

# Program Review

## Executive Summary

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### Dental Hygiene Program

Majors Reviewed:

- *Dental Hygiene, B.S.*
- *Dental Hygiene, A.A.S.*

July 2024



**Pennsylvania**  
**College of Technology**  
A Penn State Affiliate

The Dental Hygiene associate's degree program (DH) was developed in 1977. The first class of students began in January 1978 and graduated in May 1979. The bachelor's degree program was implemented in 1992, and the first students enrolled during the fall of that year. The associate degree program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA).

The applicant pool for the Dental Hygiene program continues to remain consistent, and there are more applicants than can be accommodated within the associate degree major. Other than a few exceptions made for transfer students, all students begin in a pre-dental hygiene major and complete general courses towards selection into the major. The program uses a point-based admissions ranking system to select students for admission into the associate's degree major. Clinic capacity and the patient pool in the Williamsport area limit seats in the associate's degree to 40 students each year per CODA.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the demand for dental hygienists will continue to grow 7% through 2031, which is faster than average for all occupations. The American Dental Hygienists' Association reports that 8% of dental hygienists left the workforce during the pandemic. This has resulted in workforce shortages and high demand for dental hygienists across the country.

The dental hygiene program continues to integrate and evaluate emerging technologies to enhance the teaching and learning process to align with industry trends. New technologies since the last program review include digital impression scanners, CBCT imaging and subgingival air polishing.

Although the dental hygiene clinic was renovated in 2016, some supporting clinic equipment is aging. The program will need to closely monitor needs to replace equipment in order to continue providing the outstanding learning environment that we are known for.

Recommendations to maintain program excellence include the following:

1. Continue to enhance the clinical faculty calibration plan to align with the new CODA Standard 2-24 that states that dental hygiene programs must have a defined mechanism to calibrate dental hygiene faculty for student clinical evaluation.
2. Continue efforts to promote the bachelor's degree completion program through traditional degree completion and concurrent enrollment.
3. Establish a plan for dated clinic equipment repair and replacement.
4. Conduct an evaluation/feasibility study for a master's degree in dental hygiene.
5. Monitor ongoing changes impacting the profession, including mid-level provider and licensure compact initiatives.
6. Explore the Quantitative Thinking Core Assessment outcomes and determine necessary curricular changes.