

## **Essential Functions of the Dental Hygiene Student**

### **Intellectual, Conceptual and Cognitive Skills:**

Students must have the ability to measure, assess, calculate, reason, analyze, and synthesize data. Problem solving, critical thinking, and diagnosis which includes obtaining, interpreting, and documenting information are critical and essential skills. The ability to understand and comprehend three dimensional relationships is necessary.

### **Communication Skills:**

The student is expected to be able to communicate clearly in English at a level of understanding appropriate to the ability of an individual patient to understand. This communication ability is expected both in the oral and written form. Communication must be respectful and sufficient to interact with individuals, families, and groups from a variety of social, emotional, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. The clinical practice of dental hygiene requires the ability to accurately transfer gathered data into a patient record. Therapeutic communication is one aspect of communication and must be developed by the candidate. These skills include coaching, facilitating, identifying the needs and responses of the client, and the appropriate use of touching.

### **Reading Comprehension:**

The student must be capable of reading, analyzing, and comprehending college level materials such as textbooks and professional journals so he/she can apply didactic knowledge effectively in the clinical setting and exercise good judgment when delivering dental hygiene care. The student must be able to independently interpret and follow written directions and processes when learning and developing dental hygiene skills.

### **Computer Skills:**

The student must possess basic computer skills to research the most current information to evaluate products and medications, make evidence-based decisions, to enter information into the patient database, and to complete computerized patient care activities.

### **Emotional Stability/Personal Temperament:**

Direct patient contact often involves stressors that must be dealt with rationally. High levels of mental and emotional stability are required daily. The student must be able to maintain a professional attitude and appearance. Deal with stress produced by course load; clinical requirements, and patient attitude; must have the ability to adapt to change and be able to function and maintain focus in an environment with multiple extraneous stimuli.

### **Time Management Skills:**

Time management skills are needed both in the educational and clinical practice phases as the practitioner is presented with a variety of deadlines and time critical tasks. Often, more than one task competes for a given block of time and the prospective student is expected to be able to prioritize the tasks and have them completed in a timely fashion. Functioning under time and patient management constraints is often encountered.

## **Physical Requirements**

### **Visual and Perceptual Skills:**

The practice of clinical dental hygiene mandates that the practitioner has fine motor control with correspondingly high hand-eye coordination. Visual acuity should be corrected with the ability to accommodate at a distance of 10" or less. Color vision deficiencies should be limited to a single color. As a part of visual/perceptual coordination, the student must be able to observe laboratory demonstrations and patient conditions as a part of clinical treatment.

### **Motor Skills:**

Students should have the motor function sufficient to enable them to execute movements required to provide general for patients in routine and emergency situations. It is required that a student possess the motor skills necessary to directly perform palpation, percussion, auscultation and other diagnostic maneuvers, basic laboratory tests and diagnostic procedures.

### **Other Sensory Skills:**

Should have correctable hearing in at least one ear and be able to develop reasonable skills of percussion and auscultation. Sensory and motor innervations of the hand and arm muscles should be intact and functioning normally as fine motor and tactile skills are an essential component of this profession. Such actions require coordination of both gross and fine muscular movements, equilibrium, and functional uses of the senses of touch, vision, and smell. Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress.

- A. If a physical and/or mental health condition arises that interferes with the student being able to meet the core performance standards, the student must submit a physician's release documenting the student's ability to meet the core performance standards before continuing or reapplying to the program.

### **B. ADA Statement**

Any student who feels they may need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should make an appointment with GHC Student Support Services to coordinate reasonable accommodation. Students are welcome to contact their instructor to privately discuss the matter.