



Dental Hygiene Program
Applicant Information Packet
2025 Application Cycle

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Welcome Statement

Thank you for your interest in the Dental Hygiene program at College of the Mainland. The field of Dental Hygiene is a wonderful option for students interested in serving others through allied health and has a very bright outlook! This guide will provide an overview of the curriculum, program requirements and admission criteria. Should you have any questions about the program or need further clarification, please email the Dental Hygiene program at dentalhygiene@com.edu

Dental Hygiene in Texas

The allowable duties, or 'scope of practice' of a Dental Hygienist varies depending on which state you work in. The program at the College of the Mainland prepares students to take the tests required to become licensed and apply to practice Dental Hygiene in the state of Texas.

In the state of Texas, Registered Dental Hygienists (RDH's) provide preventive and therapeutic services to patients in a variety of settings. You may choose to practice in the private sector, school-based programs, long-term care facilities, or even governmental agencies. RDH's duties include performing routine preventive services, like cleaning and polishing teeth, capturing x-rays, applying sealants and other medicaments to teeth, screening for oral diseases, and assisting in operation of the office. No matter which sector you find yourself working in, the most important thing you will do as an RDH is educate your patients. Without an effective explanation and understanding of why we need to care for our oral health, patients will never build the value required for keeping their teeth and gums healthy their entire life. As an RDH, you are the primary facilitator for patients to improve not only their oral health, but also to have a positive impact on their entire body health because of it. Because this is such a great responsibility, all Dental Hygiene curriculum is scientifically oriented, and the program is rigorous and intensive to prepare graduates to become competent RDH's.

Please note: If you're planning on moving out of state, you need to check with the state dental board in the respective state you wish to move to understand what is required to become licensed in that state.

Occupational Snapshot

The field of Dental Hygiene has a very bright outlook, as it has a faster than average occupational growth rate. Locally, in the Gulf Coast, Dental Hygiene is on the region's High Skills Demand List, with a projected growth rate of 26% between 2019-2029. Statewide, there will be an estimated 15,100 Dental Hygiene job openings in the next decade.

The annual median wage for an RDH in Texas is \$79,690. Many RDH's choose to work part time. Hourly, an RDH in Texas can expect to make between \$40 and \$50. Employment outlook, salaries, benefits and job opportunities for licensed Dental Hygienists vary according to experience and geographic location.

Skills & Essential Functions

The essential functions, which are the basic abilities a student must possess to complete the curriculum and practice in the field of Dental Hygiene are:

- Cognitive skills: Dental Hygienists must demonstrate cognitive skills to master the curriculum which includes basic, behavioral, and clinical sciences. Students will need to employ these skills daily in completing tasks such as critical and analytical thinking, synthesis of concepts and decision making.
- Psychomotor skills: Dental Hygienists must gather information for accurate diagnosis through visual, tactile, olfactory, and auditory senses. Students apply fine motor skills including manual dexterity and coordination daily. Observational skills required include gathering sensory information and application of demonstrated instrument manipulation skills.
- Communication skills: Dental Hygienists interact with many individuals on a daily basis, which makes effective communication a critical skill. Students must be able to communicate succinctly in English both through written and verbal forms and including complex dental terminology. Clinicians also use non-verbal cues from patients to assess the need for treatment modifications and emergency response.
- Behavioral and Social attributes: Dental Hygienists maintain the highest ethical standards and professionalism as part of daily practice. Part of being a competent clinician is embracing compassion, empathy and exhibiting tolerance for all individuals. Students must be able to demonstrate sensitivity for cultural, societal, and emotional differences amongst patients. They must also be prepared to treat patients with infectious diseases including bloodborne pathogens and follow strict protocol for asepsis practices. Students must be able to handle physically demanding workloads and function well under stress. Any chronic recurrent conditions such as psychiatric or substance abuse problems will interfere with safely providing quality patient care.

Program Outline

The courses required for the Dental Hygiene curriculum are:

Prerequisites – 19 Credit Hours		Semester 3: Summer I	
ENGL 1301	Composition I	DHYG 1162	Clinic II
BIOL 2401	Anatomy & Physiology I	PSYC 2301 or PSYC 2314	General Psychology or Lifespan Growth & Development
BIOL 2402	Anatomy & Physiology II		
CHEM 1406	Introduction to Chemistry or General Chemistry I and II	PHIL 2306	Introduction to Ethics
BIOL 2420	Microbiology for the Non-Science Major		
Semester 1: Fall		Semester 4: Fall	
DHYG 1201	Orofacial Anatomy, Histology & Embryology	DHYG 1239	General & Oral Pathology
DHYG 1304	Dental Radiology	DHYG 1219	Dental Materials
DHYG 1227	Preventive Dental Hygiene Care	DHYG 2231	Dental Hygiene Care II
DHYG 1431	Preclinical Dental Hygiene	DHYG 1207	General & Dental Nutrition
		DHYG 2261	Clinic III
Semester 2: Spring		Semester 5: Spring	
DHYG 1211	Periodontology	DHYG 1215	Community Dentistry
DHYG 2201	Dental Hygiene Care I	DHYG 2153	Dental Hygiene Practice
DHYG 1235	Pharmacology for the Dental Hygienist	DHYG 2362	Clinic IV (Capstone)
DHYG 1261	Clinic I	SOCI 1301	Introduction to Sociology

DHYG 1191	Special Topics in Dental Hygiene (Pain Control)	SPCH 1318 or SPCH 1315	Interpersonal Communication or Public Speaking
Program total of 68 Credit Hours			
All Non-DHYG Courses can be taken prior to acceptance into the Dental Hygiene Program			

Dental Hygiene Curriculum

The Dental Hygiene program itself is a two-year program, with 5 semesters of course work. Students are recommended to take as many additional general education courses required for the Associates of Applied Science degree as possible prior to beginning the program due to its rigorous nature and demands of the program.

The content for the Dental Hygiene program courses are listed below. COM just completed a state-of-the-art, 19-chair dental clinic and didactic lab space with brand-new, cutting-edge equipment you will be using for all program courses.

Please note: Students are expected and required to identify clinic patients who they will perform Dental Hygiene services on while progressing through the program. While the college expects to provide some community patients, each student is responsible for identifying and treating their own pool of patients that meet the diverse clinical requirements of the program.

Course #	Course Name	Description	Contact and credit hours
DHYG 1201	Orofacial anatomy, histology & embryology	The histology and embryology of oral tissues, gross anatomy of the head and neck, tooth morphology, and individual tooth identification.	Lec 1 Lab 3 Credit 2
DHYG 1304	Dental Radiology	Fundamentals of oral radiography, including techniques, interpretation, quality assurance, and ethics.	Lec 2 Lab 3 Credit 3
DHYG 1227	Preventive Dental hygiene care	The role of the dental hygienist as a therapeutic oral health care provider with emphasis on concepts of: disease management, health promotion, communication and	Lec 2 Lab 1 Credit 2

		behavior modification.	
DHYG 1431	Preclinical DH	Foundational knowledge for performing clinical skills and management of medical emergencies for patients with emphasis on procedures and rationale for performing dental hygiene care. Introduction to ethical principles as they apply to dental hygiene care.	Lec 2 Lab 6 Credit 4
DHYG 1211	Periodontology	Normal and diseased periodontium including the structural, functional, and environmental factors. Emphasis on etiology, pathology, treatment modalities, and therapeutic and preventive periodontics.	Lec 2 Lab 0 Credit 2
DHYG 2201	DH Care I	Dental hygiene care for the medically or dentally compromised patient including supplemental instrumentation techniques.	Lec 2 Lab 1 Credit 2
DHYG 1235	Pharmacology for the Dental Hygienist	Classification of drugs and their uses, actions, interactions, side effects, contraindications, with emphasis on dental applications.	Lec 2 Lab 0 Credit 2
DHYG 1261	Clinic I	A health-related work-based learning experience that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts. Direct supervision is provided by the clinical professional.	Lec 0 Lab 10 Credit 2
DHYG 1262	Clinic II	A health-related work-based learning experience that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts. Direct supervision is provided by the clinical professional.	Lec 0 Lab 16 Credit 2
DHYG 1239	General & Oral Pathology	Disturbances in human body development, diseases of the body, and disease prevention measures with emphasis on the oral cavity and associated structures.	Lec 2 Lab 0 Credit 2
DHYG 1219	Dental materials	Physical and chemical properties of dental materials including the application and manipulation of the various materials used in dentistry.	Lec 1 Lab 2 Credit 2
DHYG 2231	DH Care II	A continuation of Dental Hygiene Care I. Dental hygiene care for the medically or dentally compromised patient including advanced instrumentation techniques.	Lec 2 Lab 1 Credit 2
DHYG	General &	General nutrition and nutritional biochemistry emphasizing	Lec 2

1207	Dental Nutrition	the effect nutrition has on oral health.	Lab 0 Credit 2
DHYG 2261	Clinic III	A health-related work-based learning experience that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts. Direct supervision is provided by the clinical professional.	Lec 0 Lab 12 Credit 2
DHYG 1191	Special topics in DH (Pain Control)	Topics address recently identified current events, skills, knowledge, and/or attitudes and behaviors pertinent to the technology or occupation and relevant to the professional development of the student.	Lec 0 Lab 3 Credit 1
DHYG 1215	Community Dentistry	The principles and concepts of community public health and dental health education emphasizing community assessment, educational planning, implementation, and evaluation including methods and materials used in teaching dental health education in various community settings. Application of the principles and concepts of public dental health education.	Lec 2 Lab 1 Credit 2
DHYG 2153	DH Practice	Emphasis on the laws governing the practice of dentistry and dental hygiene, moral standards, and the ethical standards established by the dental hygiene profession. Practice settings for the dental hygienist, office operations, preparation for employment, and introduction to the dental team.	Lec 1 Lab 1 Credit 1
DHYG 2362	Clinic IV (Capstone)	A health-related work-based learning experience that enables the student to apply specialized occupational theory, skills, and concepts. Direct supervision is provided by the clinical professional.	Lec 0 Lab 14 Credit 3

Program Goals

The College of the Mainland Dental Hygiene program's goal is to provide the knowledge, skills, and values to comprehensively prepare students to qualify for licensure to deliver safe, ethical and effective Dental Hygiene care to the patients which they will serve as Registered Dental Hygienists.

The success of the program will be demonstrated through an 85% student retention rate throughout the program; 100% graduation rate for students retained throughout the program and 85% first attempt pass rate on the exams required for licensure in the state of Texas.

Student Achievement Outcomes

At the conclusions of the Dental Hygiene Program, the competent hygienist will:

1. Be prepared to take the National Board of Dental Hygiene Examiners written examination, the ADEX (CDCA-WREB-CITA) OR Central Regional Dental Testing Service clinical examination and the Texas Jurisprudence Assessment for Registered Dental Hygienists.
2. Assimilate academically acquired knowledge into identification of specific needs for a diverse population of patients.
3. Analyze, summarize, and provide competent frameworks for the dental hygiene process of care to patients of diverse needs, ages and periodontal classifications.
4. Educate others utilizing the model of assessing, planning, implementation, and evaluation of oral health promotion through individual patient care and professional sensitivity to the ethical practice principles of autonomy, beneficence and nonmaleficence.
5. Exemplify the professionalism, integrity, and ethics worthy of the profession of dental hygiene.
6. Appraise the ever-changing industry of dentistry and apply the principles of life-long learning to be an integral member of the allied healthcare team.

Program Cost

The cost for the program is estimated based on current costs and availability of equipment. The three categories below reflect required supplies and costs associated with the program, which are distributed over the two years; items or events that are highly recommended but not mandatory; and the costs associated with the board exams and license application fee, which you should plan to pay in your final semester of the program, or shortly after graduation.

Since many of the fees associated with becoming licensed in the state of Texas are paid in the final semester of the program, the program wants to ensure you are aware and prepared to pay all the fees necessary to become a Registered Dental Hygienist. While not anticipated, there may be some fluctuation in the cost of instruments and supplies required in the program from year to year.

Required by program	Details	Total
Tuition & fees	Estimated for in-district residents (68 credits)	\$4,446
Fees for clinical courses	\$100 Per course, 8 courses	\$800
Books	Estimated for e-books	\$1,250
Instruments & supplies	These items the student will use throughout the program & take with them when they graduate.	\$2,000
Total required costs		\$8,496
Recommended by the program		
Magnification loupes	Glasses with a light are HIGHLY recommended, cost varies	\$1,500
ADHA student membership	Student chapter of the American Dental Hygiene Association	\$130
National board review course	Highly recommended, spring semester of final year, cost varies	\$450
Total recommended costs		\$1,880
Fees required for licensure		
National Board Exam		

Required by program	Details	

on & Fees	nated for in-district residents (68 credits)	46
for clinical courses	course where treatment is provided in clinic, 8 courses	0
ks	nated for e-books	50
uments & Supplies	le items the student will use throughout the program will take them when they graduate	00
Total Required Costs		96
Recommended by the program		
inification loupes	nification glasses with a light are HY recommended, cost varies	00
A student membership	ent chapter of American Dental enists Association Membership	0
onal board review se	ly recommended, spring semester of final year	0
Total Recommended Costs		80
required for licensure		
onal Board Exam	HE written exam. Students will need to pay and take n in spring semester of final year.	5
e Board Exam	X clinical exam. Students will need to pay and take exam ring semester of final year.	50
s Jurisprudence Exam	uates will need to take prior to applying for licensure.	
s RDH License	uates will need to pay along with application for sure. Includes fingerprint fee and national database ch.	0
Total Licensure Cost		69

Admission Requirements

In order to apply for the Dental Hygiene program at COM, you must first establish yourself as a student at COM. Here are the steps for admission into the college:

- Apply to COM: Student can apply for free online either at www.com.edu/apply or through ApplyTexas at www.applytexas.org
- Transcripts: All official transcripts must be sent to COM admissions department. *Please don't wait until the last minute to do this before applying.*
- Vaccinations: Students are required to complete a series of vaccinations and provide proof when applying to the program. For students under the age of 22, they will need to be vaccinated against meningococcal meningitis.
- Advising: Students are recommended to meet with a health sciences advisor to review the program requirements and ensure eligibility.
- Dental hygiene application: Students will need to apply specifically to the program through the application link on the Dental Hygiene homepage on COM's website. *The link will be active once the application window opens.*

Application Requirements

The Dental Hygiene program has a competitive application process. The applicant must meet the following requirements to be eligible to apply to the COM Dental hygiene program:

You must do the following to apply for the Dental Hygiene Program:

Be enrolled as a student at COM and have a COM ID number.

Ensure all college transcripts are received by the COM admissions and records department by your application date.

Complete all prerequisite courses with a final GPA of 2.5 or higher (note: **all science** courses must be taken within 5 years of application date):

ENGL 1301 Composition I

BIOL 2401 Anatomy & Physiology I

BIOL 2402 Anatomy & Physiology II

BIOL 2420 Microbiology

CHEM 1406 Introduction to Chemistry

Attend a dental hygiene information session (completion code will be provided).

Provide your transcript for the Health Science Reasoning Test (HSRT-AD). See below for more information.

Be prepared to provide proof of all immunizations, a negative TB test, BLS in Health care certification (American Heart Association CPR class), Health Assessment from a physician once accepted into the program. See below for more information on these requirements.

Complete the Dental Hygiene Program Application online from the COM Dental Hygiene program website link.

Ensure all supporting documentation is attached along with your application at time of submission.

Please note: only complete applications will be considered. You will not be contacted for supporting documentation or critical information if your application is incomplete.

Health Science Reasoning Test

All interested applicants must take an entrance examination that is called the Health Science Reasoning Test ([HSRT-AD](#)). This test is used to create critical thinking information to measure an applicant's ability to analyze, evaluate, infer, deduce, induct, numerate, and provides an overall reasoning skill score. ***Critical thinking is the process of purposeful, reflective judgment focused on deciding what to believe or what to do.*** This test has a time limit of 50 minutes to complete. See the above link for examples of the test. The testing will require use of the testing center ([COM Testing Center](#)) by appointment only. In addition, the following information has been provided:

1. The HSRT-AD may only be taken one time per application period. If an applicant takes the exam more than one time during an application period, then this will cause their application to be invalid.
2. The test must be taken within 1 year of the application.
3. This is a computer-based examination.
4. There are 33 multiple choice questions.
5. Time requirements are exact, no exception to this policy. ALL TEST TAKERS MUST ARRIVE 3 HOURS PRIOR TO THE CLOSE OF THE TESTING CENTER. This will ensure there is enough time to process the student and to complete the exam.

6. The focus of this exam, as mentioned above, is in the ability to use reasoning in a variety of scenarios to form reflective judgments about what to believe or what to do. There is no need for profession specific content knowledge.
7. Please note, some other programs require the HSRT version of this exam. Ensure you take and submit the score for the **HSRT-AD** (Associate's degree version of the exam).
8. **COST OF THE TEST:** The test cost is \$47.

Video Presentation

All interested applicants must create and upload a video to the application. Specific instructions will be included in the application. The following criteria will be used in the evaluation of the video presentation:

- a. Audio and visual presentation was clear, informative, and easily understood.
- b. The student speaks clearly with appropriate tone and volume.
- c. The student shows enthusiasm and interest.
- d. The student's visual appearance, background, communication, and attitude is professional.
- e. The student's response to the prompts are authentic, original and demonstrate their interest in the field of dental hygiene.

Applicant Ranking

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

GPA for Pre-requisites

(Minimum 2.5 in each pre-requisite course)	
4.00	60 points
3.75-3.99	50 points
3.5-3.74	40 points
3.25-3.49	30 points
3.0-3.24	20 points
2.75-2.99	10 points
2.5-2.74	0 points

Additional Degree Required Courses Taken	
(Minimum 'C' in each course)	
PSYC 2301 or PSYC 2314	5 points
SPCH 1318 or SPCH 1315	5 points
SOCI 1301	5 points
PHIL 2306	5 points

College Degree Conferred*	
Bachelor's degree or higher	20 points
Associate degree	10 points

**Students only given points for highest degree conferred*

Health Science Reasoning Test Score	
89-100	20 points
81-88	15 points
72-80	10 points
63-71	5 points
50-62	0 points

COM students & Residency	
Completed at least 2 Semesters At COM	30 points
Live in-district but have not attended COM	15 points

RDA/CDA /Dental Assisting Experience	
At least 1 year RDA or CDA license (Must upload RDA or CDA license)	10 points
At least 1 year DA experience (Must upload proof of employment using form)	5 points
<1 year or no RDA/CDA/DA experience	0 points

Video Presentation (Asynchronous)	
Maximum points	20 points
Minimum points	0 points

Letter of Recommendation (2 maximum)	
Maximum points	10 points
Minimum points	0 points

Total Applicant Points Possible: 190

Graduation Requirements

Before the AAS-DH degree will be conferred, students must have:

- Completed all COM's entrance requirements.
- Completed all course requirements for the degree being conferred with a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5.
- Completed each program specific course with a final minimum grade of 75% for clinicals and 72% for didactic.
- Completion of at least 25% of the credit hours toward any degree must be earned at COM; however, 100% of the required specialized courses for the AAS-DH degree must be completed at COM.
- Cleared all holds and financial obligations to COM.

Transfer coursework

Dental Hygiene applicants requesting transfer credit evaluation must provide official transcripts to the admissions and records department for review. Please note, this process can take several weeks. Only general education and prerequisite coursework will be considered and evaluated for transfer credit, and all general education and prerequisite course(s) for the Dental Hygiene program must have been taken at an appropriately accredited institution.

Transfer of dental hygiene courses

Transferability of dental hygiene courses is dependent upon the policies of the program in which the dental hygiene student is desiring to transfer.

Once Accepted into the Program

Applicants will be notified via email of their acceptance into the Dental Hygiene program via their COM email address by the 15th of June for the year in which they applied. Applicants who are placed on the alternate list or not accepted will also receive an email regarding their status by the first week of June. If you are offered a position in the program, you must accept your position in the program via email by June 30th. You will also be emailed a packet with necessary forms required to be submitted to the program by August 1st prior to the start date. These forms include an Acknowledgement of Program Accreditation Status form, Vaccine Verification Form, TB Test Verification form, Health Assessment form, and Criminal Background Check Acknowledgement form.

Immunizations

All students must receive the following vaccines or demonstrate immunity against the following:

- **Three doses** of Hepatitis B vaccine
- **Two doses** of MMR (Measles, Mumps & Rubella) vaccine
- **Two doses** of Varicella (Chicken pox) vaccine
- **One dose** of Tdap (Tetanus, Diphtheria & Pertussis) vaccine
- **One dose** of Meningococcal Meningitis vaccine (Only applies to students under the age of 22 on first day of class)

Please note that the vaccines that require a series of injections have specific time minimums in between administration. Therefore, you must plan ahead to start the vaccine series with adequate time to complete the series and provide proof prior to the start of the program. In some cases, a serologic test showing positive antibodies for the disease can substitute for the vaccine dose, please contact the program for more information on the requirements.

Tuberculosis testing

Students must provide proof of **negative** Tuberculosis test by August 1st prior to the program start. The accepted screening tests are PPD reading or QuantiFERON Gold test and must be dated within one year prior to due date of August 1st.

All students must provide proof of all required vaccinations and negative TB testing prior to August 1st, or they will forfeit their spot in the program, no exceptions.

BLS Healthcare Provider Certification

Students must provide proof of hands-on CPR training, known as 'Basic Life Science for Healthcare providers CPR' from an American Heart Association approved provider (AHA-BLS CPR). The certification is valid for 2 years from the date it was issued, and it must remain valid for the entire time you will be enrolled in the program. It is advised you take the course in summer prior to the program beginning, otherwise you will need to become recertified to ensure the certification is current for the entire duration of the program. The class is offered through COM—see the [Continuing Education Schedule](#). It is also possible to find local fire departments, hospitals and companies that offer the required AHA CPR class (**NOT** Red Cross CPR).

BLS for healthcare certification must be provided by August 1st-no exceptions.

Health Assessment

All students offered a position in the program must undergo a health assessment by their medical provider. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure the student can fulfil the physical demands of the program. The form can be completed by a Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant, but must be completed on the form provided to you with your acceptance letter.

Background Check

In accordance with September 1, 2017, HB 1508, you are notified that the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners requires graduates who apply for licensure to pass a criminal background check both through the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) based on a set of fingerprints you provide Morpho Trust (Identogo). If you have reason to believe you may be ineligible for licensure due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or a misdemeanor offense you may apply for a criminal history evaluation through the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners. Visit www.tsbde.texas.gov for details on the process for the evaluation.

Mandatory Orientation

If you choose to accept an offer for a position in the program, you will be required to attend a mandatory orientation session. This will be scheduled in early August. You will be notified of the date in your offer letter sent in June.

Infectious Disease Policy

Individuals who are involved in the provision of Dental Hygiene services may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens that may result in human disease. COM strictly follows the protocols for prevention and management of exposure to infectious diseases as provided by the CDC and OSHA. Students and faculty members who experience exposure to potentially infectious materials (needle stick, mucous membrane, or non-intact skin) or airborne inhalation require specific follow-up. An accident insurance fee is assessed to courses where the likelihood of exposure may occur, and a management protocol has been developed. For more information on the policies on bloodborne and infectious diseases, refer to the current **COM Dental Hygiene Student Handbook**.

Important dates

Application for fall 2025 program cycle **opens 05/07/2025-closes 06/04/2025** at midnight.

Applicants will be notified of their status by June 15th, 2025 to their COM email address.

Accepted applicants must accept their position in writing to the program by June 30th, 2025 or they forfeit their position in the program.

Mandatory orientation for the Dental Hygiene Program 2025 cohort will be held in early August.

The program courses begin 08/18/2025.

Accreditation

The program in dental hygiene is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation and has been granted the accreditation status of “initial accreditation.”

The Commission is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education. The Commission on Dental Accreditation can be contacted at (312) 440-4653 or at 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611.

The Commission’s web address is: coda.ada.org.