

Dental Hygiene – Associate of Applied Science Degree (118)

Purpose The curriculum is designed to prepare students as primary preventive oral health professionals licensed to practice dental hygiene. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will be eligible to take national, regional, and state board examinations leading to licensure as a registered dental hygienist (RDH).

Note: Individuals who have a felony or misdemeanor conviction may not be allowed to take the licensing exam. This decision is made by the Virginia Board of Dentistry. For questions regarding this issue, call Virginia Board of Dentistry (804) 662-9906.

Accreditation Status The program has been accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Occupational Objectives A dental hygienist may practice in any of the following settings:

- Dental offices and dental clinics
- Federal, state, and local health departments
- Hospitals and nursing homes/home health organizations
- School districts or departments of education
- Educational programs for dental, dental hygiene, and dental assisting students
- Correctional facilities
- Private and public facilities for pediatric, geriatric, and other individuals/groups with special needs
- Health maintenance organizations/ managed care organizations

Admission Requirements Applicants must meet the general admission requirements for admission to the college. For application materials and additional program information, please see our Health Technology website at: <http://www.virginiawestern.edu/ht/dental>. Applicants to the Dental Hygiene

program must have completed the following:

1. One unit each of high school or college biology and chemistry.
2. Algebra II or college equivalent. Students who have not completed Algebra I or Algebra II in high school with a grade of “C” or better will be required to take the placement test. Those who do not place above Algebra I (MTH 3) and into Algebra II (MTH 4) or higher on placement test will be required to take developmental courses.
3. A grade of “C” or better is necessary in required high school/college units of math and science.

Prerequisites must be completed prior to summer 2010.

The applicant’s high school or college (if applicable) cumulative grade point average (GPA) must be at least 2.5 and is based on at least 12 credit hours of college credit in a 12-month timeframe. The GPA is determined at the end of fall semester prior to admission. Priority consideration will be given to applicants with a cumulative high school and/or college grade point average of 3.0 or above.

Applicants who are currently enrolled in high school must submit SAT or ACT scores. Priority consideration will be given to applicants with a combined (total) score of 900 on the SAT or a composite score of 18 or above on the ACT. All qualified applicants must take the HOBET Test.

Admission Procedures The Dental Hygiene program is open to qualified male or female applicants. Admission to the dental hygiene program is offered to qualified applicants on an annual basis at the Roanoke campus. Admission to the VWCC-DCC joint venture distance program site in Danville is offered to qualified applicants on a biennial basis during odd-numbered years; and to the VWCC-Lord Fairfax joint venture distance program site in Middletown and the VWCC-Central Virginia joint venture site in Lynchburg on a biennial

basis during even-numbered years. Deadline for submitting complete application materials is February 15 for the upcoming academic year. If the number of qualified applicants falls below the maximum enrollment, the application deadline may be extended. Applicants should be aware that meeting the curriculum admission standards does not guarantee program admission. Applicants will be notified in writing of the action taken by the Dental Hygiene Admissions Committee in May.

To qualify for consideration by the Dental Hygiene Admissions Committee, the applicant must submit a complete application which includes the following:

- Application to VWCC and, if applicable, the Joint Venture College;
- Dental Hygiene Program Application;
- Official transcripts of high school and all colleges attended. (Transcripts from VWCC or other Virginia community colleges are not required.);
- Official record showing completion of GED, SAT/ACT scores (if applicable as noted above);
- Two letters of recommendation and two forms of evaluation from employers/former teachers using the format provided by VWCC. See the website at: <http://www.virginiawestern.edu/ht/dental>.

It is **required** that applicants submit official high school transcripts, GED with scores, and **all** official college transcripts in one envelope to the VWCC Health Technology Information Office along with the VWCC application. Applicants are encouraged to apply early and to see the Health Technology Information Specialist for information, evaluation, and advising regarding the program. Qualified applicants must complete the HOBET (Health Occupation Basic Entrance Test) at their own expense, which is nonrefundable, and be interviewed by the Dental Hygiene faculty.

It is strongly recommended that applicants with no dental assisting experience

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observe a dental hygienist for a minimum of one full workday to obtain a realistic view of the profession prior to application.

VWCC Policy on Infectious Disease

Status Applicants who believe they are at risk of contracting an infectious disease should seek testing and counseling prior to making application to the dental hygiene program. Students engaged in patient care activities are encouraged to know their HIV and HBV status.

Applicants who are HIV or HBV positive may wish to reconsider their career goals. They must consider:

1. The possibility they may become disabled during their dental education or early in their career;
2. The infectious hazards that certain aspects of dental practice may pose;
3. The possibility of barriers to training in certain invasive clinical activities that may be imposed while in dental hygiene school because of possible hazards to patients;
4. The cost of dental education given personal health and career uncertainties.

Essential Dental Hygiene Functions

To successfully complete the clinical component of the program, the student must be able to perform all of the essential functions of a dental hygienist:

1. Communicate satisfactorily with clients, physicians, peers, family members and the health care team;
2. See and hear adequately to note slight changes in the client's condition;
3. Hear adequately to perceive and interpret various equipment signals;
4. Demonstrate adequate eye/hand coordination for dexterity in manipulation of hand instruments and other equipment used in clinical practice;
5. Use hands for fine manipulation;
6. Manage the care of a client in a sudden emergency, including one-man CPR when necessary;
7. Possess the visual acuity to correctly read handwritten orders, medication records, chart contents, and provide safety for clients;

8. Read, comprehend, and apply knowledge from complex science and dental science texts.

Despite the foregoing, a qualified person with a disability who can perform these essential functions with reasonable accommodation will be considered for admission along with other qualified applicants.

Clinical Environment The applicant should realize that student dental hygienists are, by nature of the profession, exposed regularly to highly stressful and demanding situations, difficult clients, and organizational and time pressures in a variety of client care settings. In addition, student and practicing dental hygienists are routinely exposed to blood and body fluids.

Academic Environment The academic environment is focused heavily on the sciences. Extensive reading is required in all classes, and courses are science based and academically challenging. Ability to apply knowledge and concepts across courses and the curriculum is necessary to master material. The ability to read and understand complex/scientific material is crucial to success, as is the ability to analyze written matter and express yourself coherently in written form.

Applicants with weaknesses in reading, vocabulary, written expression, and conceptualization are strongly urged to strengthen these areas prior to seeking admission. It is recommended that a medical terminology course be taken prior to admission.

Student Responsibilities After Acceptance into the Program

1. Admission is contingent upon a satisfactory medical examination indicating good general health. The medical examination must include evidence of a PPD skin test (or chest x-ray), and serology for the Hepatitis B surface antigen and antibody. The Heptavax vaccine is required. All documentation must be submitted to the Dental Hygiene Program Head no

later than August 1 in order for the student to continue in the program.

2. Current certification in Healthcare Provider cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is required for both years of the program. **No substitutions are accepted.** Students are responsible for providing their own malpractice insurance coverage during the two years of the program. Insurance is available for purchase after admission to the program. This policy is nonrefundable. All documentation must be submitted to the Dental Hygiene Program Head no later than August 1 in order for the student to continue in the program.
3. All students admitted to the Dental Hygiene program must attend dental hygiene orientation, register for all classes, and pay their tuition prior to August 1. All students are required to purchase the instrument and supply kit, pay a lab usage fee, and are expected to order uniforms at orientation. **If a student withdraws from the program, these items are nonrefundable.**
4. Students admitted to the program with academic contingencies in Biology, Chemistry, or Algebra must provide documentation of satisfactory completion of the contingency prior to the beginning of fall classes. Failure to meet a stated contingency will result in admission being rescinded.
5. All students admitted to the program without prior experience in the dental field (chairside dental assisting) are required to observe dental and dental hygiene procedures in the dental office of their choice. The observation experience must be completed by August 1. Assistance in locating practitioners willing to provide observation experience may be provided in meeting this requirement. Written documentation of this experience is required; forms will be provided by the Dental Hygiene program upon admission.
6. Students in the program are responsible for transportation to and from agencies

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utilized for clinical and community health rotation experiences.

7. Acceptance into the Program is contingent upon a satisfactory annual criminal background check and annual negative drug screening test. Satisfactory completion of this is required for license eligibility. Costs of the tests are the responsibility of the student.

Policy for Academic Retention

Continuation in the program: Satisfactory progress is demonstrated by achieving a grade of “C” or better in required Dental Hygiene and Natural Science courses.

Students must satisfactorily complete BIO 141, BIO 142, and NAS 185 with a grade of “C” or above before progressing to the second year of the program. Students must complete required Dental Hygiene courses in sequence. Should a student receive a grade of “D” in any Dental Hygiene didactic course, didactic component of a clinical or laboratory course, or the laboratory component of a preclinical or didactic course, the student will be dropped from the program and must reapply for admission. Should a student receive a grade of “D” in the clinical component of DNH 142, 190, 244, or 245 due to failure to meet minimum clinical requirements for the semester, the student may progress to the next semester of the program with faculty approval, and will have additional patient requirements for graduation added. Two consecutive “D” grades in these clinical courses may result in the student being dropped from the program.

Curriculum and Other Requirements

| | | Credits |
|----------------------------|---|----------------|
| BIO 141-142* | Human Anatomy and Physiology I-II | 8 |
| DNH 111 | Oral Anatomy | 2 |
| DNH 115 | Histology/Head and Neck Anatomy | 3 |
| DNH 120 | Management of Emergencies | 2 |
| DNH 130 | Oral Radiography for the Dental Hygienist | 2 |
| DNH 141-142* | Dental Hygiene I-II | 10 |
| DNH 145* | General and Oral Pathology | 2 |
| DNH 146 | Periodontics for the Dental Hygienist | 2 |
| DNH 150 ¹ | Nutrition | 2 |
| DNH 190* | Coordinated Practice | 3 |
| DNH 214 ² | Practical Materials for Dental Hygiene | 2 |
| DNH 216 | Pharmacology | 2 |
| DNH 226-227 ^{2,*} | Public Health Dental Hygiene I-II | 3 |
| DNH 230 | Office Practice and Ethics | 1 |
| DNH 235* | Management of Dental Pain and Anxiety | 2 |
| DNH 244-245* | Dental Hygiene IV-V | 10 |
| ENG 111* | College Composition I | 3 |
| NAS 185* | Microbiology | 4 |
| PSY 230 | Developmental Psychology | 3 |
| SDV 100 | College Success Skills (or SDV 108) | 1 |
| Elective ³ | Humanities/Fine Arts Elective | 3 |

Total Minimum Credits for Degree

70

¹ Health and wellness are emphasized throughout the dental hygiene program, but specifically in DNH 150 Nutrition.

² Includes instruction in fundamental mathematical skills.

³ Humanities/Fine Arts elective must be chosen from the “Approved List of Humanities Transfer Courses.” If planning on transfer, contact the four-year institution for requirements.

* This course has a prerequisite. Prerequisites for all courses are listed in the course description section at the back of the catalog.

Suggested Course Sequence

| Fall–First Year | Spring–First Year | Summer |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| BIO 141 | DNH 142 | BIO 142 |
| DNH 111 | DNH 145 | DNH 130 |
| DNH 115 | DNH 146 | DNH 150 |
| DNH 120 | DNH 216 | DNH 190 |
| DNH 141 | ENG 111 | |
| SDV 100 or SDV 108 | NAS 185 | |
| Fall–Second Year | Spring–Second Year | |
| DNH 214 | DNH 227 | |
| DNH 226 | DNH 230 | |
| DNH 235 | DNH 245 | |
| DNH 244 | Humanities/Fine Arts Elective | |
| PSY 230 | | |

* Support courses (non-DNH courses) may be taken prior to entry.

Note: BIO 141, BIO 142, and NAS 185 must be repeated if they were completed more than five years prior to the date of admission into the program.

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Readmission Readmission to the program will be based upon academic performance and adherence to program policies regarding attendance and professionalism, and will be contingent upon available laboratory/clinical space. Readmission is not guaranteed. Students who have been dropped from the program must submit a written application for readmission to the Program Head no later than January 1 for the following fall semester, no later than April 1 for the following spring semester, and no later than August 1 for the following summer session. The Program Head will present the readmission request to the faculty for consideration. Students applying for readmission will be notified of their admission status in writing.

Students readmitted to the program are eligible to repeat a course only once, and a Dental Hygiene course must be repeated during the semester in which it is offered. The student may not continue with other required Dental Hygiene courses until the course is repeated. Students earning a grade of “F” in any Dental Hygiene course will be dropped from the program and are ineligible for readmission unless there are extenuating circumstances (serious illness, death of an immediate family member).