Major Steps 2013-14
Dental Hygiene

Note: Highline Community College does not offer this major. However, you can complete many of the pre-requisite courses at Highline. Every effort has been made to provide current, accurate publication content. Always verify the admission information with your intended university.

What does a Dental Hygienist do?
Dental hygienists discuss general health issues with patients and update dental charts. They inspect patients’ teeth for deposits and decay, and look for any shrinkage or disease in the gums. When x-rays need updating, or when there are new patients, hygienists take x-rays. They take great care to position the camera at different angles around the head and mouth. They also develop film for dentists to use as they diagnose problems and plan treatments.

Hygienists use dental instruments to clean plaque and various stains from teeth, in preparation for the dentist. Part of that preparation may include applying numbing agents to a patient's gums. Hygienists also apply fluoride to children's teeth.

Finally, dental hygienists perform finish work on certain procedures so the dentist can go on to the next patient. Examples include removing excess cement from tooth surfaces or polishing fillings. They report the work they completed to the dentist, including any other concerns they may find. They counsel clients about dental health. They may teach dental health education for school children and other members of the community.

Dental Hygiene is a highly competitive field for admission. It is critical that you have competitive grades in your prerequisite courses. It is also important that you obtain some experience in a dental setting so that you have some understanding of the field. It is also valuable that you have an understanding of cultures and perspectives other than your own. Having good judgment and critical thinking skills plus the ability to handle stress will be extremely relevant to your future career as a dental hygienist. Dental Hygienists must also be sensitive to the fact that patients may be fearful and uncomfortable during their visits.*

What do the salaries in this field look like?
In Washington, the average entry level wage for dental hygienists is $6,274 per month ($36.20 per hour).*

*Source: Washington Occupation Information System (WOIS) wois.org
How do I prepare for admission into a Dental Hygiene program? What Washington universities and colleges offer this program?

Highline DOES NOT offer a dental hygiene program. However, you can enroll in prerequisite courses at Highline in preparation for attending a dental hygiene program at another school. It will take you at least one year to two years to complete your pre-requisite courses at Highline. If you choose to finish a degree at Highline and then apply to dental hygiene school, complete the AA Option A degree Method 2 with an emphasis in Biology. Pre-requisite classes that are shared by most if not all of the programs are as follows:

- Biology &160
- Biology &241 and 242
- Biology &260
- Chemistry &121 and 131
- English &101
- Nutrition &101
- Psychology &101
- A College Level Math (check the school for a specific Math that the program may require)
- Other classes may vary so check the admissions requirements for the programs you are interested in pursuing.

**At the Associate’s Degree Level:**

- **Clark College**
  - Vancouver, WA
  - [http://www.clark.edu/](http://www.clark.edu/)
  - (360) 992-2345
  - healthocadv@clark.edu

- **Columbia Basin College**
  - Pasco, WA
  - [http://www.columbiabasin.edu/](http://www.columbiabasin.edu/)
  - (509) 542-4571
  - lstedman@columbiabasin.edu

- **Lake Washington Inst. Of Technical**
  - Kirkland, WA
  - [http://www.lwtech.edu/](http://www.lwtech.edu/)
  - (425) 739-8300
  - info@lwtc.edu

- **Pierce College**
  - Lakewood, WA
  - [http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/](http://www.pierce.ctc.edu/)
  - (253) 964-6796

- **Seattle Central Community College**
  - Seattle, WA [http://seattlecentral.edu/](http://seattlecentral.edu/)
  - (206) 587-4186
  - scccdh@sccd.ctc.edu

- **Shoreline Community College**
  - Shoreline, WA
  - [http://www.shoreline.edu/](http://www.shoreline.edu/)
  - (206) 546-4711
  - pduggan@shoreline.edu

- **Yakima Valley Community College**
  - Yakima, WA
  - [http://www.yvcc.edu/](http://www.yvcc.edu/)
  - (509) 574-4916
  - dfulton@yvcc.edu

At the Bachelor’s Degree Level:

- **Eastern Washington U**
  - Spokane, WA
  - [http://www.ewu.edu/](http://www.ewu.edu/)
  - (509) 368-6550
  - dental.hygiene@mail.ewu.edu

How do I get a faculty advisor?

Advisors in the Educational Planning and Advising Center (EPAC) can help you plan your prerequisite courses. You can request a faculty advisor online at [http://dev.highline.edu/edplanning/request.advisor.php](http://dev.highline.edu/edplanning/request.advisor.php)

Drop-in advising appointments are available in EPAC, building 6. To view our hours please visit the following link: [http://dev.highline.edu/edplanning/contact.php](http://dev.highline.edu/edplanning/contact.php)

*Source: Washington Occupation Information System (WOIS) wois.org*