

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 7 percent from 2022 to 2032. (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). 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 the transferability of courses in the prerequisite list as well as the dental hygiene curriculum.

The Dental Hygiene Program at Doña Ana Community College is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). For more information about accreditation, you can contact the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) (<https://coda.ada.org/>)

Graduates of this program are eligible to apply for licensure in any State of The United States after completion of the program and successful completion of all required board examinations. Applicants must contact the licensing board of the state in which the graduate wants to practice, for more information on specific requirements.

Webpage: <https://dacc.nmsu.edu/academics/programs/dental-programs/index.html> (<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 and move about freely).

- Applicants offered admission to the program usually have a GPA of 3.0 or better and a 3.3 or better in Science Courses such as Chemistry, Biology, and Nutrition.
- Be able to manipulate dental/medical equipment, move/lift equipment up to 30 pounds without assistance, and perform patient care procedures with manual precision.
- Must be able to expose radiographs, and administer local anesthetics, and nitrous oxide.
- Must be able to participate in all program-related activities, including, serving as a student partner during clinical practice and learning, student club activities, and required program community service learning events.
- Be able to assist with and or provide CPR as needed
- Must be able to clearly distinguish and see all colors to accurately identify pathology based on color.

Program Admission Special Requirements

- This is a limited-entry program.
- 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. The application can be found on the program's webpage as well as a prospective student handbook outlining important information for new applicants to familiarize with.
- Applicants must be aware that although the program has a patient pool, applicants are responsible for securing patients to meet their clinical/graduation requirements.
- All applicants must be aware of exposure to bloodborne pathogens in the dental environment and the need to be immunized for the prevention of bloodborne diseases as a result of exposure in the dental environment.
- Applicants must also be certified in CPR annually and comply with training requirements set by the program once offered admission.
- Applicants must submit a completed application and all application requirements no later than the specified date on the application packet.

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) in addition to Comm 1115G, Psych 1110G & Soci 1110G (9 Credits) for a total of 38 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

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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