



**VERA Z. DWYER COLLEGE  
OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND

**TITLE: Dental Education  
Essential Abilities Policy**

**POLICY NO: IUSB-CHS-DE.006**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1,  
2018**

**TARGET GROUP: Division of  
Dental Education Students**

**SECTION: Division of Dental  
Education Student Policy**

**REVISION DATE: December  
15, 2017**

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to define the specified essential abilities (technical standards) critical to the success of students in any dental hygiene program.

**Policy:**

Students must demonstrate the defined essential abilities to succeed in their program of study.

Qualified applicants are expected to meet all admission criteria, and matriculating students are expected to meet all progression criteria, as well as these essential abilities (technical standards) with or without reasonable accommodations. The attendance requirements and physical demands on the dental hygiene student require students to be in good physical and mental health.

Applicants to the program must possess the following general qualities:

**Communication- speech, reading, writing**

***Be able to:***

- Establish rapport with patients, families and classmates
- Have proficient use of the English language in speech, reading and writing
- Communicate abilities for effective interaction in verbal, non-verbal, and written form
- Obtain and disseminate information relevant to patient care and work duties
- Respect cultural diversity

**Visual and Perceptual Skills**

***Be able to:***

- Use binocular vision with discrimination/perception to read anesthesia vials and medication labels
- Have visual acuity corrected to 20/40 or better with the ability to accommodate at a distance of 10-20 feet
- Document color vision deficiencies- limited to a single color
- Have visual skills necessary to detect signs and symptoms, body language, and infections
- Reading computer screens, documents with small printing, and hand written notations

**Hearing and Auditory Abilities**

**Be able to:**

- Have auditory abilities necessary to monitor and assess patient health needs
- Monitor vital signs and auscultation with the use of a stethoscope
- Recognize sounds of alarms and emergency signals
- Correctly interpret Dentist orders, patient needs or complaints, faculty instructions

**Motor Skills- physical ability, coordination, dexterity**

**Be able to:**

- Have normal tactile feeling, such as sensitivity to heat, cold, pain, pressure, etc.
- Have extremely fine motor control with correspondingly hand-eye coordination- hand functions should include rotation, squeezing, and repetitive movements
- Full manual dexterity which includes the function of both arms, both wrists, both hands and fingers
- Have motor function to elicit information such as palpitation, extension, twisting, bending, stooping, pushing, pulling, and lifting
- Physically move to a position to enable them to provide dental care and cardio pulmonary procedures
- Possess the strength to assist a patient in transferring themselves to and from a dental chair

**Emotional Stability and Personal Temperament**

**Be able to:**

- Have high levels of mental and emotional stability to provide a safe dental environment
- Provide all compliant and non-compliant patients with emotional support and maintain a consistent professional attitude and appearance
- Successfully manage the stress of the program didactic and clinical demands while performing multiple tasks concurrently
- Focus in an environment with multiple interruptions, noises, distractions, and unexpected patient needs

**Intellectual and Critical Thinking Skills**

**Be able to:**

- Use critical thinking skills necessary for sufficient clinical judgment
- Have the abilities to measure, assess, calculate, reason, analyze, and integrate information
- Identify cause/effect relationships
- Develop dental care treatment plans
- Problem solve, prioritize, evaluating outcomes and synthesize data for documentation
- Comprehend focus and process information
- Use long and short term memory skills

Procedure

1. The essential abilities criteria are incorporated into informational packets given to those demonstrating an interest in dental hygiene.
2. Applicants accepting admission in the BSDH program will be required to sign a letter of agreement that specifies the essential abilities criteria. This agreement states they have read and understand that they will be expected to meet the essential abilities. Students questioning their ability to meet these essential abilities criteria will be encouraged to address their inquiries to The Division of Dental Education and Health Sciences Academic Advising Center.
3. Faculty has the responsibility to determine whether a student has demonstrated these essential abilities. Faculty has the right to request consultation from recognized experts as deemed appropriate.
4. Students failing to meet these essential abilities, as determined by faculty, at any point in their academic program may have their progress interrupted until they have demonstrated their ability to meet these essential abilities within negotiated time frames. Prescribed standards of performance will be determined by the course instructor and/or the IUSB-CHS APG Board.
5. Students will be dismissed from their program of study if determined they are unable to meet these essential abilities even if reasonable accommodations are made.
6. Students failing to demonstrate these essential abilities criteria, as determined by the faculty, may appeal this adverse determination in accordance with Indiana University's and IUSB-CHS's appeal procedures.
7. Learning opportunities, including direct clinical experiences, must be sufficient in breadth and depth to ensure the baccalaureate graduate attains these practice-focused outcomes and integrates the delineated knowledge and skills into the graduate's professional dental hygiene practice. This is based on the Commission on Dental Accreditation Standards. Clinical learning is focused on developing and refining the knowledge and skills necessary to manage care as part of an inter-professional team. Simulation and lab experiences augment clinical learning and are complementary to direct care opportunities essential to assuming the role of the professional dental hygienist. A clinical immersion experience provides opportunities for building clinical reasoning, management, and evaluation skills.