



Bachelor of Science Degree in Dental Hygiene

Why consider a career in dental hygiene?

Dental hygienists are licensed oral health professionals who focus on preventing and treating oral diseases. They are graduates of accredited dental hygiene education programs and must take a written national board examination and a clinical examination before they are licensed to practice.

Dental hygienists are in high demand; the occupation is projected to be one of the 30 fastest growing occupations.

What dental hygienists do:

- Performing oral health care assessments (reviewing patients' health history, dental charting, oral cancer screening, and evaluation of gum health)
- Expose, process, and interpret dental radiographs (x-rays)
- Remove plaque and calculus

- Apply cavity-preventive agents such as fluorides and sealants
- Administer local anesthetic and/or nitrous oxide analgesia
- Educate patients on proper oral hygiene techniques, administer smoking cessation programs, and more
- Dental hygienists also work as educators, researchers, and administrators

Where dental hygienists work:

- Dental offices of general dentists and dental specialists
- Public health agencies, hospitals, and community health clinics
- Public school systems, dental schools, and dental hygiene education programs
- Dental product sales and research

AHDA & ADA publications, March 2021

Why the UNMC Dental Hygiene Program?

Small class sizes and outstanding faculty

Students thrive in our close-knit, supportive environment, and receive personalized guidance and mentoring from faculty. Our faculty are dedicated practitioners, providing patient care using the latest clinical techniques, and many are involved with cutting-edge research, community health programs, and are leaders in national dental hygiene organizations.

Hands-on learning in patient care clinics

We have created a highly effective clinical model that closely resembles providing comprehensive care within a private practice. Dental hygiene students work in conjunction with dental students to provide patients with all the care they need. This clinic model promotes a sense of teamwork and helps students build relationships with their patients.

Hands-on learning in the community

Our many community outreach programs allow students to volunteer to provide services to underserved populations that have little or no access to oral health care. Students have memorable experiences helping those in need while they practice their clinical and communication skills.

Student-lead research projects

Our students lead award-winning research projects with guidance from our faculty. Students have opportunities to present their research findings at national meetings and many receive top honors.

Innovative technology

Students gain hands-on experience using the latest dental technology, and faculty members utilize the latest interactive learning technology, including e-modules.



UNMC has truly had an incredible impact on my life. I know I would not have been able to gain the same level of hands-on experience anywhere else. The small class sizes make it possible to work one-on-one with

instructors, helping us grow into the best clinicians we can be while also building strong connections with both faculty and classmates. Collaborating with dental students as they complete exams for our patients has also given me the chance to practice valuable interprofessional skills that will serve me well in the workforce. I will always be grateful for my journey at UNMC and the opportunities it has given me! - Cori Combs, Class of 2026



My experience at UNMC College of Dentistry has been nothing short of extraordinary. The professors' attention to detail as well as the hands-on training has supported my growth as a student and as a clinician.

Being able to work alongside such dedicated faculty has also provided me with opportunities to ask questions when needed and further expand my knowledge in dentistry. - Juan Cervantes, Class of 2026



What initially attracted me to UNMC was the small class sizes. I have always believed that a more intimate learning environment fosters greater support, engagement, and academic success—and UNMC has truly delivered on

that promise. Throughout my time here, the dental hygiene faculty have continuously challenged me to grow, both in the classroom and in clinical settings. Their guidance and high standards have played a crucial role in shaping my development, preparing me to become a competent, confident clinician, and strengthening my ability to apply these skills in my future practice as a dental hygienist. - Samantha Root, Class of 2026

Class of 2026 Profile

- Average GPA: 3.68
- Average ACT: 23
- 21 NE residents, 3 non-residents
- 11 from rural areas, 13 from urban



Program Details

- 24 students are accepted each year. After selection into the program, students spend two academic years and one summer session at the College of Dentistry in Lincoln or the West Division in Gering.
- The curriculum is organized into a four-year program leading to a bachelor of science degree in dental hygiene. The curriculum is fully approved by the Commission on Dental Accreditation and graduates are eligible for examination and licensure in all states.
- Preparation for admission consists of approximately two academic years of study with the course work to be completed at any accredited college.

To comply with prerequisites, we recommend contacting our dental hygiene program advisors. We can help you select the classes that will fulfill requirements for our curriculum, as well as your respective college. Call 402-472-7425 or email lmundil@unmc.edu

Application Checklist

1. Maintain a minimum total grade point average of 2.5 in pre-dental hygiene courses.
 2. Take the Admission Test for Dental Hygiene (ATDH) through the American Dental Association (ADA). Register at: ada.org.
 3. Complete the online application at: unmc.edu/dentistry. The application is available in mid-October and must be submitted by **January 31**. An essay is required and up to three letters of recommendation are strongly encouraged. There is a \$50 application fee.
- Criteria utilized by the UNMC Dental Hygiene Program Admissions Committee for selection includes: cumulative GPA, science GPA, ACT score, interview, familiarity with the profession, and completed application.
 - Applicants will be accepted after presenting evidence of intellectual promise and strong personal qualifications, including good moral character and the desire to serve the public. Consideration is given to personal maturity and professional motivation. Students selected must be committed to scholarly pursuits and have career goals compatible with the philosophy of the baccalaureate program.

Pre-Dental Hygiene Requirements

High School

Preparation for the study of dental hygiene begins in high school. The prospective dental hygiene student should take the following high school subjects:

English	3 years
Mathematics/Algebra	2 years
Geometry	1 year
Biological Sciences (Biology)	1 year
Chemistry	1 year
Foreign Language (suggested, not required)	2 years

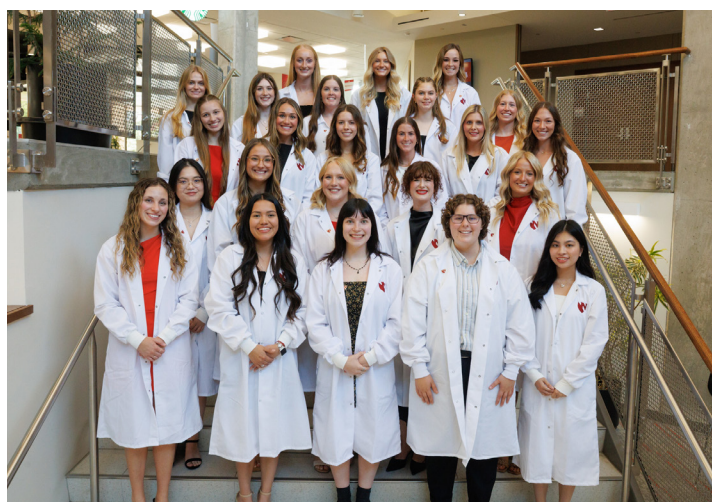
College

The pre-dental hygiene courses fulfill general requirements and provide the student with a core of knowledge.

Classes	Hours
Communication (English comp)	6
Biology	4
Microbiology	4
Human Anat or Anatomy & Physiology I	4
Human Phys or Anatomy & Physiology II	4
General Chemistry	8
Introductory Sociology	3
Introductory Psychology	3-4
Communication (speech/must give speeches)	3
Humanities/Arts	6
Social & Behavioral Sciences/ Human Behavior, Culture, & Social Organization	3
Nutrition	3
12-Hour Series	12

Six credit hours must be completed in the arts and humanities and three hours in social and behavioral sciences/human behavior, culture and social organization. A twelve-hour series (12-hours in one academic area) must be completed in a specific area of study. The courses taken in the 12-hour series must have the same course prefix for all courses being considered.

About transfer credit: Official transcripts from post-secondary institutions will be examined; credit will be awarded according to UNMC policy.



Use this QR code to visit our website - meet our students & faculty, see program costs & more!
unmc.edu/dentistry



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