

ASDH Essential Skills and Technical Standards

The profession of dental hygiene is both academically and physically challenging.

Each student will be held to the same standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Our focus is the student and to best prepare him or her for the profession. Our goal is for them to enter and complete the program without barriers.

Below is a list of academic skills that all perspective students within the College of Health Sciences must possess for optimal performance with or without reasonable accommodations.

Reading Skills – ability to learn, retain and understand information from college-level textbooks and academic journals.

Communication Skills – ability to communicate effectively in English using oral, written electronic formats or the functional equivalent.

Quantitative Skills – ability to identify and apply mathematical formulas, procedures and processes.

Computer Literacy – ability to send and retrieve information from a variety of electronic forms and to be proficient using a learning management system.

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving – ability to apply evidence- based decision making to support appropriate choices and actions.

Professional Etiquette- conducts all interactions and communications, including with peers, using civil and polite language, regardless of circumstances.

Technical Standards for SPC Dental Hygiene Program

Because the Dental Hygiene degree signifies that the holder is a dental hygienist prepared to take licensing boards and enter the practice of dental hygiene, it follows that graduates must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical and community situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Therefore, the following abilities and expectations are to be considered essential indicators for success in the St. Petersburg College Dental Hygiene Program. Examples given are not all inclusive. The goal of the listed technical standards is to provide what is expected of students entering the program so to successfully build on those skills, knowledge, behaviors, and abilities to be able to function as a dental hygienist.

Critical thinking: Critical thinking ability sufficient to plan and implement safe and effective dental hygiene practice.

Examples: Develop and implement a dental hygiene treatment plan. Evaluate and assess outcomes of treatment. Formulate and defend sound principles of dental hygiene practice. Critically self-evaluate performance, accept constructive criticism in a professional manner and be responsible for improving performance. Anticipate and consider consequences of actions (solutions). Establish priorities, organize a workload and manage tasks. Complete procedures within a specified timeframe that balances patient safety, stamina and tolerance.

Interpersonal Skills: Interpersonal skills sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.

Examples: Establish rapport with patients/clients, teachers, classmates and colleagues of all cultures, genders, health status and backgrounds. Interact professionally, honestly and forthrightly with others. React compassionately, ethically and sensitively to the various needs of others. Use civil and polite language, regardless of the circumstances.

Communication: Communication abilities of oral expression and reception or the functional equivalent for reading and writing sufficient for interaction with others in English, including electronic formats.

Examples: Follow instructions in order to correctly perform dental hygiene clinical and laboratory procedures. Comprehend technical and professional textbooks, journals, handbooks, and manuals. Communicate concisely, effectively, and courteously. Explain treatment procedures and provide dental health education. Maintain clear, concise, and accurate clinical records and reports.

Mobility: Maneuver as required to perform clinical and laboratory procedures.

Examples: Maneuver freely, safely and efficiently in and around work areas. Perform continuous patient treatment that may require repetitive motions, frequent position changes and static positions for extended periods of time.

Motor Skills: Gross motor abilities or the functional equivalent, to activate and maintain dental equipment.

Examples: Safely perform procedures. Be capable of performing infection control procedures in setting up and breaking down the dental unit. Ability to maneuver within in a limited space.

Fine motor abilities or the functional equivalent to work safely and effectively.

Examples: Control clinical equipment and adjust instruments to safely perform clinical procedures. Use dental hygiene instruments as required. Use dental hygiene instruments for extended periods of time in a variety of motions.

Visual Ability and Acuity: Visual ability and acuity or the functional equivalent sufficient to observe, perform clinical procedures in the small confines of the oral environment, and to monitor and assess the patient.

Examples: Comprehend text, numbers and graphs. Observe patient responses. Monitor gauges accurately. Observe laboratory and clinical demonstration.

Differentiate between dental instruments. Discern variations in oral tissues. Perform prolonged, multiple tasks in a small, artificially lit area. Ensure patient safety and comfort.

Emotional Endurance: This intense and time demanding program requires appropriate responses to maintain effective relationships with patients and colleagues in a variety of environments.

Examples: Perform multiple tasks while establishing priorities. Exercise professional judgment in prioritizing needs of patients. Tolerate and respond in a professional manner to a variety of situations, including those that are stressful.

Hearing: Auditory abilities or the functional equivalent to sufficiently provide and monitor a safe environment and safe patient care. Ability to accurately obtain the patients' data and medical history as part of the patients' health assessment. Ability to assess the patient's oral condition, needs and health to provide and monitor safe environment and safe patient care.

Environmental Safety: Ability to recognize and protect self, patients and others from environmental risks and hazards.

Examples: Follow established universal precautions, safety procedures, and post exposure protocol. Work safely with potentially hazardous body fluids, and contaminated sharp instruments. Incorporate effective sterilization procedures, utilize disinfectants and cleaning agents. Make use of appropriate clinical safety equipment. Tolerate frequent hand washing. Tolerate wearing examination gloves, mask and safety eyewear, and any other personal protective equipment as indicated.

Attendance and Participation: Regular attendance and full participation is expected. Absences are restricted in this program. No more than the equivalent of one absence in one class or may result in dismissal from the program. Any absences greater than one are required to be reviewed by the Program Director/Dean to receive permission to return to class and remain in the program.

It is the responsibility of the student to request and Interactive Process Meeting with Accessibility Services to determine any barriers to access. Determination of a reasonable accommodation will be made on an individual basis and the accommodation cannot fundamentally alter the nature of the program offered, impose an undue hardship, or jeopardize safety.

Accessibility Services: St. Petersburg College recognizes the importance of equal access for all students. Accessibility Services is the campus office that works with students who are experiencing barriers that may be the result of a disabling condition. Instructors may not grant accommodations without proper documentation from the Accessibility Services Office. Students registered with Accessibility Services, who have a letter requesting accommodations, are encouraged to contact the instructor early in the semester. Students who have, or think they may have, a disabling condition are invited to contact Accessibility Services for a confidential discussion. Please register at the Accessibility Services site and you will be contacted by an Accessibility Services Representative. Accessibility Services website: <http://www.spcollege.edu/accessibility/>



The College of Health Sciences assists students in every way possible; however, there are some situations that are beyond the control of the programs. Students, and especially pregnant students, should be aware that:

1. The routine practice of clinical rotations, capstones, and other learning experiences in health care or human services facilities presents a risk of exposure to pathogens which may be harmful to self and/or an unborn child. While this risk can be greatly reduced by the diligent practice of universal standard precautions, handwashing, and infection control protocols, it cannot be eliminated completely. This is especially true for airborne pathogens.
2. Sometimes patients or clients may become confused or frustrated. Incidents of people acting out toward the staff are not uncommon. This can result in unanticipated contact with potentially harmful pathogens. Such risks can be reduced, but not entirely eliminated.
3. The program faculty will make effort to minimize the risks stated above, but it should be noted that these risks are inherent to the health care and human services environments and cannot be eliminated entirely. For further detail regarding a specific pregnancy policy in your discipline, if applicable, please refer to the program information.

Health Sciences & Veterinary Community Mission Statement

The Health Sciences and Veterinary Technology Career and Academic Community, with our students, creates a leading-edge academic environment centered on best practices in health and wellness to develop holistic, compassionate, and competent healthcare professionals in a dynamic global community, through:

- Innovative instruction
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Practical experiences
- Student support services
- Career preparation and
- Service learning

College of Health Sciences Mission Statement

The College of Health Sciences (COHS) is dedicated to the philosophy and goals of St. Petersburg College. The programs in COHS provide innovative and practical educational activities so graduates can successfully function as professional providers in the health and human services disciplines. This is accomplished through planned learning experiences that provide demonstration of knowledge, skills, compassionate and professional attitudes, and direct high quality patient care, as appropriate. The programs promote critical inquiry, professional communication, leadership, community service, and a passion for life-long learning so graduates can readily adapt to an ever-changing health care environment.