



Dental Hygiene Program Standard

The approved program standard for the Dental Hygiene program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 61628).

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security
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Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Dental Hygiene program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Advanced Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 61628).

Development of system-wide program standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Program Standards Unit of the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security has responsibility for the development, review and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology.

Program standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology across the province of Ontario. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- [Vocational standard](#) (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),
- [Essential employability skills](#) (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- [General education requirement](#) (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.

The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as vocational learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges, curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The **elements of the performance** for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational learning outcome of which they form a part.

The development of a program standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government of Ontario determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the program standard

The Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Dental Hygiene Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, please contact the [Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security](#).

Vocational standard

All graduates of the Dental Hygiene program have achieved the [nine vocational learning outcomes \(VLOs\)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

The Dental Hygiene program provides students with the essential knowledge, skills, **attitude** and clinical judgment required to practice dental hygiene in a variety of practice settings, including clinical, community health, public health, and long-term care environments. Graduates of the program will be prepared to provide comprehensive, **evidence-informed** care to **clients**, addressing their oral health needs. Successful completion of the program results in the conferring of an Ontario College Advanced Diploma.

The program's nine Vocational Learning Outcomes (VLOs) emphasize key **competencies** for entry-level dental hygiene practice, including assessing **clients'** oral and overall health, **advocating** for inclusive and **culturally sensitive** care, and implementing **evidence-informed** therapies to enhance health outcomes. These outcomes ensure that graduates are equipped to make appropriate clinical decisions, provide **client-centred** care, and contribute to promoting long-term health.

To practise as a dental hygienist in Ontario, graduates must meet the registration requirements set by the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO). CDHO regulates the practice of dental hygiene in Ontario in accordance with the [Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991](#), and the [Dental Hygiene Act, 1991](#). Upon registration, graduates are required to adhere to CDHO's **Standards of Practice**, Code of Ethics, and Quality Assurance Program, ensuring their ongoing professional development and **competence**.

As self-regulated healthcare professionals, graduates of dental hygiene program practise with a high level of responsibility and **accountability**, following **ethical**, legal, professional, and regulatory requirements. Graduates of the program will engage in continuous learning to maintain and enhance their **competence**, ensuring they are current with evolving practices and **evidence-informed** findings. Dental hygienists are **client-focused** practitioners who assess and address individual health behaviours, identifying risks and recommending appropriate therapies. They **advocate** for and promote oral **health services and programs** that foster equity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity, while considering the diverse needs of their **clients**. Dental hygienists **collaborate** effectively with **clients**, families, caregivers, **interprofessional** healthcare

teams and government and community partners, employing effective communication and teamwork skills to contribute to positive health outcomes.

Graduates of the Dental Hygiene program are well-prepared to pursue diverse career opportunities, whether independently or within multidisciplinary healthcare teams. They can work in a variety of practice settings, such as private practices, community health centers, hospitals, and long-term care facilities. Additionally, opportunities exist in non-clinical fields such as **research**, compliance auditing and public health education. Furthermore, in the Province of Ontario, dental hygienists are able to establish their own clinical practice or associate with other health care providers according to the requirements set out by the CDHO.

There are opportunities for graduates to pursue further educational qualifications; through articulation agreements between the colleges and universities, graduates may be granted credits towards a degree. Students should contact individual colleges for further details of college articulation agreements with universities and other degree-granting institutions.

See [Glossary](#)

Note: The [Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer](#) (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, [ONTransfer](#).

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes Dental Hygiene (Ontario College Advanced Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. comply with **ethical**, legal, professional, and regulatory requirements in dental hygiene practice.
2. assess **clients** oral and overall health status and behaviours to identify risks and recommend **evidence-informed** therapy.
3. formulate, implement, and evaluate preventive, therapeutic, and supportive **oral health care plans** to meet **client**-centred needs and preferences.
4. develop, implement, and advocate for **oral health services and programs** to foster inclusive, diverse, equitable, and **culturally sensitive** care.
5. implement and evaluate quality assurance standards, protocols and guidelines to ensure a safe, efficient, and compliant **working environment**.
6. communicate and **collaborate** effectively with **clients**, **interprofessional** teams, and others to foster professional relationships and achieve positive health care outcomes.
7. develop and present dental hygiene practice business plans that align with current legislation and regulatory standards.
8. educate diverse **clients** to promote positive oral health knowledge, skills, **attitudes** and behaviours.
9. interpret and apply **research** findings to guide and enhance **evidence-informed** dental hygiene practice.

[See Glossary](#)

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: comply with **ethical**, legal, professional, and regulatory requirements in dental hygiene practice.

Elements of the performance

- a. adhere to relevant legislation, practice standards, and codes of **ethics** to ensure compliance in all aspects of dental hygiene.
- b. maintain privacy and confidentiality of **client** information.
- c. be **accountable** for one's own behaviour and decisions in the practice environment.
- d. engage in **evidence-informed** continuing **competence** activities, including self-reflection and peer feedback.
- e. recognize professional limitations and seek consultation with healthcare and other professionals.
- f. evaluate and reflect on one's own role in the provision of the **client's oral health services and programs**.
- g. identify and implement strategies to enhance professional **competence**.
- h. **advocate** for the **client's** access to care, right to safety, privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and **informed consent**.
- i. develop and apply effective time management and organizational skills to achieve personal and professional goals.
- j. apply knowledge, skills, services, and/or technologies to support **optimum client** outcomes.
- k. engage in community activities and affiliations with professional organizations.
- l. enhance effective and sustainable practice through self-care and healthy lifestyle strategies.
- m. adhere to mandatory reporting of **unethical**, unsafe, and incompetent practices to regulatory organizations.
- n. apply an **evidence-informed** approach to decision making using problem-solving and reasoning skill to address gaps in knowledge.

[See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: assess **clients** oral and overall health status and behaviours to identify risks and recommend **evidence-informed** therapy.

Elements of the performance

- a. establish a comprehensive profile using **evidence-informed** methods to collect and analyze **client** health data identifying any risks and **determinants of health** that may affect outcomes.
- b. collect, document, and review current and historical **client** health information, including relevant medical considerations, lifestyle factors, and health risks, to determine **evidence-informed** oral health care decisions.
- c. incorporate the **determinants of health** into the analysis phase of the assessment process to guide **evidence-informed** therapy recommendations.
- d. collect, document, and analyze findings from the **client's** oral and general health assessment to formulate a dental hygiene **diagnosis**.
- e. analyze data gathered through clinical assessments, observation, and communication to determine appropriate treatments and referrals.
- f. determine the **client's** oral health prognosis based on the comprehensive assessment.
- g. refer the **client** to other healthcare professionals, services and programs as required, in accordance with relevant legislation.
- h. make appropriate recommendations for radiographs based on **client** needs.

[See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: formulate, implement, and evaluate preventive, therapeutic, and supportive **oral health care plans** to meet **client**-centred needs and preferences.

Elements of the performance

- a. design a **dental hygiene care plan** using assessment data, a **client**-centred approach, **evidence-informed** practices, and available resources.
- b. engage **client's** as active participants in planning their **oral health services and programs**, considering their health goals, preferences, and **values**.
- c. foster an environment that supports and encourages **client** participation and enhances their role in planning their **oral health services and programs**.
- d. determine preventive, interceptive, and **therapeutic interventions** that respect the **client's** needs, **values**, and resources, ensuring cultural sensitivity.
- e. **collaborate** with **client's** and, when necessary, health professionals, caregivers or substitute **decision-makers**, to prioritize the **client's** oral health needs.
- f. develop a **dental hygiene care plan** outlining the sequence of services and resources to ensure effective delivery.
- g. use **evidence-informed** decision-making to support dental hygiene interventions, ensuring alignment with professional standards.
- h. document care processes and outcomes accurately, in accordance with regulatory standards.
- i. facilitate informed decision-making by explaining the rationale behind recommended interventions, ensuring **client** understanding.
- j. ensure **informed consent** by explaining the risks and benefits before implementing services.
- k. provide services and programs within the dental hygiene **scope of practice**, aligning with the **client's** needs and goals.
- l. use appropriate **evaluation** methods to monitor the effectiveness of services and programs.
- m. conduct ongoing **evaluation** of the effectiveness of **oral health services and programs** and adjust care as required.
- n. monitor **client** satisfaction with services and adjust care based on **client** feedback.

[See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop, implement, and advocate for **oral health services and programs** to foster inclusive, diverse, equitable, and **culturally sensitive** care.

Elements of the performance

- a. implement a population health approach along with and **evidence-informed** practice to identify and monitor high-risk individuals and groups.
- b. provide essential oral health information and facilitate access to care for **client's**, healthcare professionals, and the community.
- c. promote **social responsibility** and address disparities by leading or supporting community partners in their efforts to **advocate** for oral health initiatives.
- d. recognize the political, social, and economic issues that affect individuals and communities, and the role of governments and community partners in promoting equitable oral health care for all populations.
- e. lead and/or participate in initiatives that drive change and enhance access to **oral health services and programs** for diverse populations.
- f. **collaborate** with community, health care professionals, and other partners to achieve **health promotion** objectives for individuals and communities.
- g. select and incorporate accessible, culturally relevant and appropriate health **promotion** strategies and interventions for individuals and communities.
- h. identify barriers and necessary resources for delivering effective **oral health services and programs** to foster optimal outcomes for **clients**.
- i. develop **advocacy** strategies to address identified client and community oral health needs.
- j. demonstrate leadership and **advocacy** in dental hygiene practice by contributing to policy development, and **advocating** for the **client** care needs and the profession.

[See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: implement and evaluate quality assurance standards, protocols and guidelines to ensure a safe, efficient, and compliant **working environment**.

Elements of the performance

- a. apply health and safety legislation and standards relevant to the practice setting.
- b. adhere to current infection prevention and control measures to reduce risks to **client's**, practitioners and self.
- c. apply principles of **client** and practitioner safety.
- d. adhere to current health and safety legislation and standards, addressing potential risks to the practice environments.
- e. use, handle, and store materials and supplies according to the manufacturer's instructions for use.
- f. identify potential health risks, anticipate adverse reactions during dental hygiene care, and implement appropriate emergency responses when necessary.
- g. practise the safe management, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, according to guidelines and regulations.
- h. accurately document health and safety incidents in accordance with relevant health and safety legislation and standards.
- i. keep current on emerging trends, **evidence-informed research**, and best practices related to health and safety.
- j. **advocate** and promote a safe and respectful **working environment**.
- k. participate in quality improvement initiatives.

[See Glossary](#)

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: communicate and **collaborate** effectively with **clients**, **interprofessional** teams, and others to foster professional relationships and achieve positive health care outcomes.

Elements of the performance

- a. **collaborate** with **clients** and other professionals to deliver effective oral health initiatives and programs.
- b. assess the need for additional **oral health services and programs**, or referrals in collaboration with **clients** and other healthcare professionals.
- c. assist **client's** in meeting their oral health goals through teamwork with both the **client** and other healthcare professionals.
- d. engage with healthcare professionals and subject-matter experts to inform decision-making regarding the needs of **client's** or communities.
- e. foster ongoing communication with members of the **client's** care team to ensure coordinated care.
- f. respect and acknowledge the expertise and contributions of the care team.
- g. lead the dissemination of oral health information by collaborating with health professionals to support **evidence-informed** practices.
- h. practise cooperatively and effectively within oral health and **interprofessional** health care teams and settings to help **clients** to achieve health outcomes.
- i. reflect on one's role, collaboration, leadership, and performance within a team to actively contribute to positive team outcomes.
- j. recognize, address and resolve conflicts respectfully and professionally.
- k. integrate oral health specific language to support professional and **interprofessional** communication.

[See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: develop and present dental hygiene practice business plans that align with current legislation and regulatory standards.

Elements of the performance

- a. develop processes to collect, process, organize, store, and retrieve **client** records and business and financial information in compliance with applicable legislation and regulations.
- b. develop processes to manage equipment, supplies, and human resources to deliver **oral health services and programs** that benefit the **client** and complies with regulatory standards.
- c. use a critical review process to assess and integrate emerging knowledge, services, and technologies into practice, to align with **client** care and regulatory standards in consideration of business goals.
- d. conduct regular reviews and investigations of events and outcomes within the practice setting as part of a continuous quality improvement strategy.
- e. identify and avoid conflicts of interest to maintain the **ethical** standards of the practice.
- f. develop, implement, and present comprehensive workplace policies and protocols such as health and safety, workplace violence, human rights, accessibility, privacy protection, infection control, hazardous waste management, emergency response, and **client** consent that align with **legislative** requirements.
- g. develop job descriptions, employment contracts, and organizational structures that reflect the responsibilities within an independent practice setting.
- h. foster a workplace culture of shared **values**, mutual respect, and effective communication to support business success and ensure a positive **working environment**.
- i. promote a dental hygiene business model based on sound business principles, regulatory compliance, and professional **ethics** to guide the practice towards sustainable success.
- j. manage equipment and supplies to deliver oral health services that benefit **clients/patients** in compliance with regulatory standards.

[See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: educate diverse **clients** to promote positive oral health knowledge, skills, **attitudes** and behaviours.

Elements of the performance

- a. assess **client's oral health, attitudes**, skills, knowledge and barriers to identify learning needs.
- b. create personalized **care plans** that addresses the **client's** unique needs and promotes effective oral health behaviours.
- c. evaluate **client's** understanding, beliefs, **attitudes**, knowledge, and needs, while promoting sustainable practices that align with emerging trends.
- d. use effective communication when engaging with **client's**, caregivers and substitute **decision-makers** to support informed decision-making and enhance **health literacy**.
- e. incorporate various educational resources tailored to the **client's health literacy**, learning style, and needs.
- f. apply teaching principles and behaviour change strategies to promote positive oral health habits and outcomes at both the individual and community level.

[See Glossary](#)

9. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: interpret and apply **research** findings to guide and enhance **evidence-informed** dental hygiene practice.

Elements of the performance

- a. demonstrate critical thinking and reasoning to explore complex issues from many points of view.
- b. apply a systematic approach to demonstrate problem solving and reasoning skills.
- c. evaluate information for validity, reliability, usefulness, and application.
- d. analyze the impact of **research** findings on practice.
- e. determine practice decisions informed by evidence, professional judgment, and the **client's** experience.
- f. identify strategies to make informed decisions when limitations exist within **research**.
- g. engage in **research**-related activities to enhance skills and knowledge.
- h. present **evidence-informed** knowledge to **clients**, community and other health care professionals.
- i. contribute to **evidence-informed, client-centred** dental hygiene practice to ensure cultural sensitivity.
- j. translate knowledge from relevant sources into professional practice.
- k. engage in practices that contribute to lifelong learning.
- l. engage in self-reflection to identify areas of needed learning.

[See Glossary](#)

Glossary

Accountable/Accountability: dental hygienists' obligation to accept responsibility for their professional knowledge, skills, **attitudes** and judgment. Accountability includes self-**evaluation**, compliance with legislation, standards and codes. Dental Hygienists are also accountable to their clients/**patients**. (*Adapted from College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012*)

Advocacy: an intervention such as speaking or writing in favour of a particular issue or cause, policy, individual, or group of people. In the health field, advocacy is assumed to be in the public interest and directed towards positive or desirable ends, whereas lobbying by a special interest group may or may not be in the public interest. Advocacy is a core responsibility when systemic barriers hinder access to care. It ensures service delivery remains effective and responsive, especially for marginalized populations such as First Nations communities, people living in poverty, or persons with HIV/AIDS. (*Adapted from College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012*)

Attitude: a relatively stable belief or feeling about a concept, person or object. Attitudes can often be inferred by observing behaviours related to definition of **values**. (*College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.12*)

Care plan/care planning: a structured statement outlining goals, evidence-based interventions, and an appointment schedule that supports the diagnosis. It is informed by the dental hygiene **diagnosis**, the best available evidence, and the needs and preferences of those accessing dental hygiene services. The care plan also includes the sequencing of treatment/care and any necessary referrals. (*Adapted from Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada, Entry-to-Practice Canadian Competencies, 2021*)

Client: a recipient of oral health services. This term is broad and inclusive and may refer to an individual, a family, a group and/or a community. In some contexts, the client may also be referred to as a patient.

Collaborate: to work together and refers to the dental hygienist and the **client** and/or other health professionals working together to achieve a common goal(s). (*College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.12*)

Competence: the knowledge, skills, **attitudes** and judgment required of the dental hygienist in order to provide quality oral health services and programs. Competence is verified through the practitioner's performance in the practice environment.

Culturally sensitive: recognizing, understanding, and applying **attitudes** and practices that are respectful, inclusive, and appropriate for individuals from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds, as well as people of all ages, genders, health statuses, sexual orientations, and abilities. Cultural sensitivity goes beyond

acknowledging diversity; it also requires healthcare providers to critically examine their own biases, attributes, and power dynamics that may create barriers to care and impact health outcomes. It is a two-way process that fosters respectful and reciprocal engagement to address power imbalances and promote equitable care. *(Adapted from College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012)*

Dental hygiene diagnosis: involves the use of critical thinking skills and the analysis of the assessment data to reach conclusions about the **client's** or community's dental hygiene needs. The dental hygiene diagnosis is a statement that ties the assessment findings to the dental hygienist's planned interventions. *(Adapted from College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012)*

Determinants of health: definable entities that cause, are associated with, or induce health outcomes. Public health is fundamentally concerned with action and **advocacy** to address the full range of potentially modifiable determinants of health – not only those which are related to the actions of individuals, such as health behaviours and lifestyles, but also factors such as income and social status, education, employment and working conditions, access to appropriate health services, and the physical environments. These, in combination, create different living conditions which impact on health. *(College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.14)*

Ethics/Ethical: the branch of philosophy dealing with distinctions between right and wrong, with the moral consequences of human actions. Much of modern ethical thinking is based on concepts of human rights, individual freedom and autonomy, and doing good and not harming. The concept of equity, fairness and justice for every individual, is paramount. Finding a balance between the public health requirement for access to information and the individual's right to privacy and confidentiality of personal information may be a source of tension. *(Adapted from College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012)*

Evaluation: the process of reviewing and analyzing the effectiveness of a service, intervention, or **care plan**. Evaluation helps determine whether goals have been met and identifies areas for improvement.

Evidence-informed: a formalized process for identifying, locating, and interpreting the best available evidence to guide decision-making. *(Adapted from Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada, Entry-to-Practice Canadian Competencies, 2021)*

Health literacy: ability of individuals to access and use health information to make appropriate health decisions and maintain basic health. *(College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.15)*

Health promotion: the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve their health. It not only embraces actions directed at strengthening the skills and capabilities of individuals, but also action directed towards changing social,

environmental and economic conditions so as to alleviate their impact on public and individual health. The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986) describes five key strategies for health promotion: build healthy public policy; create supportive environments for health; strengthen community action for health; develop personal skills; and re-orient health services. (A public health system core function.) (*College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.15*)

Informed consent: the act of providing a person with comprehensive information about a proposed treatment—including its nature, benefits, risks, alternative options, and potential consequences of refusal—to support their ability to make an informed decision. The individual must have the capacity to understand this information and appreciate its implications. If a person is unable to provide consent, a substitute **decision-maker**, such as a legal guardian, must do so on their behalf. (*Health Care Consent Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, c. 2, Sched. A; Federation of Dental Hygiene Regulators of Canada, Entry-to-Practice Canadian Competencies, 2021, p. 17*)

Interprofessional: a collaborative approach involving healthcare professionals from various disciplines working together to provide comprehensive, patient-centered care. It refers to combining diverse expertise to address the overall health and well-being of the **client**, recognizing that oral health is connected to general health. By working together, professionals contribute to a more holistic and coordinated approach to care, improving outcomes, enhancing communication, and ensuring the delivery of high-quality services. (*Adapted from the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012*)

Oral health services and programs: a broad range of care provided by health practitioners. Oral health services and programs are designed to achieve the desired goals and objectives to attain and maintain optimal oral health and general health. Oral health services and programs are **client**-centered, meaning they are individualized according to **client** needs and resources. These services and programs may be preventive and therapeutic.

Research: activities designed to develop or contribute to knowledge, e.g., theories, principles, relationships, or the information on which these are based. Research may be conducted through simple observation and inference, or through experimentation, where the researcher alters or manipulates conditions in order to observe and study the effects. Quantitative research analyzes systematically collected numerical data. Qualitative research focuses on in-depth exploration of a group or issue, using methods such as focus groups, interviews, life histories, etc. (*Adapted from the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012*)

Social responsibility: an **ethic** of service that involves undertaking actions that advances the common good. (*College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.18*)

Scope of practice: the activities and procedures dental hygienists are legally allowed to perform including assessing teeth and adjacent tissues and providing preventive and therapeutic treatment. This scope is outlined by the Dental Hygiene Act, 1991 and regulated by the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO). *(Adapted from the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012 and <https://cdho.org/explore/>)*

Standards of practice: are published by the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario (CDHO) to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the dental hygienist and to provide a framework for measuring the quality of dental hygiene services/programs. The CDHO Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice outlines the knowledge, skills, **attitudes** and judgment that are essential for quality dental hygiene practice. *(Adapted from the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012)*

Substitute decision-makers (SDM): Individuals who are sometimes required to assist with decision-making for a patient/**client** who is considered incapable to make care or treatment decisions. The Health Care Consent Act contains a guide for identifying who the legally authorized SDM is, based on hierarchy of people. The highest-ranking person on the hierarchy who is willing and able to make decisions regarding health care for the patient/client becomes the SDM. *(Adapted from Health Care Consent Act, 1996).*

Therapeutic interventions: actions performed by the practitioner to assist the **client** to regain and maintain optimal oral health. *(College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.18)*

Values: core beliefs or principles that guide behavior and decision-making in the professional setting. In dental practice, values may include respect, integrity, compassion, and a commitment to quality care.

Working environment: a setting in which people work. It includes not only the physical surroundings and potential workplace hazards but also the social, cultural, and psychological aspects that can foster harmony among employees or create tension, friction, distrust, and animosity, negatively impacting well-being and increasing the risk of injury. *(Adapted from College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario, Dental Hygiene Standards of Practice, 2012, p.18)*

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Dental Hygiene program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed below, in addition to achieving the [vocational learning outcomes](#) and meeting the [general education requirement](#).

Context

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are skills that, regardless of a student's program or discipline, are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living and for lifelong learning.

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

- these skills are important for every adult to function successfully in society today
- our colleges are well equipped and well positioned to prepare graduates with these skills
- these skills are equally valuable for all graduates, regardless of the level of their credential, whether they pursue a career path, or they pursue further education

Skill categories

To capture these skills, the following six categories define the essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills and knowledge.

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Information Management
- Interpersonal
- Personal

Application and implementation

In each of the six skill categories, there are a number of defining skills, or sub skills, identified to further articulate the requisite skills identified in the main skill categories. The following chart illustrates the relationship between the skill categories, the defining skills within the categories and learning outcomes to be achieved by graduates from all postsecondary programs of instruction that lead to an Ontario College credential.

EES may be embedded in General Education or vocational courses or developed through discrete courses. However, these skills are developed, all graduates with Ontario College credentials must be able to reliably demonstrate the essential skills required in each of the six categories.

Skill category: communication

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening
- presenting
- visual literacy

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.
2. respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.

Skill category: numeracy

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning
- analyzing and using numerical data
- conceptualizing

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. execute mathematical operations accurately

Skill category: critical thinking and problem solving

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- analyzing
- synthesizing
- evaluating
- decision making
- creative and innovative thinking

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems.
2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.

Skill category: information management

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- Gathering and managing information
- Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project
- Computer literacy
- Internet skills

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.
2. analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.

Skill category: interpersonal

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- Teamwork
- Relationship management
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership
- Networking

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others.
2. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.

Skill category: personal

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- Managing self
- Managing change and being flexible and adaptable
- Engaging in reflective practices
- Demonstrating personal responsibility

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.
2. take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.

General education requirement

All graduates of the Dental Hygiene program must have met the general education requirement described below, in addition to achieving the [vocational](#) and [essential employability skills](#) learning outcomes.

Requirement

The [General Education Requirement](#) for programs of instruction is stipulated in the [Credentials Framework](#) in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction.

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or an Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study and increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work. This will typically be accomplished by students taking 3 to 5 courses (or the equivalent) designed discretely and separately from vocational learning opportunities.

This general education learning would normally be delivered using a combination of required and elective processes.

Purpose

The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and who, as a result, are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively and positively to the society in which they live and work.

General Education strengthens students' essential employability skills, such as critical analysis, problem solving and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and/or societal importance.

Themes

The themes listed below will be used to provide direction to Ontario Colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfil the General Education Requirement for programs of instructions.

Each theme provides a statement of Rationale and offers suggestions related to more specific topic areas that could be explored within each area. These suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They are included to provide guidance regarding the nature and scope of content that would be judged as meeting the intent and overall

goals of General Education.

Arts in society:

Rationale:

The capacity of a person to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of his/her life. Since artistic expression is a fundamentally human activity, which both reflects and anticipates developments in the larger culture, its study will enhance the student's cultural and self-awareness.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs, of the artist's and writer's perceptions of the world and the means by which those perceptions are translated into the language of literature and artistic expression. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and possibly, a direct experience in expressing perceptions in an artistic medium.

Civic Life:

Rationale:

In order for individuals to live responsibly and to reach their potential as individuals and as citizens of society, they need to understand the patterns of human relationships that underlie the orderly interactions of a society's various structural units. Informed people will have knowledge of the meaning of civic life in relation to diverse communities at the local, national and global level and an awareness of international issues and the effects of these on Canada, as well as Canada's place in the international community.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the meaning of freedoms, rights and participation in community and public life, in addition to a working knowledge of the structure and function of various levels of government (municipal, provincial, national) in a Canadian and/or in an international context. They may also provide an historical understanding of major political issues affecting relations between the various levels of government in Canada and their constituents.

Social and cultural understanding:

Rationale:

Knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the means for a person

to gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary culture and society. In addition to this awareness, students will acquire a sense of the main currents of their culture and that of other cultures over an extended period of time in order to link personal history to the broader study of culture.

Content:

Courses in this area are those that deal broadly with major social and cultural themes. These courses may also stress the nature and validity of historical evidence and the variety of historical interpretation of events. Courses will provide the students with a view and understanding of the impact of cultural, social, ethnic or linguistic characteristics.

Personal understanding:

Rationale:

Educated people are equipped for life-long understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities. They are aware of the ideal need to be fully functioning persons: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and vocationally.

Content:

Courses in this area will focus on understanding the individual: his or her evolution; situation; relationship with others; place in the environment and universe; achievements and problems; and his or her meaning and purpose. They will also allow students the opportunity to study institutionalized human social behaviour in a systematic way. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be oriented to the study of the individual within a variety of contexts.

Science and technology:

Rationale:

Matter and energy are universal concepts in science, forming a basis for understanding the interactions that occur in living and non-living systems in our universe. Study in this area provides an understanding of the behaviour of matter that provides a foundation for further scientific study and the creation of broader understanding about natural phenomena.

Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the

human mind that is unique in human history. This and other technological developments have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our society.

Content:

Courses in this area should stress scientific inquiry and deal with basic or fundamental questions of science rather than applied ones. They may be formulated from traditional basic courses in such areas of study as biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology or agriculture. As well, courses related to understanding the role and functions of computers (e.g., data management and information processing) and assorted computer-related technologies should be offered in a non-applied manner to provide students with an opportunity to explore the impact of these concepts and practices on their lives.

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Inquiries regarding specific Dental Hygiene programs offered by Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology in Ontario should be directed to the relevant college.

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