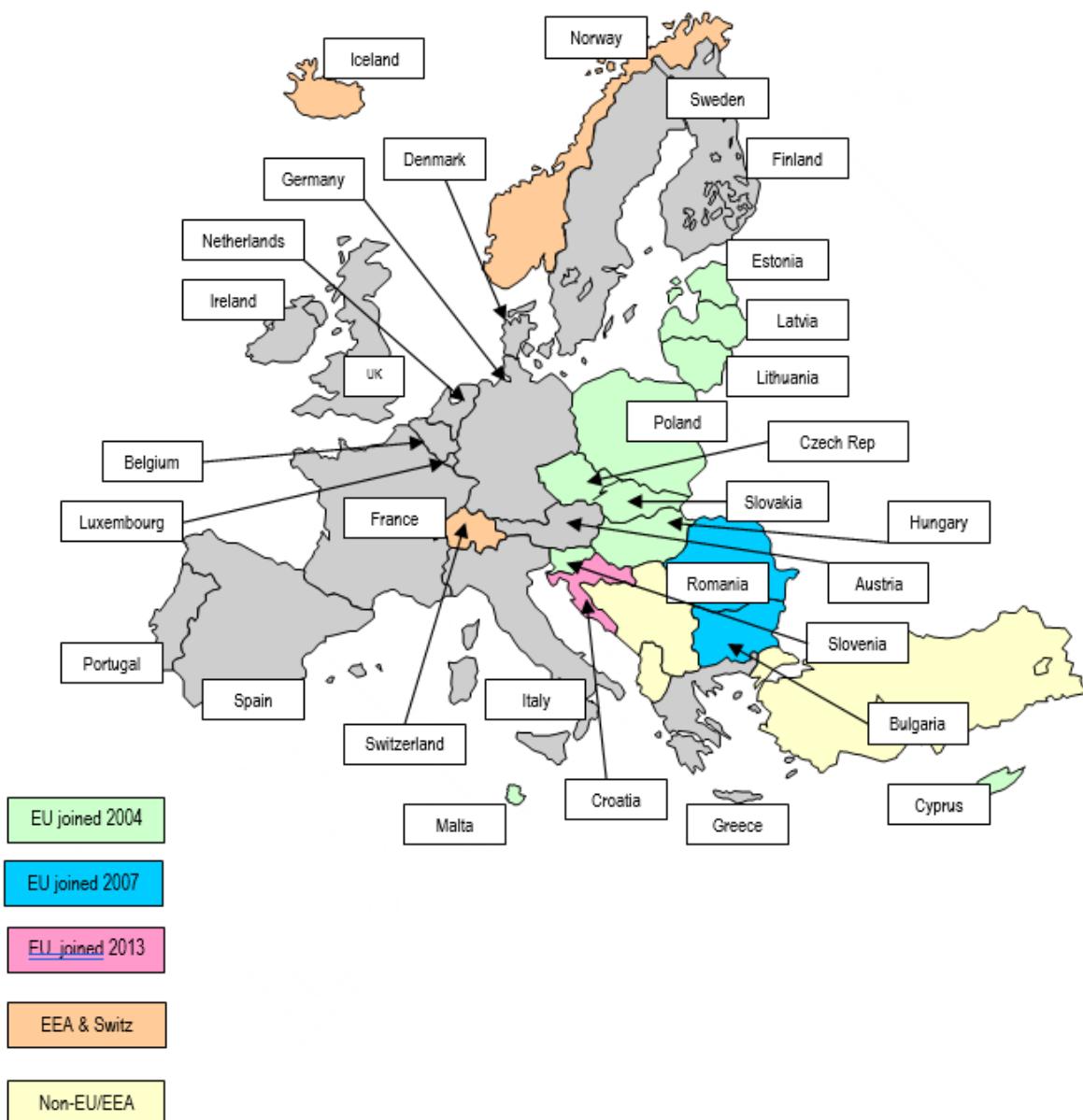


Council of European Dentists

MANUAL OF DENTAL PRACTICE 2026

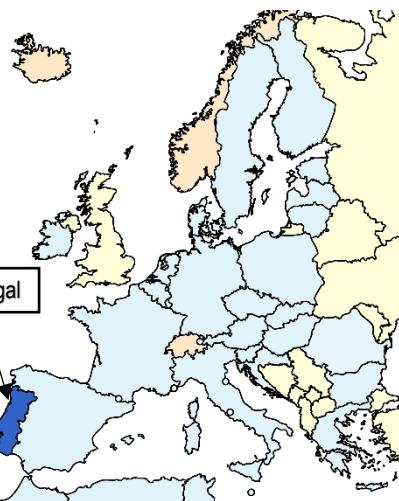
Portugal

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2026





Portugal



Portugal

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| In the EU/EEA since | 1986 |
| Population (2024) | 10 639 726 |
| GDP PPP per capita (2024) | 32 375 |
| Currency | Euro € (EUR) |
| Official language | Portuguese |

The Portuguese National Health System is centralised and universal, with all residents receive coverage. It is largely funded through general taxation and is complemented by co-existing healthcare systems. Dentists work mostly in the private sector. Only a few regional health centres and hospitals include oral health professionals. The National Oral Health Program (PNPSO) provide some oral health care to targeted groups, including children, pregnant and elderly persons and HIV/AIDS patients.

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Number of dentists (active) | 13 297 (2026) |
| (Active) dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants) | 122 |
| Members of Dental Association | 15 906 |

Three new specialities are recognised, and continuing education is mandatory. The competent authority and regulatory body is the Ordem dos Médicos Dentistas (OMD).

Date of last revision: 2 February 2026

Government and healthcare in Portugal

Portugal is a parliamentary republic. The Parliament is composed of 230 members elected for a four-year term and is responsible for adopting the yearly healthcare budget. Portugal hosts twenty-two constituencies, with eighteen mainland districts, two autonomous regions. Azores (Açores) and Madeira, one for Portuguese living in Europe and one for Portuguese living out of Europe.

The administrative system comprises 5 regions (North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo and the Algarve), 18 districts and 2 autonomous regions (Azores and Madeira). The districts are further divided into municipalities (concelhos), which elected governments and boroughs (freguesias). The islands (Azores and Madeira) have an autonomous political and administrative structure.

The Ministry of Health is responsible for developing health policy, planning and managing the National Health Service (NHS). Two main organisations, the Directorate General of Health (*Direção Geral da Saúde – DGS*) and the Executive Board for the National Health Service (*Direção Executiva do SNS*) have responsibilities with regards to national health policy objectives, developing guidelines and protocols and supervising health care delivery. In 2024, due to a structural reform, the powers and competences of the previous five regional health administrations, were transferred to 39 Local Health Units (LHU), now also responsible for public primary and hospital care services. Autonomous Regions of Azores and Madeira have effective autonomy on regional health strategy.

The Portuguese healthcare system is characterised by three co-existing health systems:

1 - **The National Health Service** (Sistema Nacional de Saúde - SNS) provides universal health coverage and is funded through

general taxation and co-payments (*taxa moderadora*). All residents are entitled to basic coverage, including migrants and asylum seekers.

2 - **Special social health insurance.** These are supplementary public and private health subsystem insurance schemes for specific professions (civil servants, military). This covers about 25% of the population and includes some dental treatments.

3 - **Private voluntary health insurance (VHI)** - About 55% of the population is covered by private insurance schemes or mutual funds.

| | Year | Source |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| % GDP spent on all healthcare | 11.1% 2023 | OECD |
| % of this spent by government | 63.2% 2023 | OECD |

Health Centres and the Health Family Unit (HFU) are basic units of the National Health Service (SNS).

Dental care services are little to not covered under the SNS benefits package. In 2016 the Portuguese government created a public dental care service within the SNS. Currently there are 150 dental care services within primary care units covering emergency care and extractions. However, the integration of dentists in the medical public career is yet to be guaranteed. A few dental hygienists are also involved in these services. Dental care expenditure is therefore largely covered in private services by VHI or out-of-pocket spending.

A "dental voucher", introduced in 2008 through the National Program for Oral Healthcare Promotion (*Programa Nacional para a Promoção da Saúde Oral*), provides a determined number of covered dental treatments for targeted groups, including children and adolescents, pregnant women (3 vouchers), low-income elderly persons (2 vouchers a year), HIV/AIDS patients and certain cancer patients.

Education, Training and Registration

Undergraduate Education and Training

To enter dental school a student must finish secondary school and then undertake national exams. A *Numerus Clausus* is defined per public and private universities. Candidates are selected after consideration of the average classification obtained during secondary school (50%) as well as results awarded in national exams on biology, geology, and physics and chemistry, or mathematics (50%).

There are also special vacancies, for example, for candidates over 23 years old, where certain schools also require the submission of an application and curriculum, as well as to carry out an interview.

| Year of data | 2023-2024 |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Number of schools | 7 |
| Student intake (for 7 schools) * | 620 |
| Number of graduates a year** | 2 760 |
| Gender balance (% of female) | NA |
| Duration of studies | 5 |

*Source: Direção Geral de Estatísticas da Educação e Ciência
** Data concerning 5 schools. No data for Egas Moniz Institute and CESPU.

3 public and 4 private dental schools co-exist in Portugal. Public dental schools include the Faculty of Medicine of Coimbra and the Faculties of Dental Medicine of Porto and Lisbon. Private schools include the Institutes of Health Sciences CESPU of Gandra and the Fernando Pessoa University in Porto, the Egas Moniz University Institute in Monte Da Caparica, Lisbon, and the Faculty of Dental Medicine of the Catholic University of Portugal in Viseu.

The courses last for 5 years, with no mandatory additional year of study or vocational training.

Registration

Applications are exclusively addressed to the Portuguese Dental Association OMD (Ordem dos Médicos Dentistas), which also holds the register.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Cost of registration | €250 -1 000 (including admission fee of 100€) |
|----------------------|---|

The OMD Statutes define the acts that a dentist may perform as “*the practice of diagnostic, prognostic, surveillance, research, forensic medical examination, clinical coding, clinical auditing, prescription, and execution of pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapeutic measures, clinical, surgical, and rehabilitation techniques for promoting oral health within the systemic health framework of the individual, and the prevention of oral disease, when performed by dentists, respecting the ethical and deontological values of dentistry*”.

Applicant must be in possession of a Diploma in Dental Medicine and be a registered member of the OMD. Only professionals registered with the OMD are dentists.

The variable registration fee depends on the extension of administrative procedures for the analysis of each request, and on documents submitted.

Vocational Training (VT)

In 2025, there was no requirement for post-qualification vocational training.

Distinctively and complementary, there are also several State run youth employment programmes applicable for qualified professions such as dentists.

Language requirements

Basic knowledge of Portuguese in Dentistry is necessary to practice dentistry in Portugal. A Portuguese language assessment is mandatory for all applicants from non-Portuguese speaking countries. The exam is implemented and supervised by the Camões Institute.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing professional education in dentistry (*formação contínua em medicina dentária* (FCMD) is regulated by the OMD and is a statutory and ethical duty.

The OMD offers an annual continuing education programme, including one annual multidisciplinary scientific, social and professional congress (3 days). Other courses such as after work short courses, mini courses (half-a-day), online streamed courses and practical courses. Dentists who attend may pay a registration fee and receive a Certificate of Attendance (most of it being freely offered by OMD to its members). Online streamed classes are provided to all free of charge.

Specialist Training Requirements

OMD holds the exclusive and public competencies for implementing and recognising dental specialties.

Specialist training in Portugal, in the recognised specialties of orthodontics, oral surgery, paediatric dentistry and periodontology is at least 3 years, takes place in OMD recognised higher education centres, and is followed by a clinical cases presentation examination to a jury nominated by the OMD. Students receive no remuneration during training.

The titles awarded, provided by OMD, are:

- Orthodontics (*especialista em ortodontia*)
- Oral surgery (*especialista em cirurgia oral*)
- Paediatric dentistry (*especialista em odontopediatria*)
- Periodontology (*especialista em periodontologia*)

Specialists must register with the OMD

Three more specialties were recently approved by the Portuguese Government: Endodontics; Prosthodontics and Public Oral Health. Data on the number of recognised specialists or the number of specialists currently in training is not yet available for these specialities¹.

Sectoral Competences

In 2021 was published a regulation establishing rules for the creation and implementation of sectoral competences.

Currently there are 4 approved sectoral competences by OMD

- Dental Sleep medicine;
- Management of Dental Units;
- Orofacial Harmonization;
- Orofacial pain and temporomandibular disorders

¹ The implementation process for the organisation of training of these specialists was therefore currently underway at the time of the drafting of this chapter.

Workforce

Dentists

Dentists ("*Medicos Dentistas*"), in Portugal, work almost exclusively in private practices.

| Year of data | 2025 |
|---|--------|
| Total Registered | 15 906 |
| In active practice | 13 035 |
| Dentist to population ratio (per 100 000 inhabitants) * | 122 |
| Percentage female | 64.1 |
| Foreign-trained dentists | 712 |
| *active dentists only | |

Stomatologists are regulated and registered as members of a college of the Portuguese Medical Association. They practice mainly in the SNS through Local Health Units, more precisely in hospitals.

Movement of dentists across borders

There is a notable cross border movement of dentists, with currently 1 763 Portuguese-trained dentists practising abroad, 689 EU-trained dentists practising in Portugal and 804 non-EU nationals practising in Portugal.

Specialists

Three dental specialities have been recently recognised, in addition to the already recognised specialities of orthodontics, oral surgery, periodontology and paediatric dentistry.

Dental specialists work in private practices only.

| Year of data | 2024 |
|------------------------------|------|
| Oral Surgeons (active) | 141 |
| Orthodontists (active) | 98 |
| Periodontists (active) | 59 |
| Paediatric dentists (active) | 65 |

Auxiliaries

There are two officially recognised dental auxiliaries in Portugal, dental technicians and dental hygienists. Dental assistants are however also widely used by dental practices. The competent authority is ACSS – Administração Central do Sistema Saúde.

| Year of data | 2024 |
|----------------------|-------|
| Technicians* | 1 543 |
| Chairside assistants | NA |
| Hygienists* | 931 |

Dental Technicians

Dental technicians must obtain an academic degree in Dental Prosthesis. These studies are carried out within dental schools and Health Institutes for 3 years. Students receive a certificate (a registerable qualification) for dental technicians. Dental technicians may study for one more year and obtain a degree (4

years). Their responsibilities include the design, preparation, manufacture, modification and repair of dental prostheses.

There are four higher education institutions, including the Faculdade Medicina Dentária da Universidade de Lisboa; Instituto Politécnico de Saúde do Norte; Escola Superior de Tecnologias da Saúde do Tâmega e Sousa and Escola Superior de Saúde Egas Moniz.

They must register within the Ministry of Health. Those responsible for manufacturing prosthesis must register at the Competent National Authority for Medical Devices (INFARMED). Technicians work in dental laboratories and cannot offer services to the public.

Dental Hygienists

Dental hygienists must train in dental schools or Health Institutes and gain recognisable qualifications before they can work. Their training lasts 3 years. They receive a course certificate at the completion of studies.

There are two higher education institutions providing such training: the Faculdade Medicina Dentária da Universidade de Lisboa; and Escola Superior de Saúde - Instituto Politécnico de Portalegre.

Dental hygienists must register to the Ministry of Health. Hygienists must work under the supervision of a dentist, who must be present at the office when they are working. Their fields of action include oral hygiene education and screening, oral examination, clinical record data and prophylaxis (scaling), the application of topical products and sealants, clinical assistance to the dentist and care of dental equipment. They are not allowed to do local anaesthetics.

Dental Chairside Assistants

The dental assistant profession is not a regulated profession and cannot be accounted for Portugal.

Portuguese regulations state in general terms that dental chairside assistants assist dentists by carrying out work that do not require specific training, pass on instructions to patients, deals with appointments, filling in and filing records, tidying and sterilizing medical instruments and collecting payments.

There is no official information about the number of dental assistants. Dental Chairside Assistants are mandatory in each dental team working under a valid clinical direction.

There is no compulsory formal training for dental assistants. However, they can obtain technical training in some universities or institutes that provide professional courses. The OMD also allows them to attend specific seminars and workshops organised during the annual OMD congress.

Other Useful Information

Main national associations

National dental associations and information centres

Portuguese Dental Association

Ordem dos Médicos Dentistas (OMD)

Ordem dos Médicos Dentistas (OMD)

Porto Headquarters

Av. Dr Antunes Guimarães, 463

4100 -080 Porto

Portugal

Tel: + 351 226 197 690

Email: geral@omd.pt

Email for the Deontological and Disciplinary Council: cdd@omd.pt

Website: www.omd.pt

Coimbra Delegation

Rua Padre António Nogueira Gonçalves Lote 4 Fraction B

Urbanização Quinta da Lomba Chão do Bispo

3030-416 Coimbra

Tel: +351 239 244 386

Lisbon Delegation

Campo Grande, 28 – 7º B

1700-093 Lisboa

Portugal

Tel: + 351 217 941 344

Website: www.omd.pt

Madeira Delegation

Conjunto Habitacional do Amparo S. Martinho

Avenida do Amparo nº 147

9000-276 Funchal

Tel.: +351 291 761 178

Email: omdmadeira@omd.pt

Website: www.omd.pt

Azores Delegation

Angra Office Center Palmeiras Park

Rua Dr. Aníbal Bettencourt nº 242 – D

9700 - 240 Angra do Heroísmo

Tel: +351 295 213 019

Email: omdacores@omd.pt

Website: www.omd.pt

Competent authorities

Ministry of Health

Ministério da Saúde

Secreteria-Geral Do Ministério da Saúde

Avenida João Crisóstomo n.º 9, 1º
1049-062 Lisboa
Tel: +351 217 984 200
E-mail: sq@sg.min-saude.pt
Website: <https://www.sg.min-saude.pt/>

Publication:

| Main Professional Journal | |
|---|---|
| OMD Dental Journal: <i>Revista da OMD</i> dos Médicos Dentistas | Journal for statistics: <i>Os Números da Ordem – Estatísticas</i> |
| Av. Dr Antunes Guimarães, 463 4100 - 080 Porto Portugal Tel.: +351 22 619 7690 Email: revista@omd.pt Website: www.omd.pt | Av. Dr Antunes Guimarães, 463 4100 - 080 Porto Portugal Tel.: +351 22 619 7690 Fax: +351 22 619 7699 Website: www.omd.pt |

Dental Schools:

| Faculdade de Medicina Dentária do Porto | Faculdade de Medicina Dentária de Lisboa |
|---|---|
| Faculdade de Medicina Dentária do Porto Rua Dr Manuel Pereira da Silva 4200 Porto Tel: + 351 220 901 100 Email: webmaster@fmd.up.pt Website: www.fmd.up.pt Number of open places (1 st year, 2024-2025): 66 | Rua Prof Teresa Ambrósio Cidade Universitária 1600 Lisboa Tel: + 351 217 922 619 Email: academicos@fmd.ul.pt Website: http://www.fmd.ulisboa.pt/ Number of open places (1 st year, 2024-2025): 70 |
| Faculdade de Medicina da Universidade de Coimbra | University Institute of Health Sciences Instituto Superior de Ciências da Saúde do Norte -CESPU (private) |
| Pólo das Ciências da Saúde-Pólo III Azhinhaga de Santa Comba 3000-548 Coimbra Tel: + 351 239 857 700 Fax: + 351 239 857 745 Email: direcao@fmed.uc.pt Website: http://www.uc.pt/fmuc Number of open places (1 st year, 2024-2025): 60 | Rua Central de Gandra, 1317,Vilarinho de Cima 4858-116 Gandra Tel.: +351 224 157 100 Fax: +351 224 157 101/102 E-mail: dir@iucs.cespu.pt Website: http://www.cespu.pt Number of open places (1 st year, 2024-2025): 120 |
| Instituto Superior de Ciências da Saúde Egas Moniz Quinta da Granja (private) | Universidade Fernando Pessoa (private) |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Travessa da Granja 2825 Monte da Caparica Tel: + 351 212 946 800 Tel: + 351 212 946 767 Fax: + 351 212 946 868 Fax : + 351 212 946 768 Email: iuem@egasmoniz.edu.pt Website: www.egasmoniz.edu.pt</p> <p>Number of open places (1st year, 2024-2025): 120</p> | <p>Praça 9 de Abril, 349 4249-004 Porto Tel : + 351 225 071 300</p> <p>Email: reitoria@ufp.edu.pt Website: http://www.ufp.pt/</p> <p>Number of open places (1st year, 2024-2025): 90</p> |
| <p>Catholic University of Portugal – Faculty of Dental Medicine Universidade Católica Portuguesa (private)</p> <p>Centro Regional das Beiras Estrada da Circunvalação, 3504-505 Viseu Tel: +351 232 419 500</p> <p>Email: fmd.viseu@ucp.pt Website: http://fmd.viseu.ucp.pt</p> <p>Number of open places (1st year, 2024-2025): 55</p> | |