



Dental Hygiene Essential Job Functions

A candidate for the Dental Hygiene program must have abilities and skills in six categories: observation, communication, motor, intellectual, behavioral/social, and environmental. Reasonable accommodation for persons with documented disabilities will be considered on an individual basis. A candidate must be able to perform in an independent manner. The following skills are required with or without accommodation.

OBSERVATION: Candidates must have sufficient sensory capacity to observe in the classroom, laboratory, and clinic. Sensory skills adequate to perform an examination and to detect subtle surface textures are required. Functional vision, hearing, and tactile sensation must be adequate to observe a patient's condition, inspect subtle color and characteristic changes in oral tissues, read radiographs, and detect fine changes on tooth surfaces.

COMMUNICATION: Candidates must be able to communicate effectively in both academic and health care settings. Candidates must show evidence of effective written and verbal communication skills, such as those needed to interact with patients and professionals and to communicate patients' needs in a prompt and effective manner.

MOTOR: Candidates must have fine motor function to execute movements required to provide care to patients. Candidates must be able to negotiate patient care environments and be able to move between settings, such as clinic and classroom buildings. Physical stamina sufficient to complete the rigorous course of didactic and clinical study is required. Long periods of sitting, standing, or moving are required in classroom, laboratory, and clinical experiences.

INTELLECTUAL: Candidates must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize. Problem solving, one of the critical skills demanded of dental hygienists, requires all of these intellectual abilities. In addition, candidates should be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and understand the spatial relationships of structures. Candidates must be able to read and understand scientific literature. In order to complete the Dental Hygiene degree, candidates must be able to demonstrate mastery of these skills and the ability to use them together in a timely fashion in problem-solving and patient care.

BEHAVIORAL AND SOCIAL: Candidates must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of their intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, and the prompt completion of all academic and patient care responsibilities. The development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients and other members of the health care team is essential. The dental hygienist's role requires flexibility, compassion, integrity, motivation, interpersonal skills, concern for others, and the ability to function in the face of the uncertainties and stress inherent in clinical practice.

ENVIRONMENTAL: Candidates must be able to function in an environment that requires use of agents for infection control, such as: nitrile gloves, masks, protective eye wear, surgical gowns, and chemical solutions and aerosols used to kill pathogens.

Students admitted to the program will receive a copy of these standards with a request for acknowledgment and return. Students may request accommodation to one or more technical standards based on disability. Reasonable accommodations to meet one or more technical standards are provided to students who validate their need through the Disability Services Office.