

**Pre-Dental Hygiene
Associate of Science
2025-2026**

Nature of Work: The dental hygienist works as a part of the dental health team to provide clinical and educational assistance. Dental hygienists work directly with patients in the office of a dentist or individually in industries, schools, or public health agencies. In the office, a dental hygienist's duties include prophylaxis and X-ray work, however in a few states such as Washington; expanded duties include the filling of minor cavities. Dental hygienists examine patients' teeth and gums, recording the presence of disease or abnormalities. They remove stain and plaque from teeth, apply caries-preventive agents such as fluorides, pit and fissure sealants, take and develop dental X-rays, place temporary fillings and periodontal dressings, remove sutures, and polish and re-contour amalgam restoration. Dental hygienists also help patients develop and maintain good oral health.

Professional Training: Requirements for licensing vary from state to state. Following the completion of training, state board examinations are required. Certification may have reciprocity between states. After the Associate of Science degree, students usually transfer to a program that can give the additional training needed.

Job Outlook: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), "Employment of dental hygienists is projected to grow 9 percent from 2021 to 2031, faster than the average for all occupations. About 16,300 openings for dental hygienists are projected each year, on average, over the decade." The BLS reports, "studies linking oral health and general health, and efforts to expand access to oral hygiene services, will continue to drive the demand for preventive dental services" which are typically provided by dental hygienists. (See www.bls.gov) Job prospects are expected to be favorable in most areas, but there will be strong competition.

Earnings: Earnings vary by geographic location, employment setting, and years of experience; and dental hygienists may be paid on an hourly, salary, or commission basis. In their May 2021 salary survey, the Bureau of Labor statistics reports the median annual wage for dental hygienists as \$77,810 with the lowest 10 percent earning less than \$60,100 and the highest 10 percent earning more than \$100,200. (See www.bls.gov)

Note: Walla Walla University does not offer the clinical portion of the Dental Hygiene program.

PRE-DENTAL HYGIENE

Winter Education Complex
(509) 527-2325

Websites

[Walla Walla University](#)
[University Bulletin](#)

[Pre-Profession: Dental Hygiene](#)

Faculty

Advisor
[Gerry Larson](#)

Professional Organizations

[American Dental Hygienists'
Association](#)

[Loma Linda School of Dentistry](#)

Suggested Degree Path

TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED: 96 cr. [See the Undergraduate Bulletin for Details](#)

The chart below details one suggested path a student may take to complete an associate's degree in Pre-Dental Hygiene.

Freshman Year

Fall Courses	Hours
Fundamentals of Speech Comm. (SPCH 101)	4
College Writing I (ENGL 121)	3
General Studies	9
Total	16

Winter Courses	Hours
Survey of Chemistry (CHEM 105)	5
General Sociology (SOCI 204)	4
College Writing II (ENGL 122)	3
General Studies	4
Total	16

Spring Courses	Hours
General Psychology (PSYC 130)	4
College Level Math Course (See Bulletin)	4
General Studies	8
Total	16

Sophomore Year

Fall Courses	Hours
Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 121)	4
Research Writing (ENGL 223)	3
Health Option (HLTH 110 OR 220)	3-4
General Studies	5-6
Total	16

Winter Courses	Hours
Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 122)	4
General Studies	12
Total	16

Spring Courses	Hours
Anatomy & Physiology (BIOL 123)	4
Microbiology (BIOL 222)	5
Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 225)	4
General Studies	3
Total	16

+ Offered even years only

- Offered odd years only

- Humanities must be in a minimum of three areas: history, fine arts, literature, philosophy, foreign language.
- 20 hours of Humanities
- 20 hours minimum of observation/shadowing
- C- grades will not be accepted for transfer credits at Loma Linda University.
- See LLU program-specific course requirements at LLU.edu

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Office of Academic Advisement

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