

Dental Hygiene

Associate of Applied Science Degree

Program Director: Rachael Bruce

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Program Website (<https://gfcmsu.edu/academic-program/dental-hygiene/>)

Program Application (https://gfcmsu.edu/dental_hygiene_application/) (Fall 2026 Application available February 13, 2026)

The Dental Hygiene degree is offered onsite.

The Dental Hygienist is a licensed professional member of the healthcare team who integrates the roles of educator, consumer advocate, practitioner, manager, and researcher to support total health through the promotion of oral health and wellness. The focus of dental hygiene is on preventing oral disease.

Upon receipt of the Associate of Applied Science Degree, successful completion of the National Dental Hygiene Board Examination is required. The graduate will also need to obtain a license for the state he/she wishes to practice in by successfully completing a regional practical examination (WREB). The dental hygienist must practice in accordance with the requirements of the individual state's practice acts and abide by requirements to maintain licensure.

The Great Falls College MSU's Dental Hygiene Program is a limited enrollment program, accepting 25 or 35 students, alternating every other year. 25 students will be accepted in even years, 35 students will be accepted in odd years (for example, we will accept 35 students in fall, 2025). Interested students are urged to contact the Program Director or the Advising & Career Center Advisors for student advising specific to admission requirements and criteria for program acceptance.

Program Goals

Dental Hygiene Program Goals:

Patient Care:

Provide challenging clinical experiences that encompass dental hygiene care for the child, adolescent, adult, geriatric, and patients with special needs so students can demonstrate clinical care that is safe, effective and ethical.

Instruction:

Provide a comprehensive curriculum in dental hygiene that reflects current practice and incorporates a variety of health care settings.

Research:

Incorporate evidence-based research into presentations for dental hygienists that require students to analyze and assess emerging technology and treatment modalities hygienist can integrate into their clinical practices.

Service:

Promote participation in professional organization and community service projects.

Outcomes

When students graduate, they will be prepared to:

1. Apply a professional code of ethics in all endeavors. This should include assuming responsibility for professional actions and care based on current standard of care. This standard of care should incorporate scientific theories and research. (DENT 105)
2. Adhere to state and federal laws, recommendations, and regulations in the provision of oral health care. (DENT 205)
3. Use critical thinking skills, comprehensive problem solving and reflective judgement to identify oral health care strategies that promote patient health and wellness as well as they should be able to determine a dental hygiene diagnosis. These strategies should consider predisposing and etiologic risk factors to prevent disease. In addition, these strategies should recognize how systemic diseases, meds, and oral health conditions influences patient care. (DENT 260)
4. Use of evidence-based decision making to evaluate emerging technology and treatment modalities as well as accepted scientific theories and research to provide not only quality, cost effective care but also educational, preventative and therapeutic oral health services. (DENT 130)
5. Continuously perform self-assessment for lifelong learning and professional growth that may include pursuing career opportunities within health care, industry, education, research, and other roles as they evolve in dental hygiene. They should understand how to access professional and social networks to pursue professional goals. (DENT 281)
6. Communicate effectively with diverse individuals and groups, serving them without discrimination by acknowledging and appreciating diversity. (DENT 250)
7. Promote the values of the dental hygiene profession as well as positive values of overall health and wellness to the public and organization through service-based activities, positive community affiliations and active involvement in local organizations within and outside the profession. (DENT 260)
8. Apply quality assurance mechanisms to ensure continuous commitment to accepted standards of care that include methods that ensure the health and safety of the patient and clinician in the delivery of care. (DENT 151, DENT 122, & DENT 281)
9. Initiate a collaborative approach with all patients to develop an individualized care plan that may include collaboration with and consultation from other health care providers to formulate a comprehensive dental hygiene care plan that is patient centered. Demonstration of professional judgement and current science based evidence practices with considerations of the unique needs of each patient including cultural sensitivity and possible referrals. These referrals may include physiological, psychological or social problems. Plans will adhere to disease prevention or maintenance strategies. Finally obtain and document patients informed consent based on thorough presentation of case. (DENT 160, DENT 251, DENT 252, & DENT 281)
10. Systematically collect, analyze, and record diagnostic data on the general, oral, and psychosocial health status of a variety of patients. Record accurate, consistent and complete documentation of oral health services provided. (DENT 251 & DENT 281)

11. Identify patients at risk for medical emergency, and manage patient care to prevent emergency. Manage a medical emergency by using professional judgement that may include providing life support and CPR as well as specialized training and knowledge. (DENT 252 or DENT 281)

12. Provide specialized treatment that includes educational, preventative, and therapeutic services designed to achieve and maintain health that includes determining outcomes of dental hygiene interventions using appropriate techniques. Also, evaluate the effectiveness of this treatment, as well as compare actual outcomes of dental hygiene interventions with expected outcomes and adjusted as needed to provide optimal care. (DENT 252 or DENT 281)

13. Identify population risk factors as well as oral health needs in the community and develop/implement strategies that promote health-related quality of life which may include determining availability of resources to meet the health care needs of this population or community. (DENT 232)

14. Evaluate reimbursement mechanisms and their impact on the patient's access to oral health care. (DENT 205)

Estimated Cost

Estimated Resident Program Cost*

Tuition and Fees	\$14,504
Lab Fees	\$275
Program Fee	\$1,390
Books/Supplies/Instruments	\$9,034
Total	\$25,204

* Fall 2025 MUS Student Health Insurance Premiums may be changing. Please check the Health Insurance website (<https://gfcmsu.edu/home/current-students/studentengagement/wellness/student-insurance/>) and/or Student Central for confirmed premium rates.

Students will be required to purchase dental instruments, supplies, uniforms, and may also be required to provide transportation to clinical sites and lodging costs depending on the clinical sites selected.

Program Requirements

Many students need preliminary math, science, and writing courses before enrolling in the program requirements. These courses may increase the total number of program credits. Students should review their math and writing placement before planning out their full program schedules.

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Science courses with labs must be completed within five (5) years of application to the program, and other courses must be completed within 15 years of applying to the program.

Prerequisite Courses

Course	Title	Credits	Grade/Sem
BIOH 201	Human Anatomy Phys I w/ Lab (= 301) **,+	4	_____
BIOH 211	Human Anatomy Phys II w/ Lab (=311) *,+	4	_____
NOTE: UM Western students may substitute BIOB 160, BIOH 365 & BIOH 370 for GFC MSU BIOH 201 & BIOH 211. All 3 classes are required and must have a grade of C or higher (not C-) within the last 5 years of application.			
BIOM 250	Microbiology for Health Sciences w/ Lab *,+	4	_____
M 105	Contemporary Mathematics (OR any math course in the MUS Core) **,+	3-4	_____
WRIT 101	College Writing I **,+	3	_____
Select one of the following:			
CHMY 121	Intro to General Chem w/Lab **,+	4	_____
OR BOTH			
CHMY 141	College Chemistry I w/Lab **,+	4	_____
CHMY 143	College Chemistry II w/Lab *,+	4	_____
Total Credits		22-27	_____

All prerequisite courses and dental hygiene program application must be completed by June 10th prior to fall entry into the program. A grade of C (not a C-) or above must be achieved in all prerequisite and program courses to advance in the program and to graduate.

Program Course Requirements after Formal Acceptance

Course	Title	Credits	Grade/Sem
First Year			
Fall			
DENT 101	Introduction to Dental Hygiene/ Preclinic **,+	2	_____
DENT 102	Introduction to Dental Hygiene/ Preclinic Lab **,+	2	_____
DENT 105	Professional Issues/Ethics in Dental I **,+	1	_____
DENT 110	Theory of Infection Control and Disease Prevention **,+	1	_____
DENT 118	Head & Neck Anatomy for the Hygienist **,+	3	_____
DENT 119	Dental Anatomy **,+	1	_____
DENT 122	Radiology I/Lab **,+	2	_____
HTH 140	Pharmacology for Health Care Providers **,+	2	_____
Credits		14	
Spring			
DENT 125	Radiology II/Lab **,+	2	_____
DENT 150	Clinical Dental Hygiene Theory I **,+	2	_____
DENT 151	Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice I **,+	4	_____
DENT 160	Periodontology I **,+	3	_____
DENT 165	Oral Histology and Embryology **,+	2	_____

DENT 240	Local Anesthesia/Nitrous Oxide Theory and Lab *,+	2	_____
Credits		15	
Summer			
DENT 223	Clinical Dental Hygiene Theory II *,+	2	_____
DENT 251	Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice II *,+	4	_____
DENT 260	Periodontology II *,+	1	_____
NUTR 221	Basic Human Nutrition +	3	_____
Credits		10	
Second Year			
Fall			
DENT 130	Dental Materials *,+	2	_____
DENT 237	Gerontology & Patients with Special Needs *,+	2	_____
DENT 250	Clinical Dental Hygiene Theory III *,+	2	_____
DENT 252	Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice III *,+	5	_____
DENT 263	General and Oral Pathology *,+	3	_____
Select one of the following:			
COMX 111	Introduction to Public Speaking +	3	_____
COMX 115	Introduction to Interpersonal Communication +	3	_____
Credits		17	
Spring			
DENT 205	Professional Issues/Ethics in Dental II *,+	1	_____
DENT 232	Community Dental Health and Education *,+	2	_____
DENT 280	Clinical Dental Hygiene Theory IV *,+	1	_____
DENT 281	Clinical Dental Hygiene Practice IV *,+	5	_____
SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology +	3	_____
Select one of the following:			
PSYX 100	Introduction to Psychology +	3	_____
PSYX 230	Developmental Psychology +	3	_____
Credits		15	
Total Credits		71	

TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS: 93-99

+ A grade of C (not C-) or above is required for graduation.

* Indicates prerequisites needed.

** Placement in course(s) is determined by placement assessment.