



# COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY

*The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER*

## REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST CAREER

The registered dental hygienist (RDH) is a licensed healthcare professional, oral health educator, and clinician. Responsibilities of a hygienist employed within a dental office may vary. Most dental hygienists evaluate patients' needs, determine a dental hygiene diagnosis, and fulfill a treatment plan. Treatments include preventive services that promote and maintain oral health and clinical treatments designed to arrest or control oral disease.

The dental hygienist works closely with, and under the supervision of a licensed dentist (D.D.S). Successful dental hygienists must exhibit critical thinking skills. The field of dental hygiene is also known to promote a flexible work schedule. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected the career of a dental hygienist to remain excellent! According to their website, the 2023 dental hygienist national mean hourly wage is \$43.21, resulting in a \$89,890 mean national annual wage.

Although most dental hygienists are employed in a dental office setting, the baccalaureate R.D.H may work in corporate health facilities, school systems, research centers, state or federal agencies, public health clinics and hospitals. Dental hygienists with baccalaureate degrees are also known to work as providers of continuing education seminars, educators, researchers, or corporate representatives.

## OU DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM B.S.D.H.

The University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry Dental Hygiene Program is proud to offer the only baccalaureate degree dental hygiene program in the State of Oklahoma! Prior to applying to our program, applicants must complete a minimum of 60 hours of required college prerequisite courses. Prerequisite courses may be taken at The University of Oklahoma in Norman, or by completing acceptable transfer equivalent courses from other accredited universities or colleges.

During each admissions cycle, 75 qualified applicants are invited to interview. Following spring interviews, our admissions committee selects 52 students to join our program. New students begin classes during the fall semester. Based on applicant site selections, our program admits 24 students to The University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry, located on The University of Oklahoma Health Campus in Oklahoma City, and admits 28 students to our distance site locations:

**ADMISSIONS FOR DISTANCE SITE LOCATIONS – OU DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM**  
**Tri County Technology Center in Bartlesville, Oklahoma – 12 Students Admitted**  
**Southern Oklahoma Technology Center in Ardmore, Oklahoma – 8 Students Admitted**  
**Western Technology Center in Weatherford, Oklahoma – 8 Students Admitted**

Students accepted to the program complete two years of dental hygiene curriculum. Procedures taught in the OU Dental Hygiene Program are within the dental hygiene scope of practice in the State of Oklahoma. The College of Dentistry ensures that program expectations, learning objectives, and educational outcomes are consistent at all sites. Local and distance sites attend the same classes through distance technology and share the same clinical and didactic requirements. Program outcomes between sites are evaluated yearly by course directors. Results are reported to the program director and dean of the college. The Higher Learning Commission and the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Associations accredit the program. Upon successful completions of our Dental Hygiene Program, graduates from all sites receive a Bachelor of Science Degree in Dental Hygiene (B.S.D.H) from The University of Oklahoma and are eligible to take national board examinations for licensure to practice as registered dental hygienists.



## PROGRAM/APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

**Prerequisite Courses:** Our professional (2+2) dental hygiene program requires approximately two years of college prerequisite coursework (minimum of 60 hours), be successfully completed at an accredited college or university, prior to applying to our program. To determine if coursework for an institution other than OU transfers to our program, please use the Transfer Equivalency Tool, <https://sis.ou.edu/ted/>. Our program does not accept course credit for dental hygiene courses completed while enrolled at any other dental hygiene programs. The dental hygiene program director must approve any course substitutions. Once accepted to our program, students complete an additional two years of undergraduate level dental hygiene coursework and clinical instruction. *\*If accepted into the program, all prerequisite coursework must be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> and official transcripts be sent to Admissions by July 15<sup>th</sup> of the year accepted.*

**Observation Hours:** Our program requires prospective students to observe a registered dental hygienist (RDH) performing his or her duties at a dental office for a minimum of 40 hours. Prospective students must log observation hours daily, and the dental hygienist must sign the log at the end of each day. Observation logs can be found on our website. Although all observation hours may be completed at one dental office, our program director and many of our interviewers prefer to see that a wide variety of dental offices have been visited to give the applicant a broader scope of dental hygienist duties. Applicants recording observation hours at their place of employment must obtain at least 20 of their observation hours outside of their place of employment.

**Online Science Labs:** Moving forward from 2025, the program will no longer be accepting labs taken online for science prerequisite coursework. However, we will accept labs that were taken online prior to 2025.

**ACT/SAT Scores:** Our program will no longer require an ACT/SAT score.

## APPLICATION & INTERVIEW PROCESS

**Submitting Applications:** Two separate applications must be submitted. Both applications open November 1<sup>st</sup>. The deadline for both applications is January 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 PM central standard time. The primary application processes through the American Dental Education Association, Dental Hygiene Centralized Application Service (ADEA DHCAS). During submission of this application, prospective students match completed prerequisite coursework and upload all required application materials. The DHCAS Primary Application link is as follows: <https://www.adea.org/godental/Apply/dhcas-application>. The University of Oklahoma Health Campus supplemental application link is as follows: <https://discover.ouhsc.edu/apply>. When completing the supplemental application there is no additional charge to add multiple sites and it makes no difference as to what order sites are added, as actual site selection takes place during the interview, for those invited.

**Interviews:** Admission to our program is competitive. During each admissions cycle, our program receives an average of 160 qualified applications for 52 available spots. Each verified application is ranked based on total cumulative GPA and total science GPA. The total number of prerequisite courses successfully completed are also taken into consideration. The final scores earned determine the 75 individuals who are invited to interview during interviews in March. Invitations to interview are sent via the email provided on application. Prospective students invited to interview will be taken on a tour of the college as part of their interview sessions. Once all interviews have taken place, our Admissions Committee meets to evaluate the results. The committee selects the individuals awarded a spot in our upcoming dental hygiene class based on total academic and interview scores and site(s) requested. Offers to join the program are sent via email to applicants by the end of April.