Dental Hygiene*
Associate in Applied Science Degree
Limited Enrollment

Program Coordinator Kathleen Hock
847.925.6543
khock@harpercollege.edu
Avante, Room X115

Career Definition
A dental hygienist is a licensed, preventive oral health professional and member of the dental health care delivery team. The dental hygienist provides educational, clinical and therapeutic services and promotes total health through the maintenance of optimal oral health.

Program Overview
An associate in applied science degree in dental hygiene is awarded at the completion of the two-year academic sequence. The degree program prepares the graduate for eligibility to complete the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination and a regional clinical examination, such as NERB (Northeast Regional Board Examination). Successful completion of these examinations allows the graduate to apply for Illinois licensure to become a registered dental hygienist and to begin entry-level practice as a clinical dental hygienist.

The Dental Hygiene Program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611,312.440.2500. www.ada.org, a specialized board recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. The Program meets the Illinois Board of Dentistry guidelines for dental hygiene education and is approved by the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation.

Program Goals
The Dental Hygiene Program will:

• maintain admission policies that ensure admission of a qualified student body.
• provide career education that prepares qualified, entry-level dental hygiene professionals who are competent to provide safe, ethical and comprehensive oral health services to a diverse population as defined by the Harper College Dental Hygiene Program Competencies for the Entry-Level Dental Hygienist.
• maintain a contemporary, learner-centered curriculum that reflects evidence-based research dental hygiene practice.
• provide quality individualized patient-centered dental hygiene care.
• provide service to the Harper College and surrounding communities, and serve as a resource of oral health knowledge and education for the health care community.
• Promote professional growth and develop leadership in dental hygiene education by engaging in professional development activities.

Program Outcomes
Students who successfully complete this program are able to:

• utilize the dental hygiene process of care in the provision of comprehensive, quality patient care.
• provide individualized patient educational services to promote health maintenance and disease prevention.
• individually and/or in collaboration with health care professionals, apply the dental hygiene process of care in planning and providing oral health related programs to the public.
• use evidence-based research to critically evaluate the validity of new information, new products and/or techniques and their relevance to the practice of dental hygiene.
• apply principles of ethical reasoning, ethical decision making, and critical thinking as they pertain to the academic environment, research, patient care and dental hygiene practice, and demonstrate professional responsibility as it applies to legal and regulatory concepts in the provision and/or support of oral health care services.
• perform self-assessment, monitor knowledge and performance and take corrective action to address deficiencies.
• demonstrate interpersonal and communication skills required to function effectively with diverse population groups and other members of the health care team.
• demonstrate professional growth by participating in professional activities and continuing education.

Graduation Requirements
To be eligible for graduation with an associate in applied science degree in dental hygiene a student must:

• satisfy requirements for an associate in applied science degree as outlined in the Catalog.
• attain a minimum GPA of 2.0 with a grade of C or better for the courses in the dental hygiene curriculum.
• complete the Dental Hygiene Program outcomes listed in this document.
• abide by specific program policies as outlined in the Dental Hygiene Student Handbook.
Opportunities for Employment
According to the U.S. Department of Labor 2011-2012 Occupational Outlook Handbook, dental hygiene ranks among the fastest growing occupations, with employment expected to increase by 36 percent through 2018, much faster than average for other occupations.

For a complete overview to all related positions and job market and salary trends, please consult the Occupational Outlook Handbook: http://www.bls.gov/OCO/

Opportunities for Advancement
- Articulation agreements exist with some universities. In these agreements Harper graduates are awarded academic credits toward advanced degrees.
- Graduates with clinical experience and education may pursue employment in academia or business.

Helpful Academic Skills
- High school chemistry, biology, advanced biology, algebra, psychology, English and communication courses
- College anatomy, physiology, English, algebra, psychology, communication courses and foreign language

Technical Skills and Essential Functions
Refer to the Functional Abilities document.

Professional Organization Websites
- American Dental Association www.ada.org
- American Dental Hygienists’ Association www.adha.org
- American Dental Education Association www.adea.org
- Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) www.idfpr.com

Frequently Asked Questions
Q: How do I get started?
A: This is a limited enrollment program and has special requirements for admission. Attendance at a dental hygiene Information Meeting is mandatory prior to acceptance. Topics addressed at the information session include: career overview, essential skills, education requirements, admission policies and procedures. To receive an application for this program you must attend an information session. A schedule of upcoming information sessions is listed online at harpercollege.edu. Search for health care information sessions.

Q: How much does the program cost?
A: Specific tuition costs will be provided at the information meeting. Dental Hygiene coursework is double the standard tuition. TUITION AND FEES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. Financial aid is available through the Harper College Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Q: What are the aptitudes, qualities and physical demands needed to be successful in the dental hygiene program?
A: Dental hygiene is a physically demanding occupation. The dental hygienist must have good eye-hand coordination, upper body strength and hand/finger dexterity without tremor. An aptitude for science and musculoskeletal health—full range of body movement—is essential. Dental hygienists also need visual and auditory acuity, the ability to use the English language to communicate effectively and should enjoy working in close proximity with people who may have various degrees of dental disease.

Q: How long is the program and can it be taken part time?
A: Prerequisites and general education coursework can be taken prior to acceptance and transferred into the program which will lighten the course load. However, completion of such coursework does not guarantee acceptance into the program. The program is considered full time and is scheduled over a two-year academic cycle. Coursework must be taken as outlined. The program is academically challenging. For each hour in the classroom, laboratory or clinic, two to three hours are needed outside of class to study.

Q: Are there specific health or other requirements for this program?
A: Yes. Once accepted into the program the coordinator will provide you with information about when to contact Health and Psychological Services (HPS) to complete specific health requirements. HPS is located in Building A, Room A362, 847.925.6849. The student will be required to complete CPR and to undergo a criminal background check through the Harper College Campus Police. Other requirements will be discussed at the program orientation for new students.
Q: If I am a foreign-trained dentist, do I have to take all of the courses in the program?  
A: Yes

Q: Do I have to complete the general education courses prior to application to the program?  
A: Only those that are designated as prerequisites—English and Psychology. It is strongly advised that applicants take all the general education requirements prior to matriculation due to the rigorous academic and clinic schedule.

Q: If I am a certified dental assistant, experienced with X-rays and study models, or a dental assistant who is certified in coronal polish and sealants, will I be exempt from certain courses?  
A: No. Students accepted into the program are not exempt from any coursework in the program.

Q: Is it possible to work while in the program?  
A: Due to the intensity of the program and the requirement to earn a grade of C in each course, working is highly discouraged. It is recommended that students work no more than 10-12 hours per week.

Q: If I have taken classes outside of Harper College that seem similar to the prerequisites, will the program accept my prior coursework?  
A: You must complete a Harper College application and submit your transcripts. An evaluation of your transcripts will be provided for you.

Q: What days are the courses and clinic scheduled?  
A: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., including the summer semester.