

Technical Standards and Essential Functions

Health Sciences programs establish technical standards and essential functions to insure that students have the abilities required to participate and potentially be successful in all aspects of the respective programs.

Applicants to the Dental Hygiene Program are advised:

- 1) that they should enjoy working with people; be effective verbal and nonverbal communicators; and be willing to provide treatment and services to all clients without discrimination.
- 2) that dental hygiene requires the development of fine psychomotor skills, critical thinking skills, and reading for comprehension and application.
- 3) of the need for depth perception and for visual acuity with eyesight correctable to allow discernment and measurement of fine details typical in the oral environment.
- 4) that they are required to show proof of the completion of an **American Heart Association** (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers as required for all Health Sciences students and for eventual licensure as defined by the State Board of Dental Examiners. A photocopy of both sides of the course completion card showing the course issue/ expiration date and the instructor's identification information is considered proof of course completion. Training must be maintained and verified annually thereafter.



Following details these categories of essential functions that successful dental hygienists demonstrate: observation, communication, motor, intellectual, and behavioral and social attributes. Dental Hygiene Program students are required to meet the technical standards/attributes and essential functions that follows. Some of the technical standards may be met with reasonable accommodations. If accommodations are needed, it is the student's responsibility to comply with the procedures set forth by the ACC Office for Students with Disabilities. If a student is unable to meet all of the outlined standards, he/she may be withdrawn from the program.

Categories of Essential Functions	Definition	Functional Abilities	Activity/Attribute Examples (not all inclusive)
Observation	Ability to participate actively in all demonstrations, laboratory exercises, and clinical experiences in the professional program component and to assess and comprehend the condition of all clients assigned to him/her for examination, diagnosis, and treatment. Such observation and information usually requires functional use of visual, auditory, and somatic sensations	Visual	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visually assess detail in client conditions which includes the general appraisal as well as detail such as the shape of tissues in the mouth ▪ Possess depth perception (binocular vision with discrimination/perception to see 1.0 mm markings or better) ▪ Possess peripheral vision ▪ Distinguish color (deficiencies should be limited to a single color) ▪ Distinguish color intensity
		Hearing	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hear normal speaking level sounds ▪ Hear faint voices ▪ Hear faint body sounds (as when taking a blood pressure) ▪ Hear in situations when he/she can not see the speaker's lips (as when using masks) ▪ Hear auditory alarms ▪ Hear telephones
		Smell	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detect odors from client ▪ Detect smoke ▪ Detect gas or noxious smells
Communication	Ability to communicate effectively in English using verbal, non-verbal and written formats with faculty, other students, clients, families and all members of the healthcare team.	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teach a concept (such as oral health education to a client) ▪ Explain procedures ▪ Provide oral reports ▪ Incorporate acceptable verbal and nonverbal behaviors ▪ Speak on the telephone ▪ Direct activities of others ▪ Convey information accurately through writing (medical and dental chart) ▪ Speak clearly and distinctly (so that vital information is not misinterpreted) 	

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Motor	Sufficient motor ability to execute the movement and skills required for safe and effective care and emergency treatment	Physical Endurance	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sit for a sustained duration (at client's side during procedures) ▪ Sustain repetitive movements (as needed for calculus removal and CPR) ▪ Complete tasks in a timely fashion
		Physical Strength	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lift 25 pounds (strength to assist a patient in transferring into a dental chair) ▪ Move light objects up to 10 pounds (i.e., x-ray equipment) ▪ Defend self against a combative client ▪ Use upper body/strength (as for CPR, or needed to restrain client) ▪ Use their hands, wrist, and forearms for extended periods (instrumentation)
		Mobility	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Twist and bend at the waist (to accommodate varying positions needed to access the mouth) ▪ Move quickly (as when managing a medical emergency)
		Gross Motor Skills	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Move within confined spaces (as found in a typical dental hygiene treatment environment) ▪ Sit and maintain balance ▪ Reach above his/her shoulders (to operate equipment. i.e., dental light) ▪ Reach below his/her waist (to access dental unit controls) ▪ Demonstrate hand-eye coordination
		Fine Motor Skills	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Push, pull, and rotate their hands at the wrist ▪ Push, pull, and rotate their forearm and shoulders ▪ Grasp small objects and dental instruments with both hands ▪ Write clearly and neatly with pen or pencil ▪ Key-in information/type (use a computer key board) ▪ Demonstrate a pinch grasp, pinching the thumb to each one of the other fingers on the same hand ▪ Demonstrate fine motor skills with both hands ▪ Feel sensations in the finger pads

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<p style="text-align: center;">Motor <i>continued</i></p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Tactile</p>	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discern vibrations (such as a patient's pulse) ▪ Detect temperature changes ▪ Discern differences in surface characteristics (oral tissues) ▪ Discern differences in unseen root surfaces (tactile sensitivity)
<p style="text-align: center;">Intellectual</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ability to collect, interpret and integrate information and make decisions.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Reading</p>	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read and interpret dentists' orders ▪ Read and comprehend written documents ▪ Read and interpret physician's recommendations for client treatment
		<p style="text-align: center;">Arithmetic Competence</p>	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read and interpret columns of writing (as found in flow sheets) ▪ Interpret digital displays (i.e., x-ray dosage, sterilizers) ▪ Calibrate equipment ▪ Interpret graphs (such as periodontal and dental charting) ▪ Tell time ▪ Measure time (duration) ▪ Count rates (pulse rate) ▪ Use measuring tools (thermometer) ▪ Read measurement marks (such as the calibrated periodontal probe) ▪ Add, subtract, multiply, divide ▪ Compute fractions (as needed for dosage calculations) ▪ Write numbers in records
		<p style="text-align: center;">Analytical Thinking</p>	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transfer knowledge from one situation to another ▪ Process information ▪ Evaluate outcomes ▪ Prioritize tasks ▪ Demonstrate long term memory ▪ Demonstrate short term memory
		<p style="text-align: center;">Critical Thinking Skills</p>	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify cause-effect relationships ▪ Plan/control activities for others ▪ Synthesize knowledge and skills ▪ Sequence information

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<p style="text-align: center;">Behavioral and Social Attributes</p>	<p>Possess the emotional health and stability required for full utilization of the student's intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all academic and patient care responsibilities and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with clients and other members of the health care team.</p>	<p>Emotional Stability</p>	<p>A dental hygienist must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish therapeutic boundaries ▪ Provide client with emotional support (demonstrate empathy) ▪ Adapt to a changing environment/stress ▪ Deal with the unexpected (such as a crisis situation) ▪ Focus his/her attention on task ▪ Monitor his/her own emotions ▪ Perform multiple responsibilities concurrently ▪ Manage strong emotions (such as grief and anger)
	<p>Possess the ability to tolerate taxing workloads, function effectively under stress, adapt to changing environments, display flexibility, and learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in clinical settings with patients.</p> <p>Possess compassion, integrity, concern for others, and motivation.</p> <p>Possess the ability to demonstrate professional behaviors and a strong work ethic.</p>		<p>Interpersonal Skills</p>