Pre-Dental Hygiene
Associate of Science
2019-2020

Nature of Work: The dental hygienist works as a part of the dental health team to provide clinical and educational assistance. Dental hygienists work directly with patients in the office of a dentist or individually in industries, schools, or public health agencies. In the office, a dental hygienist’s duties include prophylaxis and X-ray work; however in a few states such as Washington; expanded duties include the filling of minor cavities.

Dental hygienists examine patients’ teeth and gums, recording the presence of disease or abnormalities. They remove stain and plaque from teeth, apply caries-preventive agents such as fluorides, pit and fissure sealants, take and develop dental X-rays, place temporary fillings and periodontal dressings, remove sutures, and polish and re-contour amalgam restoration. Dental hygienists also help patients develop and maintain good oral health.

Professional Training: Requirements for licensing vary from state to state. Following the completion of training, state board examinations are required. Certification may have reciprocity between states. After the Associate of Science degree, students usually transfer to a program that can give the additional training needed.

Job Outlook: Dental hygienists rank among the fastest growing occupations. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), “employment of dental hygienists is projected to grow 20 percent from 2016 to 2026, much faster than the average for all occupations.” The BLS reports, “[s]tudies linking oral health and general health, and efforts to expand access to oral hygiene services, will continue to drive the demand for preventive dental services” which are typically provided by dental hygienists (see www.bls.gov). Job prospects are expected to be favorable in most areas, but competition for jobs is likely as it is a growing field.

Earnings: Earnings vary by geographic location, employment setting, and years of experience; and dental hygienists may be paid on an hourly, salary, or commission basis. In their May 2018 salary survey, the Bureau of Labor statistics reports the median annual wage for dental hygienists as $74,820 with the lowest 10 percent earning less than $51,930 and the highest 10 percent earning more than $101,820. (See www.bls.gov)

Note: Walla Walla University does not offer the clinical portion of the Dental Hygiene program.
TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED: 96 cr.  See the Undergraduate Bulletin for Details
The chart below details one suggested path a student may take to complete an associate’s degree in Pre-Dental Hygiene. Cognates are listed in italics.

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<th>Freshman</th>
<th>Fall Courses</th>
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+Offered even years only
- Offered odd years only

- Humanities must be in a minimum of three areas: history, fine arts, literature, philosophy, foreign language.
- 20 hours minimum of observation/shadowing
- C- grades will not be accepted for transfer credits at Loma Linda University.
- See LLU program-specific course requirements at LLU.edu

Walla Walla University does not offer the clinical portion of the Dental Hygiene program.