

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a dental hygienist?

Dental hygienist is a licensed healthcare professional, oral health educator and clinician who, as a co-therapist with the dentist, provides preventive, educational, and therapeutic services supporting total health for the control of oral diseases and the promotion of oral health.

What is the deadline for admission?

The deadline for the application, letters of recommendation, career statement, dental hygienist observation documentation, and transcripts for coursework completed to date is **January 15** of the year in which the applicant wishes to begin the program. The online application must be used to apply.

What are employment statistics for dental hygienists?

The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected employment prospects for dental hygiene to remain excellent, with the dental hygiene profession expected to be one of the fastest growing occupations through the year 2018. The 2014 median hourly wage was \$34.38 nationally and \$31.20 in Oklahoma. There is considerable freedom for dental hygienists to select work days and hours.

Why should I select the University of Oklahoma for my education in dental hygiene?

Graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene and as a well-rounded academic background. The baccalaureate degree allows entry into positions in teaching, administration, public health, corporate positions that other types of dental hygiene education do not. The University of Oklahoma offers dental hygiene distance education that allows students to remain near their home for those unable to relocate.

Opportunities for professional growth within a college of dentistry exist that no other form of dental hygiene education can provide. The program has an excellent clinical program, but also excels in the areas of community health and research. There is a strong emphasis on developing critical thinking skills, the ability to self-assess, and interprofessional - hallmarks of a professional.

Dental hygiene and dental faculty members who are nationally and internationally recognized as experts in their disciplines teach all courses. Exit interviews and alumni surveys consistently rate the dental hygiene faculty as the greatest strength of the program.

How long does the dental hygiene program take?

A baccalaureate degree requires a minimum of 120 semester hours of work, including specific prerequisites. The sixty semester hours of prerequisite coursework can be completed in two academic years. Once in the program, students have an additional two years in the dental hygiene curriculum.

What college should a prospective student attend?

In state or out-of-state applicants are afforded equal opportunity for admission. All coursework must be from accredited institutions.

Can I take my general education courses online?

Yes. If you would like to take these courses online, please refer to: <http://isd.ou.edu/>.

Can you tell me more about the distance education sites?

The University of Oklahoma Health Science Center College of Dentistry (OUCOD) and Tri County Technology Center (TCTC) in Bartlesville; Southern Oklahoma Technology Center (SOTC) in Ardmore; and Western Technology Center (WTC) in Weatherford, have established agreements to provide clinical sites for students to acquire a Bachelor's Degree in Dental Hygiene via distance education through an interactive distance learning format.

The distance sites are under the same American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation standards as the OUCOD program, and are accredited as one state wide program. Students at the distance sites are required to meet the same admission requirements as applicants to OUCOD and will have the same curriculum and clinical activities as the OUCOD program in every way possible. Graduates receive a B.S.D.H. degree from OU and are eligible to take the national board and clinical licensure examinations and apply for licensure in Oklahoma or any other states.

What if I'm interested in receiving my education at one of the distance sites?

Applicants to all sites go through the same procedures for admission. The application form has a place for you to prioritize where you would like to attend. You may prioritize from all four sites, from two or three sites, or select only one – it's your choice.

Beyond required courses, are there any other courses that will improve my chances of getting into the program?

Beyond the necessary prerequisite courses, no other coursework in a particular area is given preference. Areas for additional study should include courses that are of interest to the applicant. Some suggestions for courses that may improve one's knowledge for any health related career might include medical terminology, immunology or other biologic science courses, education or behavioral science courses, research, or any number of other courses that relate to a higher degree of knowledge.

Are dental assistants given preference as applicants?

No. Applicants may be able to gain valuable information about the desirability of a career in dental hygiene as well as a better overall understanding of dentistry by working as a dental assistant. However dental hygiene requires different knowledge and skill sets from those of dental assisting.

What if I will still need prerequisite courses when I apply?

Acceptance is based upon completion of FOUNDATIONAL coursework by the end of the **spring semester** prior to admission. Ideally applicants should have completed the FOUNDATIONAL coursework before the January 15 application deadline.

ALL other remaining pre-requisite courses must be completed by the time the fall semester begins. If you receive an offer of acceptance, it is contingent upon meeting the required "C" in all remaining pre-requisite coursework and a cumulative GPA of 2.5.

When will I know if I will be invited for an interview?

The interview process will occur in early spring. You will be notified by letter of your assigned time.

What is the most important factor in deciding whether an applicant is admitted?

One of the best predictors of future academic success is past academic performance. For that reason, the academic record of applicants is weighted rather heavily in the initial placement of applicants. A Foundational Grade Point Average (FGPA), last 60 hours Grade Point Average (L60GPA), ACT score, and Foundational Course Completion Status are used to compare applicants' academic qualifications.

What is an FGPA?

A GPA computed to evaluate all applicants using the same prerequisite foundational courses that are critical for the dental hygiene program - especially those courses whose content is heavily used throughout the dental hygiene curriculum. The FGPA uses the averaged grade for the following eight required courses.

English II

Human Physiology

Human Anatomy

Microbiology

Statistics

Psychology

Nutrition

General Chemistry I

Why an FGPA?

We compute a Foundational Grade Point Average (FGPA) in order to be fair to all applicants regardless of previous college experience. The reasons for FGPA are twofold: to allow a fair comparison of all applicants regardless of how many semester hours completed and provide a means for an individual to improve academic performance in key courses that can be reflected significantly in the applicant's credentials. **If FOUNDATIONAL courses have been taken through Advanced Placement or CLEP, the courses fulfill the Foundational prerequisite requirements, but are not calculated into the Foundational GPA.**

When will I know if I have been accepted?

The Admissions Committee aims for its decisions to be completed by mid-April.

Candidates are notified of their status as soon as possible after the class is selected.

Why wasn't I selected for this year's class?

The top reasons applicants aren't selected are as follow:

- ✗ Foundational GPA not competitive
- ✗ Last 60 hours GPA was not competitive
- ✗ ACT score not competitive
- ✗ Incomplete foundational coursework
- ✗ Missing too many courses to be able to complete in time for fall admission
- ✗ Inappropriate dental hygiene shadowing experience: observation of a dentist does NOT qualify nor does working in a dental office qualify as observational experience.

If I am not selected, how can I improve my prospects for the next class?

Applicants not selected are extended an invitation to schedule an appointment during the summer with the department chair to evaluate credentials and determine how to best improve foundational knowledge and increase possibility of admission. Ask yourself these questions:

- Did I have a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5? That's the GPA that "opens the door" so you can even be considered.
- Were my FGPA and L60GPA competitive? For the past five years the average FGPA and L60GPA of entering students were around 3.5.
- Did you have enough hours completed (especially in foundational courses) to give the Committee a good picture of your academic capability and to be competitive? We could not accept you if you cannot have all of your prerequisite coursework completed by the time the dental hygiene program begins in the fall. It is counterproductive for you to apply too early.

You should consider doing the following:

1. Retaking foundational courses in which you did not do well, or which you took some time ago. Remember that we use the FGPA heavily for admissions decisions and that GPA can be improved!
2. Doing whatever you can to improve study and test-taking skills. This will help you in learning better and improving your GPA.
3. Examining your knowledge of dental hygiene, including shadowing a dental hygienist. You really do need to know what you're getting into – dental hygiene is well worth the effort if it is truly what you want to do.
4. Reevaluating your personal motivation.
5. Reevaluating your commitment to becoming a dental hygienist.
6. Reevaluating your qualifications as a competitive applicant.
7. Deciding whether or not you are willing to do what it takes to be competitive. Many applicants who were not successful the first time have gone on to be some of our best students ...and graduates; so ***don't give up!!***

Is it possible to work part-time while enrolled in the dental hygiene program?

No. There are very heavy demands made on students' time. Attendance is mandatory and classes, labs and clinics are often scheduled from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, there is a significant amount of required study and at times projects that are very time consuming.