

DENTAL HYGIENE

Associate of Applied Science Degree

A dental hygienist is a vital member of a team of dental professionals dedicated to improving oral health and supporting the general health of individuals and groups. As licensed professionals, dental hygienists provide educational, clinical, and therapeutic services and may be involved in research, administration, client/patient advocacy, marketing or consulting. Dental hygienists may practice in a variety of settings such as private dental offices, public health facilities, schools, nursing homes and hospitals. They may also work in correctional facilities, business and industry and other settings.

Dental hygienists in a clinical setting perform oral and general health assessments and provide oral health instruction, as well as counseling regarding nutrition and healthy lifestyle and their impact on oral and general health. Dental hygienists take and interpret radiographs and provide many types of preventive services such as removing deposits from teeth, applying fluoride, placing sealants and more. Infection control and emergency management are also important functions. In New Mexico and other states, dental hygienists may be certified to provide local anesthesia.

Dental hygienists enjoy working with people, have good manual dexterity and enjoy working with their hands. They possess the maturity and critical thinking skills to provide current, quality, professional care. They have strong interpersonal skills to motivate and educate patients of all ages. Dental hygienists are lifelong learners and are dedicated to continuing education, enhancing the profession and practicing ethical decision-making and behavior.

Dental hygienists are generally well paid and are respected professionals in their communities. Job opportunities in the field are expected to grow much faster than the average for all occupations through 2022. Graduation from this program qualifies students to take national and state examinations to become licensed dental hygienists anywhere in the country, and there are international employment opportunities for dental hygienists educated in the U.S.

Students wishing to pursue a Bachelor's degree should consult with an advisor regarding transferability of courses in the prerequisite list as well as the dental hygiene curriculum.

Webpage: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>

Required Skills and Abilities

Students will need to demonstrate good oral expression (speech clarity) and written comprehension in English, critical thinking skills, near vision, and physical stamina (e.g., the ability to sit for long periods of time and move about freely), as well as the ability to manipulate dental/medical equipment, move/lift equipment up to 30 pounds without assistance, and perform patient care procedures with manual precision.

Program Admission Special Requirements

This is a limited entry program. Successful candidates generally have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Faculty student ratio in the clinical setting is 1-to-5. All science courses must be taken within 5 years before admission to the program.

Core Requirements

General education and related classes are required prior to applying to the Dental Hygiene Program and are identical to those offered at New Mexico State University Las Cruces (main) Campus (29 credits):

Prefix	Title	Credits
BIOL 2310 & 2310L	Microbiology and Microbiology Lab ¹	4
BIOL 2210	Human Anatomy and Physiology I for the Health Sciences ¹	4
BIOL 2225	Human Anatomy and Physiology II ¹	4
CHEM 1120G	Introduction to Chemistry Lecture and Laboratory (non majors) ¹	4
CHEM 2120	Integrated Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry ¹	3
ENGL 1110G	Composition I ¹	4
MATH 1220G	College Algebra ¹	3
NUTR 2110	Human Nutrition ¹	3
Total Credits		29

¹ Courses are identical to those offered at New Mexico State University Las Cruces (main) Campus.

Course Fees

In addition to tuition, a fee of \$400 is charged for each of the following courses:

Prefix	Title	Credits
DHYG 122	Clinical Dental Hygiene I	3
DHYG 132	Clinical Dental Hygiene II	2
DHYG 212	Clinical Dental Hygiene III	4
DHYG 222	Clinical Dental Hygiene IV	4

Dental Hygiene - Associate of Applied Science (<http://catalogs.nmsu.edu/dona-ana/academic-career-programs/dental-hygiene/dental-hygiene-associate-applied-science/>)

DHYG 110. Preclinical Dental Hygiene

3 Credits (3)

Basic scientific principles and current theory, prevention of disease transmission, ethical and professional treatment of patients, clinical learning preparation, and introduction to comprehensive patient care. Offered concurrently with DHYG 112 to provide dental hygiene students with introductory knowledge, skills and attitudes to function in the clinical setting. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 112. Preclinical Dental Hygiene Lab

3 Credits (12P)

Clinical application to basic theories and procedures used in dental hygiene practice. Techniques of instrumentation used in performing diagnostic, preventive and therapeutic services utilized when providing comprehensive patient care. Student will practice these techniques on manikins and student partners in the clinic. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 114. Oral Histology and Embryology**2 Credits (2)**

Introduction and description of general histology and embryology with emphasis on the microscopic structures of enamel, dentin, pulp, cementum, periodontal ligament, bone, oral mucosa, epithelial attachment and development of orofacial structures. May be repeated up to 2 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 116. Head and Neck Anatomy**3 Credits (3)**

Comprehensive study of the anatomy of the head and neck regions, including skeletal, nervous, circulatory, lymphatic, and muscular systems. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 117. Dental Anatomy**2 Credits (2+1P)**

A detailed study of nomenclature, morphologic characteristics, and physiologic relationships of human primary and permanent teeth as related to the clinical practice of dental hygiene. Laboratory activities develop observation and dexterity skills. May be repeated up to 2 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 118. Dental Radiology**3 Credits (3+4P)**

Study of radiation physics, hygiene and safety theories. Fundamentals of oral radiographic techniques and interpretation of radiographs. Includes exposure of intra-oral radiographs, quality assurance, radiographic interpretation, patient selection criteria, ancillary radiographic techniques and application to dental hygiene treatment. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 120. Dental Hygiene Theory I**3 Credits (3)**

Continuation of the theoretical basis for dental hygiene clinical practice. Emphasis on emergency care, planning dental hygiene care, health promotion and disease prevention, oral rehabilitation and care of appliances, modifications of dental hygiene care through the life-span, and an introduction to medically compromised patients. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 122. Clinical Dental Hygiene I**3 Credits (16P)**

Application of dental hygiene procedures on a variety of clinical patients under direct supervision of faculty. Emphasis on patient assessment and diagnosis, treatment procedures, appointment planning and prevention techniques. Theory is simultaneously related to practical experience. Offered concurrently with DHYG 120. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 124. General and Oral Pathology**3 Credits (3)**

Introduction to general pathology with focused study of diseases and disorders of the oral cavity and their interrelationship with body systems; developmental anomalies of the teeth and jaws; manifestations of disease in the oral cavity, head and neck. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 126. Periodontology**3 Credits (3)**

Study of normal and diseased periodontium to include the structural, functional and environmental factors. Emphasis on etiology, pathology, evaluation of disease, treatment modalities, and therapeutic and preventative periodontics relative to the hygienist's role as a co-therapist in a contemporary practice setting. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 132. Clinical Dental Hygiene II**2 Credits (2)**

Continuation of clinical skills, patient assessment and diagnosis, treatment and appointment planning, preventive techniques and application of dental hygiene procedures at an intermediate level under the direct supervision of faculty. Clinical-based instruction helps students synthesize new knowledge, apply previous knowledge, and gain experience managing the workflow. Theory is simultaneously related to practical experience. May be repeated up to 2 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

Prerequisite(s): "C" or above in DHYG 120, DHYG 122, DHYG 124, DHYG 126, DHYG 134.

Corequisite(s): DHYG 218.

DHYG 134. Dental Materials**3 Credits (2+2P)**

Study of the composition, chemical and physical properties, manipulations, and uses of dental materials. Emphasis on materials and procedures for which the dental hygienist is directly responsible. Laboratory experiences include application and manipulation of various materials used in dentistry. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 210. Dental Hygiene Theory III**2 Credits (2)**

Advanced theory of dental hygiene and information on periodontal therapies relative to the hygienist's role as a co-therapist in clinical practice. Continuation of the study of dental hygiene care for medically comprised patients and an introduction to special needs patients. May be repeated up to 2 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 212. Clinical Dental Hygiene III**4 Credits (16P)**

Continuation of clinical skills, patient assessment and diagnosis, treatment and appointment planning, preventive techniques and applications of dental hygiene procedures at the intermediate to competent level under supervision of faculty. Emphasis on dental hygiene treatment for the medically compromised and periodontally involved patients. Theory is simultaneously related to practical experience. Offered concurrently with DHYG 210. May be repeated up to 4 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 214. Dental Pharmacology**3 Credits (3)**

Study of the pharmacologic aspects of drugs and drug groups with which the dentist and dental hygienist are directly and indirectly concerned. Emphasis is placed on nomenclature, origin, physical and chemical properties, preparation, modes of administration and effects of drugs upon the body systems. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 215. Medical and Dental Emergencies**2 Credits (2)**

This course provides an overview of medical and dental emergencies encountered most frequently in the dental setting. It also provides the student with knowledge and techniques on how to address those emergencies should they occur. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 217. Research Methodology**2 Credits (2)**

This course provides an introduction to the principles and application of research methods in social, behavioral and medical research. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 218. Pain and Anxiety Management**2 Credits (2)**

Study of the application of various physical, chemical, and psychological modalities to the prevention and treatment of preoperative and postoperative patient anxiety and pain. Emphasis on administration of local anesthesia and nitrous oxide. May be repeated up to 2 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 219. Pain and Anxiety Management Clinical**1 Credit (4P)**

Clinical application of concepts learned in DHYG 218. Emphasis on the administration and techniques of local anesthesia and monitoring nitrous oxide. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

Prerequisite(s): DHYG 218.

DHYG 220. Dental Hygiene Theory IV**3 Credits (3)**

Theoretical preparation for advanced clinical practice. In-depth study of dental hygiene care for patients with special needs. Case Study presentations and a Board Review are utilized to demonstrate the synthesis of comprehensive dental hygiene knowledge, skills and attitudes. The most current dental and dental hygiene technology will be reviewed as it related to clinical practice. May be repeated up to 3 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 222. Clinical Dental Hygiene IV**4 Credits (16P)**

Clinical sessions combine basic and advanced dental hygiene skills with time management techniques essential for private practice. Comprehensive patient care to include assessment, dental hygiene diagnosis, treatment planning, implementation and evaluation of dental care, nonsurgical periodontal therapy, adjunct clinical procedures, ultrasonic instrumentation, patient management, sealants, and comprehensive programs for control of oral diseases will be emphasized. Theory is simultaneously related to practical experience. Students are encouraged to develop independent decision-making with minimal faculty supervision. May be repeated up to 4 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 224. Principles of Practice**2 Credits (2)**

Examination of the dental hygienist's role in both traditional and non-traditional employment settings. Career planning, resume preparation and interviewing are practices. An understanding of the law, professional ethics of dental hygiene and the need for lifelong learning are emphasized. Future roles of the dental hygienist and emerging issues in dental hygiene will be explored. May be repeated up to 2 credits. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 225. Dental Public Health Education**3 Credits (3)**

Study of principles and concepts of community public health and dental health education. Emphasis on dental epidemiology and statistical methods, community assessment, educational planning, implementation, and evaluation, scientific review of literature, and classroom presentation. Restricted to: DHYG majors. Restricted to Community Colleges campuses only.

DHYG 255. Special Topics in Dental Hygiene**1-6 Credits (1-6)**

Study of special topics related to the advanced practice of dental hygiene. May include educational methodology as well as applications in clinical practice, research, or community service. Consent of instructor required. Restricted to: Community Colleges only. Restricted to DHYG majors.

Name: Elmer Gonzalez, Program Director

Department Chair - Dental Programs

Office Location: DASH 84F

e-mail: Dentalprograms@dacc.nmsu.edu

Phone: (575) 528-7216

Website: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/>