

## Essential Indicators for SPC Dental Hygiene Program

Because the Dental Hygiene degree signifies that the holder is a dental hygienist prepared to take licensing boards and enter the practice of dental hygiene, it follows that graduates must have the knowledge and skills to function in a broad variety of clinical and community situations and to render a wide spectrum of patient care. Therefore, the following abilities and expectations are to be considered essential indicators for success in the St. Petersburg College Dental Hygiene Program. Examples given are not all inclusive.

**Critical thinking:** **Critical thinking ability sufficient to plan and implement safe and effective dental hygiene practice.**

**Examples:** Develop and implement a dental hygiene treatment plan.

Evaluate and assess outcomes of treatment.

Formulate and defend sound principles of dental hygiene practice.

Critically self-evaluate performance, accept constructive criticism in a professional manner and be responsible for improving performance.

Anticipate and consider consequences of actions (solutions).

Establish priorities, organize a workload and manage time in order to complete tasks within allotted time.

**Interpersonal Skills:** **Interpersonal skills sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural and intellectual backgrounds.**

**Examples:** Establish rapport with patients/clients, teachers, classmates and colleagues of all cultures, genders, health status and backgrounds.

Interact professionally, honestly and forthrightly with others.

React compassionately, ethically and sensitively to the various needs of others.

**Communication:** **Communication abilities of oral expression and reception, reading and writing sufficient for interaction with others.**

**Examples:** Follow written and/or oral instructions in order to correctly perform dental hygiene clinical and laboratory procedures.

Read and comprehend technical and professional textbooks, journals, handbooks, and manuals.

Communicate concisely, effectively, and courteously.

Explain treatment procedures, and provide dental health education.

Maintain clear, concise, and accurate written clinical records and reports.

**Mobility:** **Physical abilities sufficient to maneuver as required to perform clinical and laboratory procedures.**

**Examples:** Maneuver freely, safely and efficiently in and around work areas.

Perform continuous patient treatment, often requiring prolonged sitting, repeated position change, head and neck in prolonged downward position, and repetitive hand/wrist motion.

**Motor Skills:**

**Gross and fine motor abilities with hands and arms sufficient to work safely and effectively.**

Safely perform procedures requiring coordination of eye/hand and manual dexterity.  
Control clinical equipment and adjust instruments to safely perform clinical procedures.  
Use dental hygiene instruments with tactile sense and strong bimanual grasp as required.  
Use dental hygiene instruments for extended periods of time in a variety of motions.

**Visual Ability:**

**Corrected visual ability sufficient to observe, perform clinical procedures in the relatively small confines of the oral environment, and to monitor and assess patient needs.**

Read and comprehend text, numbers and graphs displayed in print or on a monitor.  
Observe patient responses.  
Read gauges accurately.  
Observe laboratory and clinical demonstration.  
Differentiate between surfaces, sizes, and shapes of dental instruments.  
Discern variations in color, size and shape of oral tissues.  
Perform prolonged, multiple tasks in a small, artificially lit area.  
Display visual/spatial skills sufficient for patient safety and comfort.

**Emotional Endurance:**

**Emotional health sufficient to respond to and maintain effective relationships with patients and colleagues in an uncertain environment.**

Perform multiple tasks while establishing priorities in a limited time frame.  
Maintain emotional control with others.  
Exercise professional judgment in prioritizing needs of patients.  
Tolerate and react calmly to stressful situations.

**Environmental Safety:**

**Ability to recognize and protect self, patients and others from environmental risks and hazards.**

Follow established universal precautions, safety procedures, and post exposure protocol.  
Work safely with potentially hazardous body fluids, and contaminated sharp instruments.  
Incorporate effective sterilization procedures, utilize disinfectants and cleaning agents.  
Make use of appropriate clinical safety equipment.  
Tolerate frequent hand washing.  
Tolerate wearing examination gloves, mask and safety eyewear, and any other personal protective equipment as indicated.