

Dental Hygiene

Allied Health Sciences Building (AHS), Room 148, (907) 786-4346

The registered dental hygienist is a licensed oral health educator and clinical operator who, as part of the dental team, uses preventive, educational and therapeutic methods to help individuals and groups attain and maintain optimum oral health. Dental hygienists can work as clinicians, educators, researchers, administrators, managers, preventive program developers, consumer advocates, sales and marketing managers, editors, and consultants. Clinical dental hygienists may work in a variety of health care settings such as private dental offices, schools, public health clinics, hospitals, managed care organizations, correctional institutions or nursing homes.

Clinical dental hygiene requires the ability to sit for long periods of time, good to excellent eye-hand coordination and excellent fine hand motor skills. Dental hygienists are exposed to bacteria and viruses. Use of protective glasses, face masks and surgical-type gloves is required. A professional appearance must be maintained during preclinical and clinical sessions.

The Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Dental Hygiene program suspended admissions effective spring 2018. The Dental Hygiene AAS program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association (CODA), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and by the United States Department of Education. The CODA accreditation will continue for the AAS degree until all current full majors have completed their requirements. Our accreditation status will apply to the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene (BSDH) program, when it becomes our entry-level program, beginning with the 2019 cohort that will be selected in fall 2018.

Students in the entry-level BSDH will be selected in August and will start dental hygiene classes in January. Once enrolled in the BSDH program, the student can anticipate a five-semester, 40-hour-per-week schedule that includes course activities outside normal class times. Evening classes and clinics may be scheduled. The program prepares graduates clinically and academically to take the National and Western Regional Examining Boards (WREB) for licensure.

The BSDH program also offers hygienists training in restorative dental hygiene. Students earning a BSDH may be eligible for a commission in the U.S. Public Health Service and for teaching opportunities. The BSDH prepares students for graduate programs in dental hygiene and public health.

Transfer of credits may be possible for graduates of a dental assisting program that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. Contact the dental hygiene program advisor for details.

Expenses beyond tuition include activity fees, instruments, uniforms, lab fees, student organization membership, graduation pin, immunizations, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) class, board exam fees, licensure fees, student health insurance and malpractice insurance for the Western Regional Examining Boards and professional

liability insurance. Please refer to the dental hygiene program website for expense estimates.

Special Considerations

Due to the nature of the work, dental hygiene students are not permitted to work in the classroom, laboratory or clinic when under the influence of intoxicants, drugs or medication affecting psychomotor responses. Guidelines for Infection Control in Dental-Health Care Settings from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will be followed for students with, or exposed to, infectious diseases. As a condition of participation in the dental hygiene program students must abide by the university's Student Code of Conduct, the dental hygiene program's policies and procedures, and the American Dental Hygienists' Association Code of Ethics for Dental Hygienists. Clinical sites may require a criminal background check and drug testing; students may not be able to complete program requirements without clinical site rotations.

Application for obtaining an Alaska dental hygiene license requires a background check and disclosure of information concerning conviction of crimes. Disclosure of treatment for bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, paranoia, depression (except for situational or reactive depression), psychotic disorder, or other mental or physical condition or disability, and drug/alcohol misuse or addiction is required, accompanied by a statement from the appropriate health care provider indicating the applicant's ability to practice safely and competently. Refer to the Board of Dental Examiners' website for specific information. Employability may be affected by results of background checks and/or drug testing. The UAA dental program application requires information concerning disciplinary actions taken at any university or college.

Preclinical and Clinical Requirements

Once admitted to the dental hygiene program, students are required to provide the following:

1. A signed form indicating the understanding and acceptance of the dental hygiene program policies regarding clinical safety protocol and immunizations.
2. Current Health Care Provider (American Heart Association) or Professional Rescuer (American Red Cross) certification in CPR/AED for infants, children and adults. First-year students must present proof of certification by the first day of class. Certification must be kept current until graduation.
3. Professional liability insurance that must be maintained throughout the duration of the student's enrollment in dental hygiene courses. Specific information regarding acceptable professional liability insurance policies may be obtained directly from the program.

Students enrolled in the dental hygiene program must provide their own transportation to all off-campus assignments. The program assumes no responsibility for illnesses and injuries experienced by the student while enrolled in the dental hygiene program. Students are responsible for all costs incurred due to illness or injury experienced by the student while enrolled in the dental hygiene program. It is required that students maintain personal medical insurance while enrolled in the program.

Students are responsible for providing their own patients to satisfy clinical requirements.

Programs of Study

Associate of Applied Science

- AAS in Dental Hygiene (suspended) (<http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/undergraduateprograms/coh/dentalhygiene/aas-dentalhygiene>)

Bachelor of Science

- BS in Dental Hygiene (<http://catalog.uaa.alaska.edu/undergraduateprograms/coh/dentalhygiene/bs-dentalhygiene>)

Faculty

Sandra Pence, Professor, pence@alaska.edu

Carri Shamburger, Assistant Professor, cashamburger@alaska.edu