

Essential Skills and Abilities for Admission, Promotion and Graduation in Dental Hygiene Diploma Program

All matters concerning ‘professionalism’ are governed by the Dr. Gerald Niznick College of Dentistry Professional Unsuitability Bylaw and those concerning other listed skills and abilities are governed by the Dr. Gerald Niznick College of Dentistry Essential Student Abilities Bylaw.

Preamble

As an accredited Canadian dental hygiene program, the Dr. Gerald Niznick College of Dentistry, School of Dental Hygiene at the University of Manitoba is responsible for providing a program of study that ensures graduates have the necessary qualifications (academic knowledge, clinical skills, and professional behaviors and attitudes) to enter the regulated profession of Dental Hygiene in Canada. Becoming and being a dental hygienist requires a wide range of highly specialized skills and abilities. Some of these are taught in dental hygiene school, while others must be brought by the individual as an innate set of essential skills and abilities. The criteria for becoming registered/ licensed as a dental hygienist in Canada requires a level of motor skills and other attributes that are not necessary in other professional occupations. Similarly, the ability to provide reasonable accommodation for special learning needs in dental hygiene may not be the same as it is for other academic programs. For example, client safety and comfort concerns with dental hygiene clinical procedures preclude the ability to accommodate additional time to complete and assess student procedures. This document describes the skills and abilities required for success in completing the dental hygiene diploma program. Students interested in becoming a dental hygienist must review this document.

It is important to note that an offer of admission to the Dr. Gerald Niznick College of Dentistry, School of Dental Hygiene is not evidence that the dental hygiene program has verified that an applicant has the prerequisite skills and abilities for success in the program. However, these skills and abilities are essential if students are to be successful in achieving the competency standards of the profession. Further, in order to be registered/licensed as a dental hygienist in Canada, individuals **must successfully complete** the Written Examination administered by the National Dental Hygiene Certification Board (NDHCB) of Canada. The Written Examination is comprised of two multiple-choice examination sessions held in the morning and afternoon of one day.

For progression in, and graduation, from the dental hygiene program, all students must conduct themselves in a professional manner, and must have the Essential Skills and Abilities (Technical Standards) discussed under the following five broad areas:

- Observation/perception
- Communication
- Motor/tactile function
- Cognition
- Emotional functioning

All applicants to the dental hygiene diploma program of the Dr. Gerald Niznick College of Dentistry School of Dental Hygiene are expected to review this document to assess their ability to meet these standards; all applicants offered admission will be required to acknowledge such review and assessment. Any candidate for the diploma in dental hygiene program who cannot demonstrate the required skills and abilities throughout their course of study may be requested to withdraw from the program.

Essential Skills and Abilities

An applicant to the diploma in dental hygiene program and a candidate for the diploma in dental hygiene program must reasonably expect that while enrolled in the undergraduate dental program he or she will be able to demonstrate an appropriate degree of professionalism, and will be able to demonstrate the following skills and abilities:

Professionalism

Students are obligated to act with integrity and diligence in carrying out their professional responsibilities, and their behavior and conduct in relation to others must be characterized by consideration, respect and good faith.

Technical Standards

(1) Observation/Perception

A student must be able to participate in learning situations and acquire information through observation and perception by the use of senses and mental abilities. In particular, a student must participate progressively in patient encounters and acquire information through acute visual and tactile sensation.

(2) Communication

A student must be able to speak, hear and write proficiently in the English language, and to observe individuals and groups of individuals in order to effectively and efficiently elicit and clarify information. The student must be able to progressively create rapport and develop therapeutic relationships with patients, and establish effective communication with all members of the dental school community and other healthcare teams. A student must be able to coherently summarize and effectively communicate a patient's condition and management plan verbally, and in written and electronic forms.

(3) Motor/Tactile Function

A student must possess sufficient motor function to develop the skills required to safely perform fine assessment, preventive and therapeutic (e.g. debridement/scaling) procedures on a client. These procedures must be done independently and competently in a timely fashion to minimize the risk to client safety and reasonable comfort. A student must possess fine motor function and sensory function in order to be able to use common dental hygiene instrumentation including, for example an explorer, a syringe, scalers (hand and ultrasonic) and dental handpiece (drill).

(4) Cognition

A student must demonstrate higher-level cognitive abilities necessary to measure, to calculate, and to reason in order to conceptualize, analyze, integrate and synthesize information. The student must be able to comprehend dimensional and visual-spatial relationships. All of these problem-solving activities must be achieved progressively in a timely fashion and must contribute to sound judgment based upon clinical and ethical reasoning.

(5) Emotional Functioning

A student must be able to tolerate the physical, emotional, and mental demands of the program and function effectively under stress. It is necessary to be able to adapt to changing environments, and to function in the face of uncertainties that are inherent in the care of patients. Decisions and procedures must be completed in a timely manner in order to maximize patient outcomes and minimize risks to patient safety.

Student Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read this document carefully, that I have assessed my ability to meet the standards, and that I anticipate that I am able to meet the described essential skills and abilities for admission to, promotion in and graduation from the Dental Hygiene Diploma program.

Student Name *(Please Print)*

Student #

Permanent Address

Telephone

Signature

Date