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 which aid individuals and groups to 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.

The Dental Hygiene Associate of Applied Science program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation of the American Dental Association, a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and by the United States Department of Education. The AAS is a three-year program comprising one year of science and general education courses and two years of coursework in dental hygiene. The program prepares graduates clinically and academically to take the National and Western Regional Examining Boards (WREB) for licensure. Once enrolled in the AAS Dental Hygiene program, the student can anticipate a four-semester, 40-hour-per-week endeavor. Some evening classes and clinics are scheduled.

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 Bachelor of Science Dental Hygiene (BSDH) program articulates with the UAA Dental Hygiene AAS. It provides hygienists advanced education in restorative dental hygiene and/or educational methodology. Students earning a BSDH may be eligible for a commission in the U.S. Public Health Service and for teaching opportunities. The BSDH also prepares students for entry to graduate programs in dental hygiene. The program prepares graduates clinically and academically to take the National and Western Regional Examining Boards (WREB) for licensure. Once enrolled in the AAS Dental Hygiene program, the student can anticipate a four-semester, 40-hour-per-week endeavor. Some evening classes and clinics are scheduled.

Preclinical and Clinical Requirements

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

1. A signed application form indicating the understanding and acceptance of the dental hygiene program requirements regarding health screening 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 (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)

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