

Technical Standards for the Dental Assisting and Dental Hygiene Programs

Our program technical standards have been developed to help students understand nonacademic standards, skills, and performance requirements expected of a student to complete this particular curriculum.

If an accommodation is necessary to participate in the program, it is imperative to identify a reasonable accommodation to those students who qualify under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Reasonableness is determined by the Disability Services Office (DSO) and the program on a case-by-case basis utilizing the program technical standards. The accommodation needs to be in place prior to the start of the program, or it may delay your ability to start the program. It is the student's responsibility to contact the DSO and request accommodations.

Skills	Description	Specific Examples
Motor Skills	Gross and fine motor abilities to assist in the provision of safe and effective care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calibrate and use equipment, document care; position and move patients • Mix and dispense dental materials and perform expanded function dental procedures. • Tactile ability sufficient for assessment and treatment. • Perform functions related to dental materials as well as laboratory procedures and treatment procedures. <p>Must have tactile sensitivity in natural fingers and strength in both hands enough to manipulate and grip small instruments and objects.</p>
Vision	Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment necessary in dental care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe patient responses, observe appearance and consistency of dental materials, oral findings, and determine shading and coloring of restorations. • Must be able to distinguish colors, hue, and shades of gingival tissues, teeth, and charting information for documentation.
Hearing	Ability to listen to and react promptly to instructors, patients, dental and medical providers while working in the clinical setting or gathering information for patient care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to patient oral health concerns • Formulate a treatment plan based on patient needs and concerns • Respond promptly to emergencies/sirens • Respond promptly to the sound of malfunctioning equipment; including handpieces, ultrasonic and radiographic equipment and compressors. • Call medical and dental providers on behalf of the patient regarding health-related concerns
Technological	Basic technological abilities sufficient to be able to use a computer, dental software, and digital scanning and radiographic equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of computer to document patient medical history and clinical findings. • Expose and develop radiographs using digital radiology equipment • Use of computer for web-based research
Communication	Communication abilities sufficient for interaction with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain treatment procedures to patients

	others in verbal and written form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate preventative oral health education • Document and interpret treatment rendered with clinical findings. • Communicate effectively, respectfully and efficiently with peers, faculty, supervisors, other professionals and patients. • Students are expected to be able to effectively communicate verbally and non- verbally. This requires the ability to see, speak, hear, read, write, and effectively utilize the English language. • Auditory ability sufficient to monitor and assess health needs and communicate with patients and other members of the oral health care team.
Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving	Critical thinking ability sufficient for clinical judgment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be able to identify cause – effect relationships in clinical situations • Collect and analyze clinical and radiographic data to aid in problem solving • Assist in the development of dental treatment plans • Assimilate knowledge from lecture, laboratory and clinical areas. • Retain factual information and use it appropriately. • Demonstrate sufficient observation skills to collect data on client treatment and assure patient safety during operative procedures. • Anticipate dentist and/or patient needs before, during, and after procedure.
Interpersonal Skills	Interpersonal abilities sufficient to interact with individuals, families, groups, etc., from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student shall establish rapport with dentist, patients, and members of the community, other health care professionals and dental team members. • Demonstrate patience and empathy with patient. • Must be able to be aware of your own tone and pitch of voice, body language, and being aware of one’s self image and how you are portraying yourself.
Environmental Tolerance	Ability to sit or stand for long periods of time in small spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit or stand in small clinical spaces and laboratory areas. • Ability to tolerate high frequency noises associated with a dental handpiece and ultrasonic equipment. • Ability to tolerate the smell of and possible exposure to dental materials and cleaning agents
Mobility	Physical abilities sufficient to move from room to room and maneuver in small spaces; stand and walk for extensive periods of time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move around small clinical space, room to room, laboratory areas, and equipment. Ability to keep balance while standing or sitting, stretch, bend, turn or squat as the need arises. • Perform multiple activities. Must be able to sit in a fixed position for an extended amount of time while assisting with dental procedures. • Must be able to fit and sit appropriately in the dental stool or chair that can be raised at the appropriate level for assistant or operator (4”-6” above operator’s head, must be able to place stool waist bar at appropriate area for balance).
Weight Bearing	Ability to lift and manipulate/move 45-50 pounds daily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position patients and move equipment and/or supplies.

<p>Cognitive and Intellectual Abilities</p>	<p>Ability to be oriented to time, place and person; organize responsibilities and decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student shall assess patient complaints and oral conditions and be able to assimilate and communicate information to other members of the treatment team. • Modify behavior/performance in the classroom or clinic after feedback from instructor or clinical supervisor. • Show problem-solving ability sufficient to organize and complete multiple tasks accurately and within assigned time frames. • Independently initiate routine tasks • Respond independently and quickly to emergency situations. • Comprehend three-dimensional relationships as in anatomical relations. • Understand spatial relationships of structures. • Comprehend and apply clinical instructions given by department personnel. • Ability to remember and re-call a large amount of information. • Ability to apply critical thinking skills and regard to obtaining adequate clinical history from the patient record and documenting that information with exam findings. • Deal with abstract and concrete variables, define problems, collect data, establish facts and draw valid conclusions.
<p>Behavioral/Social Skills</p>	<p>Exhibits mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients, peers, faculty, supervisors, and other professionals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise sound judgment, complete assessment, and develop sensitive and interpersonal relationships with patients. • Flexibility to function under stress and deal with patients and others who may be experiencing stress. • Tolerate physically taxing workloads. • Adapt to changing environments and flexible schedules. • Display behavior of: -compassion, empathy, integrity, concern for others, interest, respect and motivation, and have emotional stability. • Ability to cope in stressful situations calmly and respectably with patients and other staff members.

This document is intended to serve as a guide regarding the physical, emotional, intellectual and psychosocial expectations placed on a student. This document cannot include every conceivable action, task, ability or behavior that may be expected of a student. Meeting these technical standards does not guarantee employment in this field upon graduation. Ability to meet the program's technical standards does not guarantee a student's eligibility for any licensure, certification exam, or successful completion of the degree program