

DENTAL HYGIENIST

Dental Hygienists are health professionals who specialize in preventative care. They provide educational, clinical, research, administrative, and therapeutic services supporting total health through the promotion of optimum oral health. They examine patients for signs of oral diseases, such as gingivitis, and provide preventive care, including oral hygiene. A well-rounded background in the sciences, speech, nutrition, and the social and behavioral sciences is recommended.

CAREER DESCRIPTION*

- » National median salary: \$87,530
- » National projected career growth: 9%
- » Most work in dental offices
- » Clean teeth, examine patients for signs of oral diseases
- » Provide basic preventative care

TYPICAL EDUCATION**

- » Years of School: 4
- » Associate's and Bachelor's programs
Bachelor's degrees preferred
Requires a license
- » Average Entering GPA: 3.52
- » Average Admittance ACT Score: 22
- » Certification requirements vary by state

NEARBY SCHOOLS & DEGREE TYPES

- » University of Nebraska Medical Center (Lincoln) BS-DH
- » University of South Dakota: BS-DH
- » Central Community College: AAS
- » Des Moines Area Community College: AAS
- » Hawkeye Community College: AAS
- » Iowa Western Community College: AAS

COMPETITIVE STUDENTS ALWAYS...

- » Maintain a competitive academic record
- » Obtain health care experience
- » Shadow professionals in the field

» Following the development (or institution) of the ATDH by the ADA in 2021, UNMC now requires applicants to submit ATDH scores. Pre-Dental Hygiene students should be cognizant of which programs are requiring this exam during their application cycle.

WHAT PRACTICING PROFESSIONAL SAY

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“I wanted a career where I helped people. Dental hygiene allows me to do that many times over. The field of dentistry has changed so much over the past 30 years, and we know so much more than we used to about the mouth/body connection.”

-Kim Kiser, RDH

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“Having been in the dental profession for the last 26 years, I can honestly say that I love my profession. I started my dental career as a dental assistant and decided to become a dental hygienist to expand my skills and knowledge.”

-Candice Feagle, RDH

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*Data and information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

**Data and information from UNMC

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Click here for requirements from the schools listed below:

| | |
|---|---|
| University of Nebraska Medical Center | University of South Dakota |
| Central Community College | Des Moines Area Community College |
| Hawkeye Community College | Iowa Western Community College |

*Prerequisites vary by program. Students are responsible for ensuring all entrance requirements are met.

*Most schools prefer science classes to be taken in-person versus online.

UNMC's Prerequisites

S = Spring, F = Fall, M = Summer

| Biological Sciences (minimum credits: 16) | | | |
|---|---------|----------|-----------------------------------|
| Course | Credits | Semester | Prerequisites |
| BIOL 1020 Principles of Biology & Lab | 4 | F, S | ENGL 1150 by placement |
| OR | | | |
| BIOL 1450 Biology I and Lab | 5 | F, S, M | High school Biology and Chemistry |
| AND | | | |
| BIOL 2440 The Biology of Microorganisms & Lab | 4 | F, S, M | High school Biology and Chemistry |
| BIOL 2740 Human Anatomy & Physiology I & Lab | 4 | F, S, M | High school Biology and Chemistry |
| BIOL 2840 Human Anatomy & Physiology II & Lab | 4 | F, S, M | BIOL 2740 |

| Chemistry (minimum credits: 8) | | | |
|---|---|---------|--|
| CHEM 1180 & 1184 General Chemistry I & Lab | 4 | F, S, M | MATH 1300 or 1320 or CHEM 1140 & 1144 |
| CHEM 1190 & 1194 General Chemistry II & Lab | 4 | F, S, M | MATH 1300 or 1320 and CHEM 1180 & 1184 |

| English Composition (minimum credits: 6) | | | |
|--|---|---------|--|
| ENGL 1150 English Composition I | 3 | F, S, M | AP Score 3, ACT 14-26, HS GPA 2.3+ |
| ENGL 1160 English Composition II | 3 | F, S, M | AP Score 4, ENGL 1140 or 1150, or ACT 27+ or Reading or English ACT score of 29+ |

| Oral Communication (minimum credits: 3) | | | |
|---|---|---------|--|
| CMST 1110 Public Speaking | 3 | F, S, M | |

| Social Sciences (minimum credits: 9) | | | |
|--|---|---------|--|
| PSYC 1010 Introduction to Psychology | 3 | F, S, M | |
| SOC 1010 Introduction to Sociology | 3 | F, S, M | |
| An additional course in psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, or human geography. | | | |

| Nutrition (minimum credits: 3) | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---------|--|
| HEKI 3090 Applied Nutrition | 3 | F, S, M | |

| Humanities/Fine Arts (minimum credits: 6) | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Choose from English literature, philosophy, music history, art history, theatre arts, religion, and drawing. | | | |

| Single Subject (minimum credits: 12) | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| 12 credit hours in a single academic area (Gerontology, Psychology, Sociology, etc.) | | | |
| OR | | | |
| 7-8 credits of Biology for a total of 24 credits (BIOL 1060, BIOL 1160, BIOL 1020, BIOL 1450, BIOL 1750, or BIOL 1330) | | | |

Additional Information

- Applicants must have a minimum GPA of 2.5, but the average GPA for entering classes has been 3.5.
- No grade below "C" will be accepted. Due to the rigor of the dental hygiene program, it is strongly recommended that all dental hygiene prerequisites be taken during college. No science courses will be accepted if taken as dual credit in high school. Students can contact Hannah Evans haevans@unmc.edu for program inquiries or Lindsay Mundil lmundil@unmc.edu for advising inquiries. Preference is given to students not using AP and/or Dual Enrollment credit.