Dental Hygiene Program Applicant Information Packet

Class of Spring 2029: Cohort 4

Fall 2027 Program Start Date

Application Submission Start Date: May 3, 2027

Application Submission End Date: May 14, 2027

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Welcome to the Dental Hygiene Program at College of the Mainland!

We are thrilled that you are exploring a future in dental hygiene. Dental hygiene is a deeply rewarding, dynamic healthcare career focused on empowering patients, promoting systemic health, and serving our community.

Our program provides a rigorous, hands-on learning environment equipped with a modern 20-chair clinical facility, advanced technology, and a dedicated faculty team committed to your professional growth and success. This application packet outlines everything you need to know about our curriculum, clinical expectations, prerequisites, and admissions process.

Embarking on this educational journey is a significant step, and we are here to support you along the way. If you have any questions about the admissions criteria, prerequisites, or what life looks like as a dental hygiene student, please reach out directly to the Program Director:

- **Program Director:** Amber Kay Stevens, RDH, MS
- **Email:** astevens8@com.edu
- **Phone:** (409) 933-8543
- **Department Office:** STEM Health Sciences Building, College of the Mainland

We appreciate your interest in our program and look forward to reviewing your application!

Important Dates

- Application for Fall 2027 program cycle **Opens 05/03/2027** and **Closes 05/14/2027** at midnight.
- Applicants will be notified of their status by **June 11, 2027** to the COM email address.
- Accepted applicants must **accept their position in writing to the program by June 18, 2027**, or they forfeit their position in the program.
- Mandatory orientation for the Dental Hygiene Program will be held end of July or early August. (Dates to be determined)
- Program courses begin August 16, 2027.

Dental Hygiene in Texas

Dental hygiene is a dynamic, highly respected healthcare profession dedicated to disease prevention, oral health therapy, and total-body wellness. In the State of Texas, Registered Dental Hygienists (RDHs) provide essential preventive, therapeutic, and educational care across a wide variety of settings, including private dental practices, community health clinics, school-based outreach programs, hospital systems, and public health agencies.

As licensed healthcare providers in Texas, dental hygienists deliver specialized clinical care tailored to individual patient needs. Key responsibilities include:

- Conducting comprehensive periodontal assessments, ultrasonic and hand scaling, scaling and root planing, and professional prophylaxis to arrest and prevent periodontal disease.
- Exposing and evaluating digital dental radiographs, performing intraoral and extraoral head and neck cancer screenings, and charting dental and periodontal conditions.
- Administering local anesthesia and monitoring nitrous oxide sedation, applying pit-and-fissure sealants, placing chemotherapeutic agents, and applying preventive fluorides.
- Serving as the patient's primary educator on individualized oral hygiene strategies, nutritional counseling, tobacco cessation, and the critical link between oral infection and systemic conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

To practice as an RDH in Texas, graduates must complete an accredited dental hygiene program, pass the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE), successfully complete an approved clinical licensure examination (such as the ADEX exam administered by CDCA-WREB-CITA), pass the Texas Dental Hygiene Jurisprudence Assessment, and clear state and FBI fingerprint background checks through the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE). The curriculum at College of the Mainland is intentionally designed to rigorously prepare you for every stage of this licensure process.

Please note: Scope of practice and licensure requirements are defined by state law. If you plan to relocate outside of Texas after graduation, you will need to review the specific credentialing requirements of the dental board in your destination state.

Occupational Snapshot

Dental Hygiene continues to offer a strong career outlook with faster-than-average employment growth across regional, state, and national healthcare markets.

- **Regional High-Demand Status**

- According to *Workforce Solutions Greater Houston*, Dental Hygiene is designated as a High-Skill, High-Growth (HSHG) occupation and is recognized for strong regional economic demand across the 13-county Gulf Coast area.

- **Local Earning Power (Galveston County):**
  - Starting Wages: Entry-level hygienists in Galveston County earn an average of $41.19 to $43.09 per hour ($85,670+ annually).
  - Median & Experienced Wages: The local median wage is $47.68 per hour ($99,167/year), with experienced clinicians earning over $52.20 per hour ($108,590+/year).

Geography / Benchmark	Entry Level (10th–25th Percentile)	Median Hourly / Annual	Experienced (75th–90th Percentile)
Galveston County (Local)	**$41.19 – $43.09 / hr** ($85,672 – $89,624/yr)	**$47.68 / hr** (**$99,167 / yr**)	**$50.41 – $52.21 / hr** ($104,860 – $108,593/yr)
Greater Houston Area (Gulf Coast)	**$38.50 – $42.00 / hr**	**$45.00 – $48.50 / hr** (~$94,000 – $100,000/yr)	**$51.00+ / hr**
State of Texas (Average)	**$35.00 – $38.00 / hr**	**$42.00 / hr** (~$87,000/yr)	**$48.00+ / hr**

https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/wenzheng5491/viz/WorkforceSolutionsGreaterHouston-CareerExplorationTool_2025-Wen_06_30_2025/WorkforceSolutionsGreaterHouston-CareerExplorationTool

- **Regional Demand (Gulf Coast)**
  - Dental Hygiene is designated on the Gulf Coast region's High Skills Demand List, with an estimated regional growth rate of 26%.

- **Statewide Opportunities (Texas)**
  - Texas projects approximately 15,100 job openings for dental hygienists over the decade.

- **National Outlook**
  - Job openings for licensed dental hygienists are projected to grow by 11%, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The figures in the packet come directly from several state and federal labor market and licensing agencies:

- https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm
- https://www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm

- https://texaslmi.com/LMIbyCategory/Wages
- https://www.wrksolutions.com/job-seekers/explore-careers

Skills and Essential Functions (Technical Standards)

The College of the Mainland Dental Hygiene Program requires students to engage in rigorous, comprehensive academic, laboratory, and direct-patient clinical training. To successfully progress through the curriculum, satisfy Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) competency standards, and deliver safe, ethical patient care, students must possess specific functional abilities across five core domains.

Applicants and enrolled students must demonstrate proficiency in these technical standards independently, with or without reasonable accommodations.

1. Cognitive & Critical Thinking Skills

Students must demonstrate the intellectual ability to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, integrate, and synthesize complex biological and clinical data:

- **Clinical Reasoning**
  - Apply scientific evidence, diagnostic findings, and clinical judgment to formulate individualized dental hygiene care plans.
- **Spatial & 3D Visualization**
  - Mentally visualize three-dimensional anatomical relationships of the head, neck, and dentition to safely manipulate instruments and interpret dental radiographs.
- **Emergency & Time-Sensitive Decision Making**
  - Rapidly synthesize clinical indicators and patient symptoms to initiate appropriate emergency interventions when needed.
- **Mathematical Competence**
  - Accurately calculate medication dosages, local anesthetic limits, and periodontal index scores.

2. Visual, Tactile & Sensory Acuity

Dental hygiene procedures rely extensively on acute sensory discrimination in a restricted, sub-millimeter operating field:

- **Visual Discrimination**
  - Possess visual acuity (corrected or uncorrected) to distinguish subtle variations in tissue color, vascularity, swelling, anatomical landmarks, and radiographic pathology.
- **Tactile Sensitivity**

    - Employ refined tactile perception through fingers and hand instruments to detect subgingival calculus, root irregularities, defective restorations, and anatomic variations.
- **Auditory Perception**
    - Hear and interpret auditory cues within an active clinical environment, including patient verbal distress, equipment tone changes, and vital sign monitoring.
- **Olfactory Function**
    - Discern characteristic odors indicative of oral pathology, infection, or necrotic tissue.

3. Psychomotor, Fine Motor & Physical Endurance

Safe instrumentation requires precise motor coordination and physical stamina:

- **Fine Motor Dexterity**
    - Possess exceptional manual dexterity, hand-wrist-finger coordination, and arm-hand steadiness to safely maneuver sharp instruments, ultrasonic scalers, and anesthetic syringes without causing tissue trauma.
- **Ergonomics & Physical Endurance**
    - Sustain prolonged sitting (2 to 4+ hours per clinical session) maintaining ergonomic posture while working in confined oral cavity spaces.
- **Bilateral Hand Function**
    - Coordinate both hands simultaneously (e.g., using a mouth mirror for retraction/indirect vision with one hand while scaling with the dominant hand).
- **Mobility & Physical Effort**
    - Move freely between operatories, central sterilization, and radiology suites, and possess the ability to assist patients into and out of dental chairs.

4. Communication & Interpersonal Skills

Effective communication is essential for ethical practice, patient education, and interprofessional teamwork:

- **English Language Proficiency**
    - Communicate clearly, succinctly, and professionally in both written and spoken English, incorporating complex anatomical and dental terminology.
- **Patient Education & Health Coaching**
    - Deliver individualized health education and behavioral modification strategies with clarity, empathy, and cultural sensitivity.
- **Active Listening & Nonverbal Cues**
    - Interpret verbal statements and subtle nonverbal expressions from anxious or medically compromised patients.
- **Electronic Health Record (EHR) Documentation**

- Produce clear, accurate, and legally defensible SOAP progress notes and electronic patient chart entries.

5. Behavioral, Emotional & Ethical Standards

Professionalism, integrity, and emotional stability are fundamental requirements of healthcare practice:

- **Emotional Resilience & Stress Management**
  - Maintain clinical composure, professional demeanor, and sound decision-making during high-stress situations, practical examinations, and medical emergencies.
- **Asepsis & Infection Control Adherence**
  - Strictly adhere to CDC and OSHA infection control guidelines, universal precautions, and personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.
- **Acceptance of Constructive Feedback**
  - Receive, reflect upon, and integrate clinical guidance and faculty feedback constructively to foster continuous professional growth.
- **Ethical Practice**
  - Adhere to the ADHA Code of Ethics, institutional student codes of conduct, and patient privacy (HIPAA) mandates at all times.

Program Outline

Prerequisites

Prerequisites – 19 Credit Hours	
ENGL 1301	Composition I
BIOL 2402	Anatomy & Physiology I
BIOL 2402	Anatomy & Physiology II
CHEM 1406	Introduction to Chemistry
BIOL 2402	Microbiology for the Non-Science Major

All science prerequisites must be completed with a grade of "C" or better (minimum 2.75 prerequisite GPA) within five years prior to application.

Dental Hygiene Program Outline

Dental Hygiene Program 1st Year			
Semester 1 : Fall		Semester 2: Spring	
DHYG 1201	Orofacial Anatomy, Histology, & Embryology	DHYG 1239	Periodontology
DHYG 1304	Dental Radiology	DHYG 2201	Dental Hygiene Care I
DHYG 1227	Preventive Dental Hygiene Care	DHYG 1235	Pharmacology for the Dental Hygienist
DHYG 1431	Preclinical	DHYG 1261	Clinic I

		DHYG 1191	Special Topics in Dental Hygiene
		PSYC 2301 ORPSYC 2314	General Psychology OR Lifespan Growth & Development

Dental Hygiene Program 2nd Year					
Semester 3: Summer		Semester 4: Fall		Semester 5: Spring	
DHYG 1162	Clinic II	DHYG 1239	General & Oral Pathology	DHYG 1215	Community Dentistry
SPCH 1318 OR SPCH 1315	Interpersonal Communication OR Public Speaking	DHYG 1219	Dental Materials	DHYG 2153	Dental Hygiene Practice
SOCI 1301	Introduction to Sociology	DHYG 2231	Dental Hygiene Care II	DHYG 2362	Clinic IV
		DHYG 1207	General & Dental Nutrition	PHIL 2306	Introduction to Ethics
		DHYG 261	Clinic III		
Program total of 68 Credit Hours					
All Non-DHYG Courses can be taken prior to acceptance into the Dental Hygiene Program					

Dental Hygiene Curriculum (Associate of Applied Science)

The Dental Hygiene Program at College of the Mainland is a full-time, two-year, five-semester sequence of specialized didactic, laboratory, and clinical courses totaling 68 credit hours. Due to the sequential structure and rigorous demands of the curriculum, students are strongly encouraged to complete as many general education core requirements as possible prior to beginning the professional phase of the program.

Students train in our modern 19-chair dental clinic and dedicated didactic learning labs.

Important Clinical Requirement:

Students are responsible for securing and scheduling their own clinic patients to meet diverse clinical and procedural requirements across all clinical levels. While the college assists through community outreach and a central recall system, patient procurement is a fundamental student responsibility.

Professional Curriculum (49 Credit Hours / 5 Semesters)

Semester 1 (Fall - Year 1)

- **DHYG 1201** – Orofacial Anatomy, Histology & Embryology *(2 credits: 1 lec / 3 lab)*
- **DHYG 1304** – Dental Radiology *(3 credits: 2 lec / 3 lab)*
- **DHYG 1227** – Preventive Dental Hygiene Care *(2 credits: 2 lec / 1 lab)*
- **DHYG 1431** – Preclinical Dental Hygiene *(4 credits: 2 lec / 6 lab)*
- *Semester Credit Hours:* **11**

Semester 2 (Spring - Year 1)

- **DHYG 1191** – Special Topics in Dental Hygiene *(1 credit: 1 lec / 0 lab)*
- **DHYG 1211** – Periodontology *(2 credits: 2 lec / 0 lab)*
- **DHYG 2201** – Dental Hygiene Care I *(2 credits: 2 lec / 1 lab)*
- **DHYG 1235** – Pharmacology for the Dental Hygienist *(2 credits: 2 lec / 0 lab)*
- **DHYG 1261** – Clinical – Dental Hygiene/Hygienist I *(2 credits: 0 lec / 10 lab)*
- **PSYC 2301 or 2314** – General Psychology *or* Lifespan Growth & Development *(3 credits)*
- *Semester Credit Hours:* **12**

Semester 3 (Summer - Year 1)

- **DHYG 1162** – Clinical – Dental Hygiene/Hygienist II *(1 credit: 0 lec / 12 lab)*
- **SPCH 1315 or 1318** – Public Speaking *or* Interpersonal Communication *(3 credits)*
- **SOCI 1301** – Introduction to Sociology *(3 credits)*
- *Semester Credit Hours:* **7**

Semester 4 (Fall - Year 2)

- **DHYG 1239** – General and Oral Pathology *(2 credits: 2 lec / 0 lab)*
- **DHYG 1219** – Dental Materials *(2 credits: 1 lec / 2 lab)*
- **DHYG 2231** – Dental Hygiene Care II *(2 credits: 2 lec / 1 lab)*
- **DHYG 1207** – General and Dental Nutrition *(2 credits: 2 lec / 0 lab)*
- **DHYG 2261** – Clinical – Dental Hygiene/Hygienist III *(2 credits: 0 lec / 12 lab)*
- *Semester Credit Hours:* **10**

Semester 5 (Spring - Year 2)

- **DHYG 1215** – Community Dentistry *(2 credits: 2 lec / 0 lab)*
- **DHYG 2153** – Dental Hygiene Practice *(1 credit: 1 lec / 1 lab)*
- **DHYG 2362** – Clinical – Dental Hygiene/Hygienist IV (Capstone) *(3 credits: 0 lec / 14 lab)*
- **PHIL 2306** – Introduction to Ethics *(3 credits)*
- *Semester Credit Hours:* **9**

Course Descriptions

Course Rubric & Name	Format & Credits	Course Description
DHYG 1201 Orofacial Anatomy, Histology & Embryology	1 Lec / 3 Lab **2 Credits**	The histology and embryology of oral tissues, gross anatomy of the head and neck, tooth morphology, and individual tooth identification.
DHYG 1207 General & Dental Nutrition	2 Lec / 0 Lab **2 Credits**	General nutrition and nutritional biochemistry emphasizing the direct impact of diet and nutrition on oral health and systemic disease.
DHYG 1211 Periodontology	2 Lec / 0 Lab **2 Credits**	Normal and diseased periodontium including structural, functional, and environmental factors. Emphasis on etiology, pathology, treatment modalities, and therapeutic/preventive periodontics.
DHYG 1215 Community Dentistry	2 Lec / 0 Lab **2 Credits**	Principles of dental public health and health education emphasizing community assessment, program planning, implementation, and evaluation in diverse public settings.
DHYG 1219 Dental Materials	1 Lec / 2 Lab **2 Credits**	Physical and chemical properties of dental materials including the clinical application, manipulation, and safe handling of modern dental materials.
DHYG 1227 Preventive Dental Hygiene Care	2 Lec / 1 Lab **2 Credits**	The role of the dental hygienist as a primary therapeutic preventive provider with emphasis on disease management, health promotion, patient communication, and behavior modification.
DHYG 1235 Pharmacology for the Dental Hygienist	2 Lec / 0 Lab **2 Credits**	Classification of pharmacologic agents, mechanisms of action, drug interactions, side effects, and contraindications with direct application to dental practice.
DHYG 1239 General & Oral Pathology	2 Lec / 0 Lab **2 Credits**	Pathologic conditions of the human body and oral cavity, developmental disturbances, systemic diseases, differential diagnosis, and clinical management.
DHYG 1304 Dental Radiology	2 Lec / 3 Lab **3 Credits**	Fundamentals of oral radiography including radiation physics, biology, digital imaging techniques, radiographic interpretation, quality assurance, and radiation safety.

DHYG 1431 Preclinical Dental Hygiene	2 Lec / 6 Lab **4 Credits**	Foundational clinical skills, ergonomics, instrument manipulation, infection control, and management of medical emergencies with emphasis on ethical dental hygiene practice.
DHYG 1191 Special Topics in Dental Hygiene	1 Lec / 0 Lab **1 Credit**	Addresses emerging technologies, current clinical topics, professional development, and specialized board examination preparation strategies.
DHYG 2153 Dental Hygiene Practice	1 Lec / 1 Lab **1 Credit**	Legal, ethical, and regulatory standards governing dental hygiene practice. Includes office management, jurisprudence review, career preparation, and interprofessional practice.
DHYG 2201 Dental Hygiene Care I	2 Lec / 1 Lab **2 Credits**	Dental hygiene care for the medically or dentally compromised patient including supplemental instrumentation techniques and advanced case planning.
DHYG 2231 Dental Hygiene Care II	2 Lec / 1 Lab **2 Credits**	Advanced continuation of Dental Hygiene Care I, focusing on complex care management, advanced periodontal instrumentation, and ultrasonic technology.
DHYG 1261 Clinical – Dental Hygiene I	0 Lec / 10 Lab **2 Credits**	Work-based learning applying foundational theory and skills to patient care under direct clinical faculty supervision.
DHYG 1162 Clinical – Dental Hygiene II	0 Lec / 12 Lab **1 Credit**	Progressive clinical experience advancing scaling competencies, assessment efficiency, and comprehensive patient care.
DHYG 2261 Clinical – Dental Hygiene III	0 Lec / 12 Lab **2 Credits**	Advanced clinical care focusing on moderate-to-advanced periodontal cases, pain management, and specialized patient populations.
DHYG 2362 Clinical – Dental Hygiene IV (Capstone)	0 Lec / 14 Lab **3 Credits**	Summative capstone clinical experience demonstrating entry-level professional competence, mock clinical board examinations, and comprehensive patient management.

Program Goals & Student Achievement Outcomes

Program Mission & Goals

The mission of the College of the Mainland Dental Hygiene Program is to provide students with the foundational knowledge, clinical competencies, and professional values necessary to qualify for state

and national licensure, delivering safe, ethical, and evidence-based preventive care to diverse patient populations as Registered Dental Hygienists.

The success and quality of the program are measured by institutional benchmarks:

- **Student Retention**
  - Maintain a minimum 85% student retention rate throughout the sequential program of study.
- **Program Completion**
  - Achieve a 100% graduation rate for all retained students completing their final semester.
- **Licensure Success**
  - Maintain a minimum 85% first-attempt pass rate on all required national and regional licensure examinations (NBDHE and ADEX/CDCA-WREB-CITA).

Student Achievement Outcomes (Graduate Competencies)

Upon completion of the Associate of Applied Science in Dental Hygiene degree, the graduate will be competent to:

- **Licensure Readiness**
  - Successfully challenge and pass the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE), the ADEX Dental Hygiene Clinical Examination (administered by CDCA-WREB-CITA), and the Texas Dental Hygiene Jurisprudence Examination.
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making**
  - Integrate scientific evidence, didactic knowledge, and clinical assessment findings to accurately identify and address the specific healthcare needs of diverse patient populations.
- **Dental Hygiene Process of Care**
  - Systematically execute the complete dental hygiene process of care—Assessment, Diagnosis, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation, and Documentation (ADPIED)—for patients of varying ages, medical complexities, and periodontal disease classifications.
- **Health Promotion & Community Advocacy**
  - Educate individuals and community groups using preventive models that promote systemic and oral health, demonstrating cultural competence and respect for patient autonomy, beneficence, nonmaleficence, and justice.
- **Professional Ethics & Legal Compliance**
  - Exemplify the highest standards of integrity, professional demeanor, and ethical practice in accordance with the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) Code of Ethics and the Texas Dental Practice Act.
- **Lifelong Learning & Interprofessional Collaboration**

- Evaluate emerging trends and technologies in healthcare, actively participating in professional organizations and collaborating as an integral member of the interprofessional healthcare team.

Program Costs & Estimated Expenses

The costs associated with the Dental Hygiene Program are estimated based on current tuition rates, equipment requirements, and licensing vendor fees. Expenses are categorized into three distinct areas:

1. **Required Program Expenses** (Tuition, clinical kits, textbooks, and compliance fees distributed over the two years).
2. **Recommended Program Equipment & Memberships** (Items essential for clinical ergonomics and board readiness).
3. **Licensure Examination & Credentialing Fees** (Payable during the final semester and upon graduation).

1. Required Program Expenses (Two-Year Total)

Expense Category	Details & Description	Estimated Cost
Tuition & Fees	**In-District:** 68 credit hours at $77/credit hour *(Out-of-District: 68 credit hours at $115/credit hour = $7,820)* Tuition & Fees | Cost of Attendance	**$5,236** *(In-District)*
Instrument Kits, Typodont & Supplies	Ultrasonic inserts, hand instrumentation cassettes, "Charlie" typodont, and clinic expendables (student keeps upon graduation).	**$2,200**
Textbooks & E-Book Access	Required physical textbooks, e-books, and digital learning platforms across 5 semesters.	**$1,250-2,000**
Total Estimated Required Costs	*(Based on in-district residency)*	**~$9,436**

2. Recommended Program Equipment & Professional Memberships

Item / Resource	Details & Purpose	Estimated Cost

Custom Loupes with LED Light	Custom magnification glasses and headlight system (**strongly recommended** to ensure proper musculoskeletal ergonomics and visual acuity).	**$1,400 – $2,500**
ADHA/SADHA Student Membership	Student membership in the American Dental Hygienists' Association (provides access to scholarships, professional development, and graduation cords).	**$260**
NBDHE Board Review Books	Comprehensive board review books and materials in the final spring semester.	**$450**
Total Recommended Expenses		**~$2,100 – $3,210**

3. Estimated Licensure & Credentialing Fees (Final Semester / Post-Graduation)

These fees are paid directly to state regulatory agencies and testing organizations in your final semester to obtain your Texas Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) license.

Credential / Examination	Testing Agency / Details	Estimated Cost
National Board (NBDHE)	Written computerized board examination administered by the Joint Commission on National Dental Examinations (JCNDE).	**$600**
Clinical Licensure Exam (ADEX)	Simulated manikin/clinical examination administered by CDCA-WREB-CITA.	**$1,150 – $1,300**
Texas Jurisprudence Assessment	State laws and rules assessment required by the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE).	**$54**
TSBDE Initial RDH License & Fingerprinting	Initial Texas RDH application fee, IdentoGO fingerprint processing, and NPDB query.	**$200**
Total Estimated Licensure Costs		**~$2,004 – $2,154**

Financial Aid Advisory:

All tuition, required books, instrument kits, and mandatory program fees are eligible for inclusion in your financial aid Cost of Attendance (COA) budget. Contact the COM Financial Aid Office to explore federal loans, Pell Grants, and workforce allied health scholarships. Financial Aid Services

Admission & Application Requirements

The Dental Hygiene Program utilizes a competitive, objective selection process. Applicants must first be admitted to College of the Mainland (COM) and satisfy all program-specific academic and testing prerequisites to be eligible for ranking and selection.

Step 1: General College Admission & Enrollment

- **Apply to COM:** Submit a free general admission application via Admissions & Aid.
- **Submit Official Transcripts:** Send official transcripts from all previously attended colleges and universities directly to the COM Admissions and Records Department.
- **Meningitis Vaccination:** Applicants under the age of 22 on the first day of class must submit proof of the Meningococcal Meningitis vaccination.
- **Health Sciences Advising:** Meeting with an allied health advisor is recommended to verify prerequisite transferability and degree audit accuracy.

Step 2: Program Academic Eligibility Requirements

- **Active Student Status:** Must be actively enrolled at COM with an assigned COM Student ID number and active COM email address.
- **Prerequisite Completion:** Complete all 19 credit hours of required prerequisite courses with a grade of **"C" or higher** and a cumulative **Prerequisite GPA of 2.75 or higher**:
- **ENGL 1301** – Composition I
- **BIOL 2401** – Human Anatomy & Physiology I (Lecture + Lab)
- **BIOL 2402** – Human Anatomy & Physiology II (Lecture + Lab)
- **BIOL 2420** – Microbiology for Non-Science Majors (Lecture + Lab)
- **CHEM 1406** – Introductory Chemistry I (Lecture + Lab)
- **5-Year Science Recency Policy:** All science prerequisites (BIOL 2401, BIOL 2402, BIOL 2420, and CHEM 1406) must have been completed within **five (5) years** prior to the application deadline.
- **Minimum Cumulative GPA:** Possess an overall cumulative GPA of at least **2.50** across all college-level coursework.

Step 3: Entrance Examination & Orientation

Health Science Reasoning Test (HSRT-AD):

- Take the computerized HSRT-AD critical thinking exam administered through the COM Testing Center.
- **Exam Fee:** $47.00 per attempt (payable when scheduling an appointment).
- **Format:** 33 multiple-choice questions assessing analysis, inference, evaluation, induction, and deduction within a 50-minute time limit. No prior dental knowledge is required.
- **Testing Window:** Available from the first Monday in March through the day before the application deadline.
- **Retake Policy:** Applicants may take the HSRT-AD up to **two (2) times** per application cycle (the highest score achieved will be utilized for applicant ranking).

Online Orientation Session:

Complete the Dental Hygiene information/orientation module on the program website. Enter the Code given at the end of the recording. This code will change every year.

Step 4: Mandatory Dental Hygiene Observation Hours (8 Hours)

- All applicants must complete a minimum of 8 verified hours of direct observation/shadowing with a licensed Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) in a clinical practice setting.
- Shadowing hours must be documented on the official *COM Dental Hygiene Observation Verification Form*, signed by the supervising dental hygienist (including their license number and clinic contact information), and uploaded with your application.

Step 5: Letters of Recommendation (Optional / Supplemental)

- Applicants may submit a professional letter of recommendation (e.g., from an employer, supervising dentist/hygienist, or college science professor).
- Letter must address the applicant's work ethic, integrity, communication, and interpersonal skills.

Step 6: Video Submission Guidelines & Prompt

Format & Technical Requirements

- Length: 2 to 3 minutes maximum (submissions exceeding 3 minutes will incur a penalty).

- Platform / Delivery: Unlisted YouTube link. (If I can not view the video you will not receive points for your submission. I cannot open Private videos.)
- Framing & Quality: Good lighting, clear audio, minimal background distractions, applicant visible from the chest upward.
- Professional Appearance and Demeanor: Student visual appearance and video background are professional in manner, communication, attitude, and appearance.

Applicant Prompt Questions

1. *Why did you choose to pursue a career in dental hygiene?*
2. *How did you hear about the COM Dental Hygiene program and why have you chosen to apply here?*

Step 7: Formal Application Submission

- **Online Application:** Complete and submit the formal Dental Hygiene Application through the COM Dental Hygiene program portal prior to the published deadline.
- **Document Uploads:** Attach all required supporting documentation at the time of submission (HSRT score report, orientation completion code, RDA/CDA credentials or dental assisting work verification letters, and unofficial transcripts).

Application Policy Notice:

Only complete applications submitted with all supporting documentation by the designated cutoff date will be reviewed. Incomplete submissions will not be considered or processed.

Post-Acceptance Compliance Requirements (Due August 1st)

Upon receiving an official conditional offer of admission in late June, candidates must complete and submit the following compliance items prior to **August 1st** to finalize enrollment:

Immunization History & Serologic Titers

- Completed Hepatitis B series (with quantitative positive antibody titer), MMR (2 doses or positive titers), Varicella (2 doses or positive titer), Tdap (within 10 years), and annual Influenza.

Tuberculosis Clearance

- Negative PPD skin test (two-step or current annual) or negative QuantiFERON-TB Gold blood test dated within 12 months.

AHA BLS Certification

- Current **American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers** certification (must include hands-on skills evaluation; valid for the duration of the program).

Mandatory Program Orientation

- Attendance at the on-campus program orientation held in early August prior to the start of the semester.

Applicant Ranking

All applicants that meet the above admissions requirements will be objectively ranked using the following rubric:

Academic Readiness	Criteria / Benchmark	Points
Health Science Reasoning Test (HSRT-AD)	95-100 90-94.99 85-89.99 80-84.99 75-79.99 Below 75	25 22 19 16 12 0
Prerequisite GPA *(ENGL 1301, BIOL 2401, BIOL 2402, BIOL 2420, CHEM 1406)*	4.00 3.75 – 3.99 3.50 – 3.74 3.25 – 3.49 3.00 – 3.24 Below 3.0	25 22 19 16 12 0
Science Course Performance	**Anatomy & Physiology I** A of first attempt B on first attempt Retaken course	 3 2 0
	Anatomy & Physiology II A of first attempt B on first attempt Retaken course	 3 2 0

	Microbiology for Non-Science Majors A of first attempt B on first attempt Retaken course	 4 2 0

Total Points_____/60

Professional Readiness		Criteria / Benchmark	Points
Professional Resume		Professional, error-free, healthcare/service experience clearly outlined. Minor formatting or grammar issues. Significant omissions or errors.	5 3 1
Professional Letter of Recommendation		Strong recommendation with clear examples of professionalism, responsibility, and academic /work ethic. Positive recommendation with limited examples. Generic recommendation.	5 3 1
Video Submission	**Why Dental Hygiene?**	Clearly articulates motivation for becoming a dental hygienist and demonstrates understanding of the profession. Provides a general explanation with limited depth. Presents an unclear or poorly developed rationale.	5 3 1
	Why College of the Mainland Dental Hygiene Program?	Demonstrates knowledge of COM Dental Hygiene and explains how the program aligns with career goals. Provides a general response with minimal program-specific information. Limited or no explanation of interest in COM	5 3 1
	Communication Skills	Organized, articulate, confident, and professional communication. Adequate communication with minor issues in clarity or organization. Difficult to follow, disorganized, or ineffective communication.	5 3 1
	Professional Presence	Organized, articulate, confident, and professional communication. Adequate communication with minor issues in clarity or organization. Difficult to follow, disorganized, or ineffective communication.	5 3 1

	Video Time Requirement Deduction (Maximum video time deduction: -3 points)	Exceeds allotted video time by up to 30 seconds Exceeds allotted video time by 31-60 seconds Exceeds allotted video time by more than 60 seconds	-1 -2 -3

Total Points____/30

Bonus Points	Criteria / Benchmark	Points
Additional General Education Courses *(Grade of "C" or higher)*	PSYC 2301 or PSYC 2314	1
	SPCH 1318 or SPCH 1315	1
	SOCI 1301	1
	PHIL 2306	1
Residency, COM Coursework & Veteran Status	COM In-District Resident	2
	Completed 3+ college-level courses at COM	2
	Completed 1–2 college-level courses at COM	1
	Honorably Discharged Veteran *(Attach DD-214)*	3
Prior Degrees & Credentials	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	5
	Associate Degree in Science/Medical Field	4
	Associate Degree (Non-Medical)	3
	COM Collegiate High School Graduate	2
	Completed an Honors Course (A, B)	3, 2
	Completion of Dental Assisting Program	2
	Verified Previous Dental Experience	2
Professionalism Deduction (-10 Maximum)	Unprofessional email, phone, or written communication with faculty, staff, or admissions personnel.	-2
	Failure to follow application or interview instructions.	-2
	Inappropriate or disrespectful interactions with faculty, staff, students, or clinical partners.	-3
	Misrepresentation or falsification of information on the application or supporting documents.	-10
	Unprofessional conduct during the application process that reflects poorly on suitability for the dental hygiene profession.	-3

Total Points ____/25

Required for Application Submission	Mandatory 8 Hours Clinical Shadowing	*(Y/N)*
	Online Dental Hygiene Info Session Completion Code	*(Y/N)*

Final Score

Category	Points
HSRT Exam	25
Prerequisite GPA	25
Science Course Performance	10
Resume	5
Recommendation	5
Video	20
Base Total	**90**
Bonus Points	+25
Professionalism	-10

Maximum Possible Score = 115

Transfer Coursework & Advanced Standing

Evaluation of Prerequisite & General Education Credits

- **Official Transcript Submission**
    - Applicants seeking transfer credit evaluation must submit official transcripts from all previously attended colleges and universities directly to the COM Admissions and Records Department.
- **Accreditation Standards**
    - General education and prerequisite courses are eligible for transfer review provided they were completed with a grade of "C" or higher at an institution accredited by a recognized institutional accrediting agency.
- **Science Prerequisite Recency**

- All transferred science prerequisites (Anatomy & Physiology I & II, Microbiology, and Introductory Chemistry) must have been completed within five (5) years prior to the application deadline to ensure current foundational knowledge.

- **Evaluation Timeline**
  - Official transcript evaluations and degree audits are processed through the Admissions and Records Department and can take several weeks. Applicants are strongly urged to order transcripts well in advance of the program application deadline.

Institutional Residency & Degree Conferral Requirements

- **Residency Requirement**
  - In accordance with College of the Mainland policy, at least 25% of the total semester credit hours required for the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree must be earned in residence at COM.

- **Dental Hygiene Core Completion**
  - 100% of the specialized dental hygiene coursework (all DHYG-designated lecture, laboratory, and clinical courses) must be taken and completed in residence at College of the Mainland.

Transferability of Dental Hygiene Courses (Prior Program Credit)

- Due to the sequential, integrated nature of dental hygiene curricula and individualized competency tracking across clinical levels, the College of the Mainland Dental Hygiene Program does not accept transfer credits for specialized dental hygiene courses (DHYG) completed at other institutions.

Outbound Course Transferability

- The transferability of DHYG credits earned at COM to other colleges, universities, or baccalaureate completion programs is determined solely by the receiving institution's transfer policies.

Once Accepted into the Program

Applicants will receive notification of their admission status (accepted, alternate, or not accepted) via their official COM student email by the last business week of June.

Candidates receiving a conditional offer of admission will be sent an Acceptance Onboarding Packet containing mandatory medical and regulatory clearance forms. All post-acceptance documentation must be fully completed and uploaded to the department's compliance tracking portal by August 1st. Failure to meet the August 1st deadline will result in the immediate forfeiture of your seat in the program.

Mandatory Post-Acceptance Compliance Requirements (Due August 1st)

1. Immunizations & Serologic Titer Verification

Due to clinical patient contact and exposure to bloodborne pathogens, students must provide documentation of the following immunizations or positive quantitative blood titers prior to beginning clinical courses:

Hepatitis B (3-Dose Series + Quantitative Titer):

- Documentation of the complete 3-dose vaccine series (or 2-dose Heplisav-B series) **AND** a positive quantitative Hepatitis B Surface Antibody (anti-HBs) titer. Note: Because the Hepatitis B series requires up to 6 months to complete, begin this process immediately if you have not already completed it.

MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella):

- Two (2) documented doses of the MMR vaccine or positive serologic titers for all three diseases.

Varicella (Chickenpox):

- Two (2) documented doses of the Varicella vaccine or a positive quantitative Varicella IgG titer. *(A history of having the disease is not accepted without laboratory titer proof).*

Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis):

- One (1) dose of Tdap administered within the past ten (10) years.

Meningococcal Meningitis:

- Proof of vaccination required for all students under the age of 22 on the first day of class.

2. Tuberculosis (TB) Screening

Students must submit documented proof of TB clearance dated within twelve (12) months of the program start date:

Acceptable Screenings:

- Either a standard **2-step PPD skin test** or a **QuantiFERON-TB Gold / T-Spot blood test**.

Positive TB History:

- Students with a history of a positive TB test must submit proof of a clear baseline chest X-ray along with an annual medical clearance symptom review signed by their physician.

3. Basic Life Support (BLS) Healthcare Provider Certification

Students must maintain an active CPR certification throughout the entirety of their enrollment:

Required Course:

- **American Heart Association (AHA) Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers**.
- **Delivery Format:** Courses must include a hands-on psychomotor skills evaluation (100% online courses and non-AHA certifications, such as Red Cross standard CPR, are not accepted).
- **Certification Window:** We recommend completing the AHA BLS course during the summer immediately preceding enrollment so the 2-year certification remains valid through graduation.

5. Criminal Background Check (Texas HB 1508 Notice)

In compliance with **Texas House Bill 1508**, all applicants and enrolled students are formally notified that:

- The **Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE)** requires all applicants for dental hygiene licensure to undergo and pass an FBI and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) fingerprint-based criminal background check prior to issuing an occupational license.
- An individual who has been convicted of an offense, placed on deferred adjudication, or has a felony/misdemeanor record may be deemed ineligible for dental hygiene licensure by the TSBDE.
- **Criminal History Evaluation:** Any applicant with reason to believe they may be ineligible for licensure due to a prior conviction or deferred adjudication has the right to request a preliminary **Criminal History Evaluation Letter** directly from the TSBDE prior to or during their enrollment. Visit www.tsbde.texas.gov for full details and evaluation instructions.

6. Student Acknowledgement of Program Costs Form

All admitted students must sign and return the Acknowledgement of Estimated Costs Form, confirming they understand the tuition, mandatory instrument kit purchases, digital clinical software fees, and final-semester board examination expenses required to complete the program and obtain Texas licensure.

7. Mandatory On-Campus Orientation

Admitted students are required to attend a full-day, in-person Dental Hygiene Orientation session scheduled in early August. Specific dates, room locations, and kit distribution schedules will be provided in your late-June acceptance email. Attendance is mandatory for all incoming cohort members.

8. Infectious Disease & Bloodborne Pathogen Policy

Because clinical training involves exposure to blood, saliva, and airborne aerosols, the Dental Hygiene Program strictly adheres to infection control protocols established by the CDC, OSHA, and the Organization for Safety, Asepsis and Prevention (OSAP).

- Students receive comprehensive training in standard precautions, personal protective equipment (PPE), post-exposure prophylaxis, and hazardous materials management prior to treating patients.
- A specialized student accident/exposure insurance fee is included in course enrollment to cover emergency post-exposure medical evaluations if an accidental needle stick or sharps injury occurs. Complete institutional protocols are published in the *COM Dental Hygiene Student Handbook*.

Institutional Statements & Legal Notices

Equal Opportunity & Non-Discrimination Statement

College of the Mainland does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, or veteran status in its educational programs, admissions, or employment practices, in accordance with Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, and the ADA.

Accreditation Statement

The College of the Mainland Dental Hygiene Program is accredited by the **Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA)** and has been granted the accreditation status of *Approval without Reporting Requirements*. The Commission is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Commission on Dental Accreditation | 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611 | (800) 232-6108 | *coda.ada.org*

Notice Regarding Texas House Bill 1508 (Licensure Eligibility)

In accordance with Texas law, please be advised that criminal history may impact an individual's ability to obtain an occupational license from the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE). Applicants have the right to request a preliminary Criminal History Evaluation Letter from the TSBDE prior to applying to or entering the program.

Application Submission Checklist

Ensure every item below is completed and attached before submitting your application file. Incomplete applications or missing documents will not be processed or reviewed by the admissions committee.

- [ ] **Active COM Student Admission:** Admitted to College of the Mainland with an active COM Student ID number and COM student email address.
- [ ] **Official Transcripts Submitted:** Official transcripts from all attended colleges and universities sent directly to and evaluated by the COM Admissions and Records Department.
- [ ] **Prerequisites Satisfied:** Completed all 19 prerequisite credit hours (ENGL 1301, BIOL 2401, BIOL 2402, BIOL 2420, CHEM 1406) with a "C" or better, maintaining a minimum 2.50 Prerequisite GPA (with all sciences completed within 5 years).
- [ ] **Additional Degree Coursework (If Applicable):** Transcripts reflecting completed coursework in PSYC 2301/2314, SPCH 1318/1315, SOCI 1301, and/or PHIL 2306 for additional ranking points.
- [ ] **Prior Degree / Credential Documentation (If Applicable):** Proof of conferred Bachelor's, Associate degree, COM Collegiate High School diploma, or Certificate of Completion from an accredited Dental Assisting program.
- [ ] **HSRT-AD Official Score Report:** Score report from the Health Science Reasoning Test completed through the COM Testing Center.
- [ ] **Online Orientation Completion Code:** Verified completion code from the mandatory online Dental Hygiene Information Session module.
- [ ] **Mandatory Shadowing Form:** Signed *Clinical Shadowing Verification Form* documenting a minimum of 8 hours of direct RDH observation.
- [ ] **Previous Dental Experience Verification (If Applicable):** Copy of active RDA/CDA license or official employer verification letter of clinical dental assisting experience (for ranking points).
- [ ] **Veteran Status Documentation (If Applicable):** Copy of DD-214 (Member 4 copy) verifying military service.
- [ ] **Video Submission:** 2-to-3 minute video link or uploaded Unlisted YouTube link addressing the required clinical reflection, time management, and professional core values prompts.
- [ ] **Letter of Recommendation (Optional / Point Eligible):** Professional letter of recommendation from an employer, supervising clinician, or college science professor.
- [ ] **Online Program Application:** Completed and submitted through the COM Dental Hygiene application portal prior to the deadline.

Dental Hygiene Program RDH Observation Verification Form

Applicant Name:_____ COM Student #_____

Office Name:	Office Phone #
RDH Name:	RDH License #
RDH Initial:	Number of Hours Observed:

Office Name:	Office Phone #
RDH Name:	RDH License #
RDH Initial:	Number of Hours Observed:

Office Name:	Office Phone #
RDH Name:	RDH License #
RDH Initial:	Number of Hours Observed:

Office Name:	Office Phone #
RDH Name:	RDH License #
RDH Initial:	Number of Hours Observed:

Total Hours Observed: _____

By Signing below I attest all information on this form is accurate and complete.

Applicant Signature:_____

Date:_____