

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR A DENTAL HYGIENIST

The ethical practice of dental hygiene requires intellectual ability, physical competence and personal responsibility. Therefore, all requirements for admission must be satisfactorily completed unassisted. In addition to demonstrating personal characteristics appropriate for a career in a health care profession, qualification for admission to, and, following completion of the curriculum, graduation from, the dental hygiene program requires satisfaction of the following general standards:

- sufficient intellectual capacity to fulfill the curricular requirements of the various required basic science, dental sciences and clinical courses;
- ability to communicate with patients, colleagues, faculty, staff and other members of the health care community;
- physical ability to learn and safely perform the various technical skills required to complete the dental hygiene curriculum; and
- sufficient emotional stability and responsibility to withstand the stresses, uncertainties and changing circumstances that characterize the practice of dental hygiene.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DENTAL HYGIENE

In addition to the general standards stated above, students must be able to satisfy all of the following specific technical standards:

All entering students must have the ability to read technical English rapidly and with comprehension; communicate with faculty, patients and peers in English using reasonable grammar and syntax; and attend class. Successful completion of the basic science and clinical science curricula requires physical competence, intellectual ability and personal responsibility of the student to levels facilitating competency in the following tasks and techniques:

- Observe and collect data from demonstration, laboratory assignments and lectures in the basic and dental sciences.
- Examine, evaluate and diagnose the oral health status of a child, adolescent, adult and geriatric patient.
- Observe the patient accurately at a distance and close at hand.
- Position him/herself in such a manner as to make it possible to examine the patient thoroughly, and perform inspection, palpation, percussion, and auscultation as necessary to complete the oral evaluation of the patient.
- Develop an understanding of current radiation safety principles.
- Become competent in obtaining and interpreting diagnostic oral radiographs.
- Assess the oral hygiene treatment needs of special patients, such as the medically, mentally or physically compromised patients, and the socially and culturally disadvantaged.
- Develop appropriate communication techniques compatible with handicapping or compromising disorders.
- Develop the skills required to interpret the results of the physical evaluation and to develop an appropriate oral hygiene treatment plan.
- Educate and motivate patients regarding their role in establishing and maintaining oral health.
- Control pain and anxiety by utilizing topical pharmacological anesthetics, as well as through modeling and biofeedback.
- Prevent and manage dental and medical emergencies. This includes having the capacity to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation and other appropriate life support measures for medical emergencies that may be encountered in a dental practice.
- Assess attachment levels and probing periodontal pockets, as well as perform root debridement and soft tissue management.
- Recognize malocclusion in the primary, mixed and permanent dentition.