

DENTAL HYGIENE, BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.S.)

The Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene requires two years of liberal arts study, with a minimum of 60 semester hours, followed by two years of study focusing on basic and dental sciences, dental hygiene science and theory, community health and pre-clinical and clinical experiences. Upon successful completion of the program, graduates are eligible for national, regional and state board licensing examinations. Classes enter once each year in the fall semester.

Learning outcomes

Upon completing this program, students will know and know how to do the following:

- Demonstrate commitment to the legal and ethical practice of dental hygiene, demonstrating integrity, honesty and confidentiality with colleagues, patients and the community
- Demonstrate competence in interpersonal and communication skills and in the evaluation, synthesis and application of information and technology as resources in contemporary dental hygiene practice
- Systematically collect, accurately record and analyze data on the general, oral and psychosocial health status of a variety of patients using methods consistent with medico-ethico-legal principles
- Use critical-thinking and decision-making skills to reach conclusions about the patient's dental hygiene treatment needs based on an analysis of all available assessment data and evidence from current scientific literature
- Collaborate with the patient, guardian and/or other health care professionals to formulate an individualized comprehensive dental hygiene care plan based on assessment findings and the dental hygiene diagnosis
- Provide and implement specialized care that includes educational, preventive and therapeutic services designed to minimize risk and optimize oral health as well as assist the patient in achieving and maintaining oral health goals
- Evaluate the outcomes of dental hygiene care, which occur throughout the process of care, and modify as necessary
- Initiate and assume responsibility for health promotion and disease prevention activities for diverse populations in a variety of settings

Special requirements

Admission requirements include two years of liberal arts study with a minimum of 60 semester hours of transferable quality academic course credits. By completing these 60 semester hours, students will complete the general education requirements of the degree. More information concerning the admission requirements for VCU students is located in the University College chapter of this Bulletin under "Preparation for the study of dental hygiene."

- **GPA** – A minimum GPA of 2.5 based on a 4.0 scale in the cumulative courses and a minimum GPA of 2.7 in math/sciences is required.
- **English proficiency** – To successfully complete the dental hygiene curriculum, students are required to communicate clearly (in English) with faculty, students, staff and patients. To assure such competence, the Dental Hygiene Program requires any applicant whose native language is not English and who has been educated primarily outside of the United States to submit official Test of

English as a Foreign Language or International English Language Testing System scores. Applicants are required to submit an official score with the application packet. The test must have been taken within the past two years. The Dental Hygiene Program does not conditionally admit applicants who have not met the requirement for proof of English proficiency.

You may be exempt from this requirement if:

- You have successfully completed 26 or more transferable semester credits at a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the U.S. and have completed the full freshman English (non-ESL) requirement at that school with a minimum grade of C.
- or
- You have successfully completed 60 or more transferable semester credits at a two- or four-year postsecondary institution in the U.S.

No student will be considered for admission until proof of English proficiency is determined.

TOEFL: VCU's Dental Hygiene Program minimum TOEFL score requirements are 550 (paper), 213 (computer) or 80 (internet-based). For more information about TOEFL testing, go to www.ets.org (<http://www.ets.org>).

IELTS: VCU's Dental Hygiene Program minimum IELTS score requirement is 6.0.

Degree requirements for Dental Hygiene, Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

General Education requirements (minimum 21 credits)

Course	Title	Hours
University Core Education Curriculum		
UNIV 111 Play	Focused Inquiry I	3
course video for Focused Inquiry I		
UNIV 112 Play	Focused Inquiry II	3
course video for Focused Inquiry II		
UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument	3
Approved humanities/fine arts		3
Approved natural/physical sciences		3-4
Approved quantitative literacy		3-4
Approved social/behavioral sciences		3-4

Admission requirements (minimum 39 credits)

Course	Title	Hours
English		6-9
General biology with laboratory		3-5
College chemistry with laboratory		3-5
Anatomy with laboratory		3-5
Physiology with laboratory		3-5
Microbiology with laboratory		3-5
Humanities		3
Introductory sociology		3
Introductory psychology		3
Speech		3

Statistics	3
Visual or performing arts	3

Major requirements

Course	Title	Hours
ANAT 301	Head and Neck Anatomy for Dental Hygienists	3
ANAT 302	Microscopic Anatomy (Dental Hygiene)	2
DENH 301	Dental Hygiene Theory I	5
DENH 302	Dental Hygiene Theory II	2
DENH 312	Community Oral Health Promotion	2
DENH 327	Clinical Dental Hygiene I	5
DENH 342	Nutrition	3
DENH 401	Dental Hygiene Theory III	2
DENH 402	Dental Hygiene Theory IV	2
DENH 407	Research Methods and Study Designs	2
DENH 411	Introduction to Public Health	2
DENH 412	Community Dental Health	2
DENH 422	Current Issues, the Law and Ethics	2
DENH 437	Clinical Dental Hygiene II	5
DENH 447	Clinical Dental Hygiene III	5
DENH 457	Clinical Service-learning	2
GENP 302	Dental Materials	2
GENP 311	Oral Anatomy and Occlusion	3
IPEC 501	Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1
MICR 365	Infection and Immunity (Dental Hygiene)	2
ORPT 301	Dental Radiology	1
ORPT 324	Oral Pathology	3
ORSG 431	Management of the Medically Compromised Dental Patient and Medical Emergencies in the Dental Office	2
PERI 326	Periodontics I	1
PERI 329	Periodontics II	2
PHTX 441	Pharmacology (Dental Hygiene)	5
Total Hours		68

The minimum total of credit hours required for this degree is 128.

What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

Credits required for admission to program 60 credits

Junior year

Fall semester	Hours
ANAT 301 Head and Neck Anatomy for Dental Hygienists	3
ANAT 302 Microscopic Anatomy (Dental Hygiene) (Dental Hygiene)	2
DENH 301 Dental Hygiene Theory I	5
GENP 311 Oral Anatomy and Occlusion	3
IPEC 501 Foundations of Interprofessional Practice	1

MICR 365 Infection and Immunity (Dental Hygiene) (Dental Hygiene)	2
ORPT 301 Dental Radiology	1
PERI 326 Periodontics I	1
Term Hours:	18

Spring semester

DENH 302 Dental Hygiene Theory II	2
DENH 312 Community Oral Health Promotion	2
DENH 327 Clinical Dental Hygiene I	5
DENH 342 Nutrition	3
GENP 302 Dental Materials	2
ORPT 324 Oral Pathology	3
PERI 329 Periodontics II	2
Term Hours:	19

Senior year

Fall semester

DENH 401 Dental Hygiene Theory III	2
DENH 407 Research Methods and Study Designs	2
DENH 411 Introduction to Public Health	2
DENH 437 Clinical Dental Hygiene II (capstone)	5
DENH 457 Clinical Service-learning	1
ORSG 431 Management of the Medically Compromised Dental Patient and Medical Emergencies in the Dental Office	2
PHTX 441 Pharmacology (Dental Hygiene)	5
Term Hours:	19

Spring semester

DENH 402 Dental Hygiene Theory IV	2
DENH 412 Community Dental Health	2
DENH 422 Current Issues, the Law and Ethics	2
DENH 457 Clinical Service-learning	1
DENH 447 Clinical Dental Hygiene III (capstone)	5
Term Hours:	12
Total Hours:	68

The minimum total of credit hours required for this degree is 128.

DENH 301. Dental Hygiene Theory I. 5 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture and 6 laboratory/clinical hours. 5 credits. Designed to familiarize the student with the scope, role and responsibilities of the dental hygiene profession. Topics include an introduction to the educational and therapeutic services as well as the philosophy of preventive oral health and its relevance to the practice of dental hygiene. Also introduces the clinical knowledge and skills needed to perform fundamental clinical dental hygiene procedures, instrumentation, patient education and preventive services.

DENH 302. Dental Hygiene Theory II. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. Continuation of DENH 301. Designed to provide the student with knowledge and skills necessary to provide patient care and includes instruction in some more advanced dental hygiene skills, including dental hygiene diagnosis, treatment planning, oral signs of abuse/neglect, topical medicaments and use of sonic and ultrasonic instrumentation.

DENH 312. Community Oral Health Promotion. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture contact hours. 2 credits. Prerequisite: DENH 301. Enrollment restricted to students in the dental hygiene program. Introduces preventive oral health strategies, methods, materials and principles of instruction in health education and communication. Emphasizes oral health promotion as related to individual patients, community groups as well as professional peer-group presentations. Introduction to evidence-based decision-making in dental hygiene practice.

DENH 327. Clinical Dental Hygiene I. 5 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 clinic hours (3 clinical hours per credit). 5 credits. This service-learning designated course has two segments. The first introduces the clinical practicum and dental hygiene services as part of a comprehensive care model. Students apply basic instrumentation and patient treatment skills in a clinical setting. Weekly seminars provide opportunities for students to problem solve and critically discuss and assess clinical experiences. During the second segment, students are assigned rotations in clinical practice settings in underserved areas, where they are exposed to patients of varied ethnic, socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds, as well as special patient populations not typically encountered in the School of Dentistry clinics. While continuing clinical education, students have the opportunity to make oral health care more accessible to marginalized groups. Throughout this unique learning experience, students are exposed to the benefits of potential practice in public health dentistry.

DENH 342. Nutrition. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Designed to provide students with an overview of the chemistry of the major nutrients as well as provide a practical approach to the concepts of nutrition. Emphasis will be placed on developing positive preventive health behaviors and providing nutritional education to dental patients in a clinical setting. The interrelationships of diet, nutrition and dental and systemic diseases will be discussed along with current food trends, consumer aspects of food choices and basic nutrition principles. A general review of dietary supplements also will be provided.

DENH 401. Dental Hygiene Theory III. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. Dental specialty content is presented: concepts and techniques in specialty areas that will enable the dental hygienist to consider implications for dental hygiene treatment planning with relation to periodontics, orthodontics, endodontics, preventive, cosmetic and restorative dentistry, pain control, oral surgery, prosthodontics, pediatric dentistry and implantology. Through case scenarios students develop treatment plans with regard to the dental hygiene process of care. Students discuss patient education needed for each phase of care appropriate for the informed consent of the patient.

DENH 402. Dental Hygiene Theory IV. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. This course is designed to present the principles of dental practice, including dental team management strategies, business office management, increasing use of computers in dentistry, OSHA and its impact on practice management, insurance coverage for dental care, and employment opportunities and career options.

DENH 407. Research Methods and Study Designs. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. Designed to guide dental hygiene students in becoming competent in the use of scientific literature as a part of lifelong learning and evidence-based decision-making in patient care. Covers foundational materials in research design and biostatistics, including the development of testable hypotheses, data collection, data summary, and evaluation and interpretation of data found in scientific literature. Students will critique scientific literature from peer-reviewed journals and participate in reflection of current literature on assessment of patients with special needs. Students will also take part in an online Collaborative Investigator Training Initiative for protecting human subjects in research.

DENH 411. Introduction to Public Health. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. This hybrid course is intended to provide the dental hygiene student with an overview of the broad field of public health. Topics include the sciences of public health, the controversial nature of public health, powers and responsibilities of the government, social and behavioral factors in health, environmental issues in public health, medical care and public health, and public health challenges in the upcoming century. The course serves as a foundation for DENH 412. The course will also provide students with experiences that foster positive attitudes and behaviors regarding their responsibility to care for underserved populations, thereby providing insights on the impact of social and economic factors on dental health. Field experiences place emphasis on special populations, including elementary school children; geriatric, institutionalized and hospitalized clients; and individuals with mental and/or physical disabilities. The course and its field experiences will prepare the dental hygienist for the role of dental public health practitioner, educator and consultant, as well as a resource person in community settings.

DENH 412. Community Dental Health. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 3 clinical/service-learning project hours. 2 credits. This hybrid course is designed to provide dental hygiene students with an introduction and overview of basic concepts of dental public health, community dental health education and community program planning. Course topics include oral health trends, dental indices, water fluoridation, prevention and control of oral diseases in a community, and community dental health programs. Students become involved in the application of concepts such as program assessment, design, implementation and evaluation. This course will prepare the dental hygienist for the role of dental public health practitioner, educator, and consultant and resource person in community settings. Field experience is designed to prepare students to function in a variety of community health settings. Emphasis on special populations of elementary school children, geriatric, institutionalized, hospitalized and individuals with mental and/or physical disabilities.

DENH 422. Current Issues, the Law and Ethics. 2 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture hours. 2 credits. This online course is designed to explore the ethics, jurisprudence and principles of dental hygiene practice. Students explore ethical issues and dilemmas in dental hygiene and health care delivery. This course strives to provide students with the foundations of ethical reasoning and decision-making in practices. The course fosters professional development and an understanding of the legal and ethical aspects of oral health care.

DENH 437. Clinical Dental Hygiene II. 5 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 clinical hours (3 clinical hours per credit). 5 credits. Prerequisite: DENH 327. A continuation of the clinical practicum; seminars and clinical experiences continue to prepare students to provide oral health care services in the private and public sector. Students participate in comprehensive care clinical experiences within the School of Dentistry. Advanced dental hygiene procedures are initiated and patient assessment, management skills and self-assessment are emphasized. Skill development in dental hygiene procedures continues; patient management skills as well as decision-making and problem-solving in relation to patient assessment, treatment planning and evaluation are emphasized. Course sequence provides the student with the opportunity to use and further enhance the knowledge and skills of dental hygiene practice and procedures in a clinical model that emphasizes comprehensive patient care and a foundation for transference of those skills to the work environment in the private and public sector. Note: A grade of PR is required in this course for continuation in DENH 447.

DENH 447. Clinical Dental Hygiene III. 5 Hours.

Semester course; 1 lecture and 4 clinical hours (3 clinical hours per credit). 5 credits. Prerequisite: DENH 437 with a grade of PR. A continuation of the clinical practicum; seminars and clinical experiences continue to prepare students to provide oral health care services in the private and public sector. Students participate in comprehensive care clinical experiences within the School of Dentistry. Advanced dental hygiene procedures are initiated and patient assessment, management skills and self-assessment are emphasized. Skill development in dental hygiene procedures continues; patient management skills as well as decision-making and problem-solving in relation to patient assessment, treatment planning and evaluation are emphasized. Course sequence provides the student with the opportunity to use and further enhance the knowledge and skills of dental hygiene practice and procedures in a clinical model that emphasizes comprehensive patient care and a foundation for transference of those skills to the work environment in the private and public sector.

DENH 449. Clinics in Dental Hygiene. 1-5 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 credits. Clinical/laboratory experiences offering the opportunity to use and further develop the knowledge and skills of dental hygiene practice.

DENH 450. Independent Study. 1-5 Hours.

Semester course; 1-5 credits. Independent study projects planned to meet the learning objectives of the student.

DENH 457. Clinical Service-learning. 1 Hour.

Continuous course; 32 clinical sessions. 1 credit. Prerequisites: DENH 302, 327 and 342. Enrollment restricted to dental hygiene students only. Course must be repeated to fulfil requirements. (Requirement is for 32 clinical session over two semesters. Students will repeat for 2 credits.) This is a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets community-identified needs. Students are assigned rotations in clinical practice settings in underserved areas, in which they are exposed to patients of varied ethnic, socioeconomic and demographic backgrounds, as well as special patient populations not typically encountered in the School of Dentistry clinics. While continuing clinical education, students have the opportunity to make oral health care more accessible to marginalized groups. Throughout this unique learning experience, students are exposed to the potential benefits of practice in public health dentistry. Students will reflect on the service activity to increase understanding and application of course content and to enhance a sense of civic responsibility. Students will also provide guided reflections on designated reading assignments. Graded P/F.

DENH 460. Individual Plan of Study. 1-6 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-6 credits. This course is designed on an individual basis to accommodate remediation of a failed course. The course director will design course material to include self-paced learning, assignments, tests and clinic or lab activities necessary to equal the failed course content. Graded as pass/fail.

DENH 477. Special Topics in Dental Hygiene. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; 1-3 credits. Designed around the interests of students, faculty expertise and availability of educational resources. Format may include intensive mini-courses or workshops.