



PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Dental Hygiene Program is a part of the College of Health, Education, and Human Sciences (CHEHS) at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith (UAFS). The Dental Hygiene Program is accredited by the American Dental Association's Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). Students desiring admission to the Dental Hygiene Program need to be aware of and understand the following information related to admission, progression, and graduation.

ADMISSION

Admission Criteria

To be considered for admission into the program, students must meet the following criteria:

1. Complete university admission requirements to include submission of official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended.
2. Have a minimum 2.50 cumulative grade point average (GPA) for all college course work (including transfer work and excluding developmental courses) and be in good academic standing.
3. Complete required prerequisite courses for the program with a minimum grade of C or higher in each course prior to the application deadline.
4. Take the [Test of Essential Academic Skills \(TEAS\) Exam](#).
5. Submit Dental Office Observation Verification Form. (Verification forms may be used for two years after the dates of observation.)
6. Students may not attempt any course more than twice and be eligible for admission into the Dental Hygiene Program.

Note: The application process for the Dental Hygiene Program requires a criminal background check. Licensure in Arkansas also requires state and federal criminal background checks.

Application

Admission into the Dental Hygiene Program is competitive. Students who meet the minimum criteria identified above are eligible to submit an application for admission.

1. **Application Deadline** – May 20 for fall entry into the program.
2. Eligible students must submit an application for admission online prior to the application deadline.

Selection

Selection is based on the following system:

Phase One

Selection is based on successful completion of the admission criteria and is a highly competitive process. Due to program size limitations, meeting admission requirements does not guarantee admission into the program. Those with higher prerequisite GPAs and TEAS scores will rank higher in selection. The most qualified applicants will be contacted after the admissions deadline for an interview.

*College credit earned through CLEP or AP for a course will not be used for ranking purposes.

Note: In the event that applicants have identical ranking scores, priority will be given to the student with the highest cumulative GPA. The top 25 applicants after Phase One of the selection process will proceed to Phase Two.

Phase Two

Interviews will be conducted by the Dental Hygiene Selection Committee. Candidates will be evaluated based on overall professionalism, oral and written communication skills, and ability to meet the program requirements. The panel will select a maximum of 16 students who demonstrate the potential to:

- succeed in the program;
- meet the didactic and clinical rigors of the program;
- demonstrate the necessary interpersonal skills to work as a team and interact with clients of varying ages and backgrounds;
- successfully complete the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination and clinical licensure examinations; and
- be a viable part of the healthcare and dental fields.

Performance Requirements

In order to meet the expected student learning outcomes for the Dental Hygiene Program, the student must be able to meet the following performance requirements:

- **Motor Skills/Physical Health:** Students must possess sufficient physical ability and health in order to adequately acquire technical skills for the practice of dental hygiene that includes: specific diagnostic procedures; manipulation of hand instruments and air-driven instruments utilizing fine motor skills; hand and eye coordination; superior hand and finger dexterity; operating dental equipment; providing basic life support if needed; lifting or assisting patients into the dental chair if needed; ability to sit or stand for long periods of time; ability to work an average of eight (8) hours per day or more; and ability for repetitive motions utilizing hand, arm, and shoulders for the performance of the various oral hygiene procedures. This list provides some, but not all, possible abilities that the student must possess in order to provide safe treatment for patients.
- **Sensory/Observation Ability:** Students must have visual acuity, either corrected or normal, with the ability to read syringes, labels, instructions, and various equipment utilized by the dental hygienist. The student should also be able to see with normal color

spectrums to differentiate different color-coded equipment and supplies. The student must have sufficient auditory function to understand normal speaking voices without viewing the speaker's face and take/hear blood pressure with a stethoscope.

- **Communication:** Students must possess the ability to communicate effectively through reading, speaking, and writing with patients, peers, and faculty to provide effective patient care. Communication encompasses speaking as well as reading and assimilating information. The student should have sufficient speaking skills as well as the ability to engage in conversation. Communication skills are essential for gathering pertinent information throughout the dental hygiene process of care and to gather information for evidence-based practice. Students must be able to write clearly and legibly, providing concise information for documentation on all patient treatment records.
- **Cognition/Intellectual/Conceptual:** Students must possess the ability to use analytical/critical-thinking skills to draw conclusions or solve problems; organize, analyze, and make information useful by employing mathematics; and use technology as a learning resource and for information management. Students should be able to follow appropriate sequences for the delivery of dental hygiene care and to multi-task as needed to complete processes in a timely fashion.
- **Behavioral/Social:** Students must possess maturity and emotional stability to provide the patient with effective and safe care. Demeanor should be friendly, positive, and reassuring regardless of the situation. Additionally, students must demonstrate good judgment, compassion, and respect for varying ages, conditions, and ethnicities. Appropriate behavior is demonstrated by the ability to respond to suggestions in a positive manner, being flexible and responsive to modifications deemed necessary, prompt completion of patient-related responsibilities, and effective rapport with patients, peers, and faculty. Students' behavior should also demonstrate compliance with all procedures and policies as well as maintaining standards of academic integrity.

Program Costs

An estimated expense sheet can be found [on the UAFS website](#). Applicants requiring financial aid should seek assistance through the UAFS Financial Aid Office.

Additional Documentation

Students admitted into the Dental Hygiene Program must submit the following additional documentation prior to fall entry:

- Health Care Provider Statement/Medical Release Form
- Proof of immunizations
- CPR Certification: American Heart Association Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS)
- Criminal background check
- Drug screen

PROGRESSION

Science courses taken more than five (5) years prior to entering the program will be evaluated on an individual basis by the executive director of the Dental Hygiene Program and the dean of the College of Health, Education, and Human Sciences. See your advisor for more information and to request a science course evaluation.

The Dental Hygiene Program is competency-based. To continue in the program, a student must maintain a 75-percent average in clinical performance and a 75-percent average through each didactic course.

A student dropped for academic or any other reason may apply for readmission if in compliance with the UAFS Student Academic Progress Policy as outlined in the course catalog. A student who discontinues the dental hygiene sequence for academic or any other reason must petition for readmission to the Dental Hygiene Program. The readmission requirements are found in the Dental Hygiene Program Policy and Procedure Manual (see the Readmission Criteria and Procedure Policy). The student is not guaranteed a position for readmission. A student who is readmitted is accountable for the degree requirements in effect at the time of readmission. grade of C or better is required in ALL courses applicable to the Bachelor of Science degree in dental hygiene.

GRADUATION

To earn a dental hygiene degree, a student must earn a grade of C or better in all required courses applicable to the Dental Hygiene Program; earn a minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA in all course work required for the major; and earn a minimum 2.00 cumulative GPA on all work attempted at the university. The student must meet with the advising coordinator to complete the graduation application one year prior to the intended graduation.

After being granted the Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene, the student is eligible to sit for the National Dental Hygiene Board Examination to become a registered dental hygienist. To apply for licensure in the state of Arkansas, the student must be a graduate of a dental hygiene program accredited by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). The UAFS Dental Hygiene Program meets this requirement.

At the end of the program, the student will take a written national board administered by the [Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations \(JCNDE\)](#) at Pearson Vue Testing Centers and a clinical examination through a regional testing agency accepted by the state in which they intend to practice.

All fees and registrations associated with board examinations are the responsibility of the graduate and are not part of the requirement for graduation from the program.

Note: RDH licensure requires a state and federal criminal background check. A person shall not be eligible to receive or hold a license to practice dentistry or another health care profession

issued by the Arkansas State Board of Dental Examiners if the person has pleaded guilty or nolo contendere or has been found guilty of either an infamous crime that would impact their ability to practice dentistry or dental hygiene in the State of Arkansas or a felony, regardless of whether the conviction has been sealed, expunged, or pardoned. [\(More information can be found here\)](#).

I have read and understand this program statement.

(In place of your signature, please type your full legal name.)

Note: Information is subject to change. Please check for current information before applying to the program.

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