

**Northampton Community College  
Dental Hygiene Program  
Essential Functions for Student Continuance and Graduation**

The Dental Hygiene curriculum requires students to have adequate communication, motor, sensory, cognitive, behavioral and ethical abilities in order to ensure the health and safety of clients/peers and to successfully complete the program of study. The Essential Functions reflect the required abilities that are compatible with effective performance as an entry-level dental hygienist.

<b>Abilities/Attributes</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Some Examples of Necessary Activities/Attributes (not all inclusive)</b>
Motor Skills/Sensory	<p>Gross and fine motor abilities sufficient to provide safe and effective care and documentation.</p> <p>Tactile ability sufficient for client assessment and treatment.</p> <p>Visual ability sufficient for observation and assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reaches, manipulates and operates equipment &amp; instruments competently</li> <li>• Performs CPR/BLS</li> <li>• Performs all treatment to OSHA and OSAP standards</li> <li>• Performs palpation</li> <li>• Detects intraoral deposits and removes with hand and/or power instrumentation</li> <li>• Detects dental caries clinically, radiographically and/or through technology</li> <li>• Observes client responses</li> <li>• Discriminates color changes and shades of gray, i.e., lesion and gingival description, x-ray interpretation</li> <li>• Accurately reads measurements on instruments, i.e., probe</li> <li>• Develops eye/hand coordination and skills with dominant and non-dominant hands</li> </ul>
Communication	<p>Communication abilities in English sufficient for appropriate interaction with others in verbal and written form.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reads, understands, spells, writes and speaks English proficiently</li> <li>• Establishes rapport with clients and colleagues</li> <li>• Explains treatment procedures and recommendations in a manner that other healthcare providers, as well as clients, understand</li> <li>• Implements dental health education, diet &amp; tobacco dependence counseling</li> <li>• Documents client responses, clinical findings and services rendered with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar</li> <li>• Validates responses/messages with others</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic computer and documentation skills (i.e., logging on, typing, Microsoft® Office programs, BlackBoard, emailing, Dentrix Enterprise, Dexis, etc.)</li> </ul>
Behavioral/ Emotional	<p>The ability to perceive events realistically, to think clearly and rationally and to function appropriately in routine and stressful situations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies changes in client health status</li> <li>• Handles multiple priorities in stressful situations</li> <li>• Adapts quickly to change; flexible</li> <li>• Uses good judgment</li> <li>• Empathizes with clients</li> <li>• Demonstrates initiative to find clients for clinic and/or for course requirements</li> <li>• Demonstrates flexibility, positivity and responsiveness</li> <li>• Manages class time appropriately and follows clinical time guidelines independently</li> </ul>

Abilities/Attributes	Standard	Some Examples of Necessary Activities/Attributes (not all inclusive)
Cognitive/ Critical Thinking	<p>Critical thinking/problem solving ability sufficient for sound clinical judgment.</p> <p>Comprehend, analyze, apply, synthesize and evaluate information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies cause-effect relationships in clinical situations</li> <li>• Develops care plans</li> <li>• Evaluates treatment outcomes</li> <li>• Seeks consultation in a timely manner</li> <li>• Computes basic mathematical problems</li> <li>• Comprehends data in tables, graphs, charts and analog/digital displays (i.e., analog clock, sphygmomanometer, etc.)</li> <li>• Uses critical thinking skills in both the classroom and in the lab/clinical setting</li> <li>• Achieves clinical competency through independent organization of clinical requirements</li> </ul>
Professional Conduct	<p>The ability to practice dental hygiene ethically and to abide by the professional standards of practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts personal responsibility for actions - accountable</li> <li>• Is courteous; appropriately open and candid</li> <li>• Is honest; presents own work (i.e., does not plagiarize, does not photograph or video record “test materials”, does not cheat, etc.)</li> <li>• Does not erase or modify data from any record or file, or remove any record from where it is maintained</li> <li>• Does not share confidential information with any individual(s) who does not need to know</li> <li>• Manages conflict constructively</li> <li>• Functions interdependently with other healthcare providers</li> <li>• Meets deadlines; attends class/lab/clinic on time and/or preferably early</li> <li>• Is tolerant; has respect for all human beings</li> <li>• Accepts criticism maturely</li> <li>• Maintains decorum in front of clients/peers</li> <li>• Complies with the clinical dress code; demonstrates good personal hygiene</li> <li>• Complies with classroom rules and program policies</li> <li>• Interacts with faculty in a non-confrontational manner</li> <li>• Understands and accepts role as both operator/clinician and as a client for a peer while in clinic/lab (i.e., giving and receiving of local anesthetic injections AND learning clinical skills and providing and receiving instrumentation with student partners).</li> <li>• Volunteers time toward curriculum-related and/or professional association activities</li> <li>• Obtains necessary vaccinations, including influenza</li> <li>• Does not practice under the influence of alcohol, controlled or dangerous drugs/substances</li> </ul>

**Penalty:** If a student does not meet the essential functions in a pre-clinical, clinical or lab course the faculty member will issue an “F” grade for the course. The student will be referred to the program director and depending on the essential function deficiency the student may be dismissed from the dental hygiene program. The student has the right to appeal the “F” grade or dismissal from the program by following the procedural steps listed in the College’s Student Handbook under: Appeal Procedure - Charges of Academic Dishonesty.