
IMPORTANT FACTORS TO CONSIDER BEFORE APPLYING TO THE DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

Academic Standards and Progression through the Program

Once enrolled in the Dental Hygiene program all DHY courses must be completed with a final course grade of “C” (75%) or better to advance to the next course and/or semester in the curriculum. Should a student earn a final course grade of less than “C” will not be permitted to continue in the program.

A student who is dismissed from the Dental Hygiene program may apply through the Admissions Department to be reaccepted into the program with the next applicant group. A letter of support from the Dental Hygiene program coordinator is required; reapplication does not ensure reacceptance.

Accommodations and Disabilities

The Dental Hygiene program is committed to all students achieving their potential. Students must contact Access and Disabilities Services if accommodations are needed to meet the essential abilities needed to function competently as a dental hygienist. If you have a disability, or think you have a disability (physical, learning disability, hearing, vision, psychiatric or other), which may need a reasonable accommodation, or you might require any special assistance in the event of an emergency or evacuation, please contact the Access and Disability Services Department (Building I- Room 103, 847.925.6266; ads@harpercollege.edu), as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Information on Access and Disabilities Services is available at <https://www.harpercollege.edu/ads/index.php>, or in the *Harper College Catalog and Student Handbook*. Staff in the Access and Disabilities Services Center located in I-103 (847.925.6266), will determine the appropriate accommodations and make recommendations to the student. The student must provide the program coordinator and faculty with a copy of these recommendations. This information will be shared with appropriate staff and faculty to ensure an efficient response to the identified student need.

Employment While a Student

Students enrolled in the Dental Hygiene program are cautioned regarding employment while a student in the program. Due to the heavy course workload, it is best that a student begin the program without job responsibilities or work *minimal* hours/week (10 hours or less). The intensity of the program is such that employment may detract from course responsibilities.

Functional Abilities/Essential Functions for the Dental Hygienist

Introduction:

1. The essential abilities standards are a requirement for admission to the Dental Hygiene program and are also identified in the *Dental Hygiene Program’s Student Handbook of Program Guidelines and Requirements*.

2. Students will be required to demonstrate that they are able to meet all of the essential abilities standards and abilities at the competency and performance levels required of an entry-level practitioner employed in a private practice/clinical dental hygiene setting. Students failing to meet the essential abilities, as determined by faculty, may have their progress in the Dental Hygiene program interrupted.

Ability	Standards	Examples of Necessary Activities (not all inclusive)
Motor Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross and fine motor function to provide safe and effective patient care using precise instrumentation procedures & avoiding patient injury: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Full manual dexterity including the functioning of arms, wrists, hands and all fingers. ○ Wrist, hand and finger dexterity to perform fine motor function without tremor. ○ High level of hand-eye coordination required for fine motor control. ○ Tactile ability sufficient for the use of small instruments and with control sufficient for effective instrumentation. • Comfortable working in close physical proximity to patient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaches, manipulates & operates instruments & equipment. • Performs palpation. • Uses indirect vision to properly adapt instruments. • Detects intraoral deposits (calculus) using explorers & tactile sensitivity. • Detects caries using explorers & tactile sensitivity. • Performs debridement using small, sharp hand & ultrasonic instruments. • Assembles and uses syringes to administer local anesthetic. • Able to straddle dental chair, reach for light and bracket tray.
Sensory Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal or corrected visual acuity sufficient for observation of fine detail and discernment of variations in color, shape and texture, such as those associated with oral conditions. • Visual acuity to acquire information from documents (paper or electronic) such as charts and for observation and assessment. • Auditory ability sufficient to hear verbal communication from patients and members of the health team; includes ability to respond to emergency signals. • Ability to discern soft sounds, such as those associated with taking a blood pressure. • Ability to coordinate verbal and visual feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observes patient responses. • Observes and records intraoral & extraoral findings. • Takes blood pressure. • Reads charts & computer screen. • Accurately reads measurements on instruments, i.e., probe. • Listens to patient while using instruments. • Listens to and observes instructor while recording findings (paper or electronic) and observing patient responses.

Ability	Standards	Examples of Necessary Activities (not all inclusive)
Communication Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to establish rapport with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds. • Communicate effectively in English with patients, families, and other health care providers, both verbally and in writing. • Sufficient command of the English language in order to retrieve information from lectures, articles, textbooks, etc. • Effectively adapt communication for intended audience. • Computer literacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes rapport with patients, faculty and colleagues. • Explains treatment procedures to instructor and patient. • Implements dental health education including dental hygiene care, diet, & tobacco dependence counseling. • Documents patient responses, clinical findings & services rendered. • Provides presentations to larger audiences including peer and community groups. • Conducts literature searches to utilize empirical research for evidence-based patient care decisions.
Problem Solving Ability/Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply critical thinking skills in the classroom, lab and clinical settings. • Identify cause-effect relationships in clinical situations. • Demonstrate problem-solving skills and sound clinical judgment in delivery of patient care. • Can measure, calculate, reason, comprehend, analyze, apply, prioritize, and synthesize data • Use sound judgment and safety precautions. • Address problems or questions to the appropriate persons at the appropriate time. • Organize and prioritize job tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops treatment/care plans. • Makes adjustments in care as indicated. • Evaluates treatment outcomes. • Seeks consultation in a timely manner. • Responds appropriately to emergencies. • Self-directed in classroom and lab activities, i.e., balanced approach in needing assistance and figuring things out. • Functions effectively under stress. • Prepared with necessary equipment, supplies and completed homework assignments for all classroom, lab and clinic sessions.
Behavioral/ Emotional Skills and Professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to Harper College Academic Honesty Policy (per College catalog). • Adhere to Harper College Code of Conduct (per College catalog). • Abide by the guidelines set forth in the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act. • Adhere to all dental hygiene program policies (per program and clinic manuals). • Ability to perceive events realistically, to think clearly and rationally and to function appropriately in routine and stressful situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with program policies. • Follow policies and procedures required by academic and clinical settings. • Identifies changes in patient health status • Handles multiple priorities in stressful situations. • Adhere to infection control procedures. • Adapts quickly to change. • Uses good judgment. • Empathizes with patients. • Accepts personal responsibility for actions-accountable. • Courteous; appropriately open & candid • Honest; presents own work.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not erase or modify data from any record or file, or remove any record from where it is maintained. • Does not share confidential information with any individual(s) who does not need to know. • Manages conflict constructively. • Functions independently with other healthcare providers. • Meets deadlines; attend class & clinics on time. • Respectful. • Accepts criticism maturely. • Maintains decorum in front of patients/peers. • Complies with clinical dress code; good personal hygiene.
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Occupational Risks

Bloodborne and Respiratory Pathogen Policy

Harper College Dental Hygiene program faculty, staff and students (“personnel”) have the obligation to maintain standards of health care and professionalism that are consistent with the public’s expectations of the health professions.

We are committed to addressing issues related to bloodborne and respiratory pathogens, such as COVID-19, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) in a spirit of compassion and sensitivity to individual needs as well as to community welfare. The purpose of this policy is to minimize the risk of transmission of a bloodborne pathogen from an infected health care worker or student to a patient.

The Dental Hygiene program recognizes that knowledge and information about bloodborne pathogens continues to change and therefore this policy will be reviewed regularly, and changes will be recommended as appropriate.

Patient Care

1. All personnel are ethically obligated to provide patient care with compassion and demonstrate respect for human dignity.
2. No personnel may ethically refuse to treat a patient solely because the patient is at risk of contracting or has an infectious disease.
3. Personnel are ethically obligated to respect the rights of privacy and confidentiality of patients with infectious diseases.
4. The Dental Hygiene program will protect the privacy of confidentiality of any personnel who test positive for an infectious disease.

Infection Control

1. All health care workers and students are required to follow “Universal Precautions’ which is the basis of the practices and procedures set forth in the Dental Hygiene Program’s Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Program.
2. The Dental Hygiene Program Coordinator, along with the faculty, has established and enforced written preclinical, clinical, and laboratory protocols to ensure adequate asepsis, infection and hazard control, and hazardous waste disposal. These protocols are consistent with current federal, state and/local guidelines and have been provided to all students, faculty and support staff. The protocol is complete including the availability and use of gloves, masks, and protective eyewear by students, faculty and patients in both preclinical and clinical settings. The protocols are reviewed annually by faculty to ensure accuracy and compliance.

Risk of Exposure to Infectious Illnesses

The Harper College dental hygiene students, in the course of their clinical/academic duties have significant exposure to blood, blood products, tissue, secretions or body fluids of patients potentially containing Hepatitis B (HBV) and are at risk for HBV as well as other infectious diseases. Unintentional punctures of the skin with contaminated instruments or needles sometimes occur despite careful technique. These factors increase student risk for contracting diseases.

Dental hygiene faculty or students who are exposed to a respiratory or bloodborne pathogens in the course of their work in the Dental Hygiene program are expected to follow the procedures set forth the Program’s Bloodborne and Respiratory Pathogen Policy and Exposure Control Program.

Infectious Diseases Carrier Status

If a prospective student is a carrier or contracts an infectious disease, he/she should consider how that status would affect his/her future in healthcare. Information to help make decisions about one’s future as a student or healthcare worker is available through a personal physician and/or Health & Psychological Services at Harper College. Refer to Board Policy regarding students with chronic communicable diseases, (*Rules and Regulations Implementing Board Policy 09.05.00: Chronic or Otherwise Substantially Harmful Communicable Diseases*).

Training in Infection Control and Radiographic Procedures

No student will be permitted to deliver patient services in any setting until he/she has been instructed in infection control (as per OSHA guidelines) and has mastered material on safety and universal precautions with satisfactory competency.

No student will be permitted to deliver patient services in any setting until he/she has been instructed in radiation safety practices (as per NCRP Report 145 Radiation Protection in Dentistry) and has mastered material with satisfactory competency.

Cumulative Repetitive Trauma /Work-Related Musculoskeletal Disorders

Individuals that have cumulative trauma disorder (such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, etc.) should discuss the implications of these conditions with a physician and the Dental Hygiene Program Coordinator. The severity of these conditions may adversely affect the individual's performance in the program and upon graduation, the practice of dental hygiene.

Latex Allergy or Sensitivity

Though the Dental Hygiene program is a "latex-free" environment, individuals that have a latex allergy/sensitivity should discuss the implications of these conditions with a physician and the Dental Hygiene Program Coordinator.

Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct

It is important that students and faculty in a health profession realize that in our society the health practitioner functions mainly on the basis of self-discipline, rather than on imposed regulation and receives a high degree of public confidence and trust. By accepting a Professional Code of Conduct which represents this trust, the student and faculty member demonstrate the desire to be fully prepared for the dental hygiene profession and to the people served. As is traditionally expected of all health professionals, faculty members and students will demonstrate the highest standard of integrity at all times. Students and faculty are expected at all times to conduct themselves in accordance with the

- Harper College Student Code of Conduct and all other College Policies
- American Dental Education Association's Statement on Professionalism in Dental Education
- American Dental Hygienists' Association Code of Ethics

Failure to adhere to the standards of professionalism and professional characteristics as outlined below could result in dismissal from the program.

Professionalism & Professional Characteristics

- Professional Appearance
- Ethical Conduct
- Infection Control & Safe Practice
- Patient Communication, Care & Privacy
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Professional Responsibilities
- Time Management
- Self-Evaluation
- Problem-Solving Ability
- Compliance with OSHA, HIPAA, Radiation Safety, ADA and/or other regulatory agencies policies.