CENTRAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Health Sciences

Program Planning Guide

Pre-Dental Hygiene Program (A55280DH)

The pre-dental hygiene program builds the academic and professional foundation students need to succeed in a Dental Hygiene associate degree program and in their future careers as dental hygienists. It develops the essential knowledge, skills, and habits dental hygienists rely on to provide safe, effective, and patient-centered oral healthcare. Through coursework in anatomy and physiology, chemistry, and microbiology, students gain a strong understanding of the human body, oral-system interactions, and the biological mechanisms that influence health, disease, and infection control. These courses prepare students to apply scientific reasoning, precision, and evidence-based judgment in clinical dental settings.

Communication, critical thinking, and professional readiness are central components of the program. Courses in writing, communication, social psychology, humanities, and math strengthen students' ability to communicate effectively with patients and dental teams, understand patient behavior, and solve practical problems in clinical settings. This coursework also supports success on required licensure exams, including the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination (NBDHE) and the American Board of Dental Examiners (ADEX) clinical examination. Together, the pre-dental hygiene courses prepare students to enter a Dental Hygiene program with confidence and to meet North Carolina licensure requirements.

The pre-Dental Hygiene program is designed as a preparation track and does not lead to a degree. Students who decide not to pursue Dental Hygiene will need to work with their Education Navigator to transition into a different degree pathway.

Pre-Dental Hygiene Program General Education Classes:

Required Program Courses		Class	Lab	Credits	Notes:
ACA 122	Transfer & Career Success	0	2	1	Seated or online
BIO 163	Basic Anat. & Physiology	4	2	5	Seated
BIO 175	General Microbiology	2	2	3	Seated
CHM 130/130A	Gen, Org. & Biochemistry with lab	3	2	4	Seated
ENG 111	Writing & Inquiry	3	0	3	Seated or online
Elective	Communication/English	3	0	3	Seated or online
Elective	Humanities/Fine Arts	3	0	3	Seated or online
SOC 240	Social Psychology	3	0	3	Seated or online

A minimum grade of B must be earned in all science classes (BIO 163, BIO 175, and CHM 130/130A). A minimum grade of C must be earned in all other classes for the dental hygiene program.

Communication/English Elective Options: Select One: ENG 112, ENG 114, COM 110, **COM 120***, COM 231
Humanities/Fine Arts Elective Options: Select One: ART 111, ART 114, ART 115, DRA 111, ENG 231, ENG 241, ENG 242, HUM 110, HUM 115, HUM 120, HUM 122, HUM 150, HUM 160, MUS 110, MUS 112, **PHI 240***, REL 211, REL 212
Approved Biology Substitutions: Can substitute BIO 165/166 or BIO 168/169 for BIO 163; Can substitute BIO 275 for BIO 175
Approved Chemistry Substitutions: Can substitute CHM 130 for CHM 130/130A
Approved Psychology Substitution: Can substitute PSY 150 and PSY 210 for PSY 240

*Recommended for DH students

Effective Term: 2026FA

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Pre-Dental Hygiene Suggested Course Schedule:

		Class	Lab	Clinical	Credits	Notes:
1st Semester (fall)						
ACA 122	Transfer & Career Success	0	2	0	1	Seated or online
BIO 163	Basic Anat. & Physiology	4	2	0	5	Seated
ENG 111	Writing & Inquiry	3	0	0	3	Seated or online
Elective	Communication Elective	3	0	0	3	Seated or online
SOC 240	Social Psychology	3	0	0	3	Seated or online
	Total Semester Hours	**13**	**4**	**0**	**15**	
2nd Semester (spring)						
CHM 130	Gen, Org. & Biochemistry	3	0	0	3	Seated
CHM 130A	Gen, Org. & Biochemistry Lab	0	2	0	1	Seated
BIO 175	General Microbiology	2	2	0	3	Seated
Elective	Humanities/Fine Arts Elective	3	0	0	3	Seated or online
SOC 240	Social Psychology	3	0	0	3	Seated or online
	Total Semester Hours	**11**	**4**	**0**	**13**	

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Planning for Your Future as a Dental Hygienist:

Earning a bachelor's degree builds on the clinical knowledge and patient care experience gained in a Dental Hygiene program and prepares hygienists for expanded roles within today's oral healthcare system. Bachelor's programs related to dental hygiene, such as dental hygiene completion programs, health sciences, public health, or healthcare management, emphasize advanced concepts in oral health promotion, population health, leadership, ethics, research, and healthcare systems. These programs strengthen the ability to think critically, apply evidence-based practice, analyze health data, and understand how social, cultural, and behavioral factors influence oral and overall health outcomes.

At the bachelor's level, dental hygienists develop leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills that support roles beyond direct clinical care, including community oral health education, care coordination, quality improvement, advocacy, and practice management. A bachelor's degree can open the door to higher-paying positions, supervisory and administrative roles, public health and education positions, industry and research support roles, and graduate study in healthcare-related fields. Most importantly, it prepares dental hygienists to take on greater responsibility, adapt to changes in the oral healthcare workforce, and make a broader impact on patient care and population health.

After completing the required courses for admission to the hygiene program, students who plan to earn a bachelor's degree in the future may take the following recommended courses while waiting to begin the program or while enrolled in it. These courses are commonly transferable to universities and may apply toward bachelor's degree requirements, depending on the receiving institution. Please see the college catalog for course descriptions.

Recommended Courses **(Take one class from each row)**		**Class**	**Lab**	**Credits**	**Notes:**
HIS 131 HIS 132	American History I American History II	3	0	3	Seated or online
GEL 111	Geology	3	2	4	Online
HEA 110	Personal Health/Wellness	3	0	3	Seated or online
MAT 152 MAT 171	Statistical Methods I Precalculus Algebra	3	2	4	Seated or online
ECO 251	Prin of Microeconomics	3	0	3	Seated or online
PSY 150 PSY 241 PSY 281 SOC 210	General Psychology Social Psychology Abnormal Psychology Introduction to Sociology	3	0	3	Online
SPA 111	Elementary Spanish I (see note below)	3	0	3	Seated or online
SPA 112	Elementary Spanish II	3	0	3	Seated or online
SPA 211	Intermediate Spanish I	3	0	3	Seated or online
SPA 212	Intermediate Spanish II	3	0	3	Seated or online

A minimum grade of C must be earned in all classes that transfer to a university for a bachelor's degree.

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For students interested in continuing their education and expanding career opportunities, bachelor's degree pathways are available that build on the knowledge and skills gained in dental hygiene.

East Carolina University - Bachelor of Science in University Studies
Students with a completed Associate in Applied Science in Dental Hygiene through any North Carolina community college, are able to transfer technical credits to ECU for application towards the BS-US.

O'Hehir University - Bachelor of Science in Oral Health Promotion
The O'Hehir University Bachelor of Science in Oral Health Promotion provides licensed dental hygienists and dental therapists an opportunity to complete their bachelor's degree with a focus on behavior change, oral health advocacy, and professional development. Designed as a degree-completion program for those already practicing clinically, it builds on the clinical foundation and real-world experience gained in an associate degree program, emphasizing reflective learning, guided behavior change, and practical application in oral health promotion. Students engage in weekly online video-conference cohorts and complete a behavior change research project tailored to their interests and practice, fostering critical thinking, implementation skills, and professional communication. The program's flexible, primarily online format makes it accessible to working dental hygienists seeking to expand their role in public health, education, research, and leadership within the profession.

Appalachian State University - Bachelor of Science in Health Care Management
The Appalachian State University Bachelor of Science in Health Care Management is a strong option for dental hygienists who want to broaden their career opportunities beyond chairside care. The program builds on existing healthcare knowledge and prepares graduates for leadership, supervisory, and administrative roles through coursework in healthcare systems, management, finance, quality improvement, and policy. Offered in a flexible, distance-based format, it is well-suited for working dental hygienists and transfer students seeking advancement within healthcare organizations.

Foreign Language Requirement

Spanish is not required for all bachelor's programs, but it is strongly recommended for pre-health students because it significantly improves communication with a large and growing Spanish-speaking patient population. Being able to speak Spanish builds trust, reduces misunderstandings, and helps prevent errors in patient care. Employers in healthcare provide stipends to bilingual employees, making Spanish a powerful advantage for anyone preparing for a health science career. The following Spanish courses are available for pre-health students, but are not always part of a transfer agreement: SPA 111, SPA 112, SPA 211, SPA 212

Students who have questions about the pre-Dental Hygiene program should contact their Education Navigator.