Technical Standards for Admission and Retention

Dental Hygiene

Dental hygiene education requires that the accumulation of scientific knowledge be accompanied by the simultaneous acquisition of skills essential to the profession. The curriculum is stressful requiring both emotional stability and physical stamina.

Candidates seeking enrollment into the Dental Hygiene program at Farmingdale State College must meet the safety and technical standards in the following areas: communication, observation/sensory, motor, intellectual-conceptual, and behavioral-social attributes.

Communication: The student must possess the ability to communicate effectively in English using reasonable grammar and syntax in both oral and written formats. In addition, the student must notice and appreciate both verbal and nonverbal communication when performing dental hygiene care. Examples of communication include but are not limited to:

- Effectively obtain a patient’s history
- Accurately interpret data from medical records
- Document pertinent observations
- Interact effectively with members of the health care team
- Explain alternative treatment options
- Communicate directions during and after treatment

Observation/Sensory: Students must be able to observe a patient accurately, both at a distance and close at hand. In addition, the student must have the functional use of the senses of vision, touch, hearing, and smell which are necessary in assessing patients and maintaining their safety. Examples of observation/sensory skills include but are not limited to:

- Auditory ability to monitor vital signs
- Visual ability to determine variations in color, shape, texture and consistency i.e. early signs of inflammation, skin changes (pallor, cyanosis and ecchymosis).
- Visual acuity to read charts, records, small print, handwritten notations and instrument markings.
- Tactile ability must be sufficient for assessment and performance of dental hygiene procedures, i.e. calculus detection, tooth defect identification.
- Palpation of pulses

Motor: The student is required to perform gross and fine motor movements, maintain consciousness and equilibrium, and possess the physical strength and stamina which are necessary to provide safe patient care. The candidate should have full manual dexterity including the functioning of both arms, both wrists, both hands and all fingers. Examples of motor skills include but are not limited to:

- Instrumentation skills requiring dexterity i.e. grasping, fingering, pinching, pushing, pulling, holding, extending, and rotation
- Controlled intraoral and extraoral hand movements of less than one millimeter
- Operation of foot controls for low speed handpieces, ultrasonic scalers, air polishers etc.
- Responding rapidly to emergency situations (cardiac arrest, respiratory arrest, falls)
- Transferring patients
- Protect and remove patients from an area in the event of a fire or disaster

Intellectual-conceptual: The student must possess the ability to problem solve, establish a plan of care, set priorities, calculate, measure, analyze and synthesize objective as well as subjective data. These critical skills are essential for providing quality dental hygiene care. In addition the candidate must possess the ability to understand and comprehend three dimensional and spatial relationships. Examples of intellectual-conceptual skills include but are not limited to:

- Calculate the variations in milliamperage, kilovoltage, distance and exposure time on the resulting dental radiograph
- Measure clinical attachment loss
- Develop care plans based on individual patients needs
- Utilize appropriate instrument adaptation

Behavioral-social attributes: The student must possess emotional stability and flexibility, which will enable him/her to develop the ability to function effectively in stressful situations. This includes the ability to adapt to changing environments, exercise sound judgment, complete assessment and intervention activities and develop sensitive interpersonal relationships with patients, families and others responsible for health care.

Examples of these behavioral and social attributes include but are not limited to:

- Ability to express empathy
- Ability to think and act rationally during a crisis
- Demonstrate appropriate behavior towards staff, peers and patients according to societal norms
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Accepting constructive criticism

Admission to the dental hygiene program is open to all qualified individuals in accordance with the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq). However, due to the rigors of the curriculum and the immense responsibility for safe patient treatment, a student can be denied admission to the dental hygiene program, or dis-enrolled from the program if accommodating the student’s disability would pose a direct threat to patients or would compromise the academic integrity of the program.

Farmingdale State College

State University of New York

Tel 631-420-2000

www.farmingdale.edu