Dental Hygiene

The dental hygienist (RDH) is a licensed primary health-care professional, oral health educator, and clinician. The dental hygienist works closely with and under the supervision of a dentist. Most dental hygienists are employed in a dental office; however, dental hygienists can be found in numerous other settings: long-term care facilities, hospitals, corporate health facilities, school systems, research centers, state and federal agencies, and public health clinics. The responsibilities of a dental hygienist include preventive services that promote or maintain oral health and clinical treatments designed to arrest or control oral disease. Quality dental hygiene care requires critical thinking to assess the patient’s needs, determine a dental hygiene diagnosis, develop individualized patient care, implement dental hygiene treatment, and evaluate outcomes of dental hygiene treatment.

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics has projected that employment prospects for dental hygiene are expected to remain excellent. In fact, the dental hygiene profession is expected to be one of the fastest growing occupations through the year 2012. The national median hourly wage in 2004 was $28.58 and in Oklahoma for 2004 the median hourly wage was $28.48. Annual salaries for part-time practitioners vary. There is considerable freedom for dental hygienists to select work days and hours.

The Department of Dental Hygiene, which has been educating outstanding dental hygienists since 1971, is located within the College of Dentistry at the OU Health Sciences Center in Oklahoma City. The University offers two paths to completion of a Bachelor of Science degree in dental hygiene; a Bachelor of Science Degree Program that requires of at least 60 hrs of prerequisite coursework and two years in the dental hygiene curriculum, and a Career Ladder Program that is an individualized program designed for associate degree registered dental hygienists to achieve a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene: RDH-to-BSDH Track.

Bachelor of Science Degree Program

The University of Oklahoma Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene degree requires a minimum of 128 credit hours. The University offers a baccalaureate degree program that consists of at least 60 hours of prerequisite coursework and two years in the dental hygiene curriculum. The baccalaureate RDH may be employed as an educator and/ or researcher who conducts clinical studies and analyzes scientific data, and as a provider of continuing education seminars. Prerequisite courses may be taken at the University of Oklahoma or another accredited university or college. The College of Dentistry offers the program on the Oklahoma Health Sciences Center campus in Oklahoma City and by distance education at the following three sites: 1) Tri County Technology Center in Bartlesville, OK, 2) Southern Oklahoma Technology Center at Ardmore, OK and 3) Western Technology Center in Weatherford, OK. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates
from all sites receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Dental Hygiene and are eligible to take written and clinical examinations for licensure to practice as registered dental hygienists.

ADMISSION

Admission to the Dental Hygiene Program is competitive. Selection is based on the applicant's post-secondary academic record, life experiences, and potential for success in a baccalaureate program. New students are admitted for the fall semester only. Oklahoma residents are given preference, but well-qualified non-residents are also considered for admission. All application materials must be submitted by January 15th of the year in which admission is sought. To be considered for admission, students must meet the following requirements:

1. Be in good standing with the last college or university attended.
2. Take the ACT or SAT and provide individual component scores and composite score. (Recommended for the 2006 admissions cycle; REQUIRED for 2007 admissions cycle).
3. Have a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale with a grade of C or better on all required coursework.
4. Have a minimum of 60 semester hours of coursework from an accredited college or university.
5. Ideally applicants should have completed the FOUNDATIONAL coursework (see prerequisite courses) before the January 15 application deadline. Acceptance is based upon completion of foundational coursework by the end of the spring semester prior to admission. All prerequisite courses, excluding foundational, must be completed by the time the fall semester begins.
6. Spend a minimum of 40 hours observing a dental hygienist.
7. Submit a completed University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center application online that includes the prioritized site(s) for which the applicant wishes to be considered. https://app.applyyourself.com/?id=uok-hs
8. If English is the student’s second language, a minimum score of 250 is required on the national standardized TOEFL examination.
9. An offer of acceptance into the program is contingent upon meeting the required “C” in all remaining prerequisite coursework and a cumulative GPA of 2.5.

PREREQUISITES

The following courses completed are required (with a minimum of a “C” grade) and must be included within the minimum 60 semester hours of study. The course names and numbers are those of the University of Oklahoma. Any exception or substitutions must be approved by the program director or college dean or be listed in the Official Course Substitution Guide of the University of Oklahoma.

CORE AREA 1: Symbolic &Oral Communication
ENGL 1113, Principles of English Composition I
ENGL 1213, Principles of English Composition II
Foreign Language* — High School, two years; or, College, two courses
COMM 1113, Principles of Communication, or 2613, Public Speaking
COMM 2513, Introduction to Statistics, or PSY 2003, Understanding Statistics
ECON 2843, Elements of Statistics

CORE AREA 2: Natural Science
ZOO 2234, Human Anatomy or ZOO 2255, Human Anatomy
CHEM 1315, General Chemistry
HES 2823, Introduction to Nutrition
MBIO 2815, Introduction to Microbiology
ZOO 2124, Human Physiology
CORE AREA 3: Social Science
PSC 1113, Government of the United States
PSY 1113, Elements of Psychology
SOC 1113, Introduction to Sociology

CORE AREA 4: Humanities
HIST 1483, U.S. History 1492 to 1865, or HIST 1493, U.S. History 1865 to Present
Understanding Artistic Forms (three hours)*
Western Civilization & Culture (three hours)*
Non-Western Culture (three hours)*
Approved upper-division general education course (three hours)*

*Indicates additional general education courses required for students beginning their college education in fall of 1990 or after and those who have not earned an Oklahoma bachelor’s or associate’s (excludes applied science) degrees.

A Foundational Grade Point Average (FGPA) is computed and used in the selection process. The FGPA uses the best grade for the following seven required courses listed below: English II, Human Physiology, Human Anatomy, Microbiology, Statistics, Psychology, Nutrition, and General Chemistry** It is important that as much of the foundational coursework as possible be completed in the fall semester prior to desired entry in order to have the strongest possibility of selection.

**This course will be computed as a foundational component beginning with the admission cycle 2007.

Dental Hygiene Degree Completion Program: RDH-to-BSDH Track

The University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry offers an individualized Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene: RDH-to-BSDH Track. The Career Ladder Program is designed for Registered Dental Hygienists who have earned an associate’s degree and wish to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene degree. Classes and requirements are designed for the working dental hygienist and those who may not live in the immediate geographic area. Didactic coursework may be taken in Oklahoma City at the College of Dentistry or via distance education at any of the three distance facilities located in Ardmore, Bartlesville, or Weatherford, Oklahoma. Clinical work may be completed at any of theses sites.

Each applicant’s prior dental hygiene educational credentials will be evaluated and an program will be designed specifically to meet the needs of the individual. The University of Oklahoma Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene degree requires a minimum of 128 credit hours. The 60-hour career ladder program grants credit for advanced standing of up to 30 hours of dental hygiene courses through various validation methods, leaving 30 semester hours required for completion of the degree.

Focus in degree work may include one or more of the areas identified by the American Dental Hygienists’ Association as interrelated roles of the professional dental hygienist.

1. Clinical — work in collaboration with dentists as co-therapists rendering preventive and therapeutic interventions, and evaluating treatments.

2. Management — as an office manager, the dental hygienist develops office protocol, monitors practice productivity and financial affairs, and coordinates human and material resources.

3. Acute and Extended Care Facilities — provide clinical and educational services for patients and residents, provide staff training, serve as client advocates and change agents to ensure that health care needs of diverse populations are met.

4. Public Health/School Districts — hygienists working in public health and school districts provide oral health assessments, referrals, and preventive services, and develop educational strategies to change the oral health behaviors of clients.
5. **Education/Marketing** — serve on the faculties of dental and dental hygiene programs in colleges and universities, in private business and industry, marketing dental technology and products, and in centers that focus on the needs of the physically challenged and elderly.

6. **Research** — contribute to advancing the knowledge base in dental health care by investigating both basic and applied research problems.

### ADMISSION

Formal admission to the University of Oklahoma is an initial requirement for admission to RDH-to-BSDH Track. The application deadline for a planned fall enrollment is June 1. (Late applications will be considered).

The following documents must be submitted:

1. Completed application forms.
   a. University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center application
   b. RDH-BSDH Career Ladder Supplemental Application

2. Official transcripts from all colleges attended.

3. Photocopy of passing score on the National Dental Hygiene Board Examination.

4. Official transcripts from all institutions of higher education attended.

5. Two letters of recommendation: one from the director or clinical supervisor of the dental hygiene program attended and one from the applicant’s current or most recent dental hygiene employer. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the Chair of the Department may approve other sources of recommendations.

6. Non-refundable application fees to OUHSC the Department of Dental Hygiene.

### REQUIRED COURSES

**CORE COURSES**
- DH 3523, Research in Dental Hygiene 3 hours
- DH 4331, Clinical Rotation I 1 hour
- DH 4338, Clinical Dental Hygiene III 8 hours
- DH 4341, Clinical Rotation II 1 hour
- DH 4349, Clinical Dental Hygiene IV 9 hours
- DH 4413, Correlation Seminar 3 hours
- DH 4421, Ethics and Jurisprudence 1 hour
- DH 4990, Special Studies in Dental Hygiene: Capstone 4 hours

**ELECTIVE COURSES***
- DH 3111, Pediatric Dentistry 1 hour
- DH 3121, Geriatric Dentistry 1 hour
- DH 4541, Community Health Practicum 1 hour
- DH 4960, Directed Reading in Dental Hygiene 1-4 hours

*Additional approved elective courses may be taken for credit toward the degree. All students are responsible for maintaining current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) certification.

### VALIDATION OF COMPETENCY

Registered Dental Hygienists may qualify for 30 hours of advanced standing credit by successfully completing the Dental Hygiene Advanced Placement Examination, which consists of four independent parts. A minimum score of 75 is required on each segment. Advanced standing academic credit will be recorded on the student’s transcript following successful completion of at least 12 hours of academic credit in the Bachelor of
Science in Dental Hygiene degree program with grades of C or better. The examination is divided into the following four segments:

**Part 1:** Clinical Dental Hygiene

**Part 2:** Periodontology

**Part 3:** Community Dental Health

**Part 4:** Preventive Dentistry

Registered Dental Hygienists who meet the following criteria may apply for up to 30 hours of advanced standing academic credit.

1. Graduated from an accredited associate degree or certificate of dental hygiene program.
2. Successfully completed the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination.
3. Successfully completed the Western Regional Board Examination or the equivalent.
4. Satisfactorily completed any necessary prerequisite coursework.
5. Completion of Dental Hygiene Department Request for Advanced Standing.
6. Successful completion of the Dental Hygiene Advanced Placement Examination with a minimum score of 75 on each of four components.

The provisions of this publication do not constitute a contract, express or implied between any applicant, student, or faculty member of the Dental Hygiene Program.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

To obtain pre-advisement contact:

Dental Hygiene Program  
OUHSC, DCSB 567  
P.O. Box 26901  
Oklahoma City, OK 73190-3044  
Telephone: (405) 271-4435; FAX: (405) 271-4785

For questions about the online application contact:

Office of Admissions & Records  
OUHSC, BSEB Room 200  
P.O. Box 26901  
Oklahoma City, OK 73190-3040  
Telephone: (405) 271-3282; FAX: (405) 271-2480

For information concerning financial aid contact:

Office of Financial Aid  
OUHSC, BSEB Room 241  
P.O. Box 26901  
Oklahoma City, OK 73190-3040  
Telephone: (405) 271-2118

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