

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION, ADVANCEMENT, AND GRADUATION

The West Virginia University School of Dentistry Department of Dental Hygiene is committed to fostering a learning environment that supports students from all backgrounds. The Department of Dental Hygiene provides the following technical standards to inform incoming and enrolled students of the essential skills, knowledge, and abilities required for successful participation in the dental hygiene program and eventual entry into the clinical practice of Dental Hygiene.

To successfully matriculate through the program, students must meet these technical standards, with or without reasonable accommodations, at the time of admission and throughout enrollment.

The Department of Dental Hygiene encourages students with disabilities to seek reasonable accommodations and provides individualized support through the West Virginia University Office of Student Accommodations (OSA). Consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and guidance from the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) and the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD), an individualized interactive process is used with each student with disabilities to determine whether reasonable accommodations would allow that student to meet the technical standards of the program without fundamentally altering its essential requirements. Students are expected to initiate this process through the Office of Student Accommodations.

If you believe you need accommodations to meet the technical standards listed below, contact the West Virginia University Office of Student Accommodations (OSA)

<https://osa.wvu.edu/>

Because the dental hygiene degree signifies readiness to enter clinical practice, candidates must demonstrate the ability to perform a variety of tasks in didactic, laboratory, simulation, clinical, community, and interprofessional settings.

I. Observation

Students must be able to:

- Observing demonstrations, laboratory procedures, and clinical instruction.

- Identifying normal and abnormal oral and craniofacial anatomy.
- Detecting dental caries, periodontal conditions, oral lesions, and other deviations from normal health requiring referral or consultation.
- Interpreting radiographic images and other diagnostic findings.
- Monitoring patient responses during preventive, therapeutic, and educational procedures.
- Assessing infection prevention and control practices and maintaining a safe clinical environment.
- Recognizing medical emergencies or changes in patient status requiring immediate intervention.

II. Communication

Students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Communicate effectively, respectfully, and compassionately with patients, caregivers, faculty, staff, peers, dental auxiliaries, dentists, and other healthcare professionals.
- Accurately obtain, interpret, and communicate patient information.
- Explain oral health conditions, preventive strategies, treatment recommendations, and post-care instructions using language appropriate to each patient's level of understanding.
- Educate patients using evidence-based preventive and health promotion strategies.
- Clearly document patient assessments, treatment provided, patient education, and clinical findings using professional terminology and electronic health records.
- Obtain informed consent when appropriate.
- Follow instructions for didactic, laboratory, and clinical activities.
- Adapt communication methods to accommodate individual patient needs.
- Work collaboratively with faculty, students, staff, dental auxiliaries, dentists, and members of the healthcare team to coordinate patient-centered care.

III. Patient Care and Clinical Skills

Assessment

Students must be able to:

- Review and evaluate medical and dental histories.
- Assess risk factors affecting oral and systemic health.
- Measure and document vital signs.
- Perform comprehensive extraoral and intraoral examinations.
- Conduct oral cancer screenings.
- Assess hard and soft tissues.
- Perform periodontal assessments and charting.
- Evaluate patients for preventive, therapeutic, and referral needs.

Diagnostic Procedures

Students must be able to:

- Expose, process, evaluate, and interpret diagnostic radiographs.
- Recognize normal and abnormal findings requiring consultation or referral.
- Utilize assessment findings to assist in developing evidence-based dental hygiene diagnoses and individualized treatment plans.

Clinical Care

Clinical education requires students to:

- Ensure patients are positioned safely and ergonomically throughout treatment
- Perform preventative and therapeutic instrumentation using dental instruments
- Perform periodontal debridement and nonsurgical periodontal therapy.
- Polish clinical crowns
- Apply fluoride therapies, pit and fissure sealants, and desensitizing and antimicrobial agents when indicated.
- Administer local anesthesia and nitrous oxide, when included in the curriculum and permitted by state law.
- Deliver individualized oral health education and preventive counseling.
- Evaluate treatment outcomes and modify care appropriately.

- Perform other duties within the scope of the dental hygiene practice.

Infection Prevention and Safety

Students must be able to:

- Follow current CDC and OSHA infection prevention guidelines.
- Demonstrate sterilization and instrument processing procedures.
- Utilize appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Maintain aseptic technique.
- Prepare and maintain treatment areas and clinical equipment.
- Operate dental and radiographic equipment safely and effectively.

Emergency Preparedness

Students must be able to:

- Maintain Basic Life Support (BLS) certification.
- Recognize and respond appropriately to medical emergencies.
- Perform CPR and other emergency procedures within the scope of dental hygiene education and training.

IV. Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities

Students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Apply biomedical, behavioral, oral, and dental sciences in patient care.
- Integrate scientific evidence into clinical decision making.
- Utilize critical thinking and sound clinical judgment.
- Interpret patient assessment, periodontal findings and radiographic images.
- Develop individualized, evidence-based dental hygiene care plans.
- Modify patient care based on assessment findings and treatment outcomes.
- Perform calculations necessary for safe patient care, including medication, anesthetic, and radiographic exposure calculations when applicable.
- Utilize electronic health records and current technology appropriately.

- Evaluate personal performance and incorporate constructive feedback into continued professional growth.

V. Behavioral and Social Attributes

Students must demonstrate the ability to:

- Manage time effectively and meet academic and clinical responsibilities.
- Attend and actively participate in all required educational activities.
- Function effectively under stressful or rapidly changing circumstances.
- Adapt to changing clinical environments and patient needs.

VI. Ethical and Legal Standards

Candidates are expected to:

- Uphold the ethical principles outlined in the American Dental Hygienists' Association Code of Ethics.
- Comply with state dental practice acts and regulations governing the practice of dental hygiene.
- Maintain compliance with HIPAA privacy and security regulations.
- Follow OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standards and current CDC infection prevention guidelines.
- Comply with all University, School of Dentistry, Department of Dental Hygiene, and clinical affiliate policies.
- Meet all clinical site requirements, including immunizations, background checks, drug screening (when applicable), and health documentation.
- Demonstrate professionalism in all academic, clinical, community, and interprofessional settings.
- Immediately report circumstances that may affect their ability to safely participate in clinical education.
- Meet all legal and professional requirements necessary for graduation and eligibility for dental hygiene licensure.

Technical Standards Review

Technical Standards are reviewed annually and as needed by the Dental Hygiene Academic and Professional Standards committee. Students must abide by these standards throughout the duration of the dental hygiene program.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

West Virginia University School of Dentistry Department of Dental Hygiene

As a condition of admission and continued enrollment in the Dental Hygiene Program at the West Virginia University School of Dentistry, I acknowledge that I have received, and understand the **Technical Standards for Admission, Advancement, and Graduation**.

I understand that these Technical Standards identify the essential competencies required to successfully complete the curriculum and to perform the essential functions of a dental hygiene student.

I understand that I must be able to meet these Technical Standards throughout my enrollment in the program.

Student Information

Printed Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Department of Dental Hygiene

Received by: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____