

Master of Science, Concentration in Dental Hygiene MS

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Reference

The Master of Science Degree Program in Dental Hygiene prepares professional dental hygienists with specialized skills for roles in oral healthcare management, marketing, teaching in dental hygiene education, community-based oral health, and/or research. The program and its faculty support the institutional mission by promoting: the advancement of knowledge and service in oral healthcare, quality continuing education/life long learning opportunities for practicing dental hygienists and assistants, education of a diverse student body in a multicultural environment, the application of ethical principles in healthcare decisions and practice, quality instruction, partnerships with healthcare professionals and agencies in the community and beyond, and the education of dental hygienists for specialized roles as deemed by societal need.

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

The Master of Science in Dental Hygiene Program supports the major goals of the University addressed in the Strategies Plan 2000-2005.

1. Students. The program attracts students nationally and internationally, and boasts a 30% minority contingency who are socially and economically challenged.
2. Faculty. The program has attracted a distinguished faculty who are recognized nationally for their expertise, quality and strength.
3. Societal Need. The program focuses on the preparation of dental hygienists for advanced professional roles. The program is one of nine master of science in dental hygiene degree programs in the nation. The rarity of such programs makes Old Dominion University a focal point for dental hygiene education in the nation and in the world.
4. Teaching Excellence. Graduate faculty in the School of Dental Hygiene have been recognized for their teaching excellence. Awards earned by faculty include the Alan Rufus Tonelson Distinguished Faculty Award, The State Council on Higher Education Outstanding Faculty Award, The College of Health Sciences Hirschfeld Award for Outstanding Teaching, the American Dental Hygienists' Association/ Warner Lambert Award for Excellence in Dental Hygiene, the American Dental Hygienists' Award for the Outstanding Faculty Advisor and the Teletechnet Teaching Award. Faculty have also been finalists for

the State Council on Higher Education Outstanding Faculty Award and the Carnegie Foundation

Professor of the Year.

5. Research, Scholarship, Creativity. The faculty embrace the philosophy that professional advancement is achieved through a strong research commitment. The nine full time faculty members have expertise in research design, proposal development and in conducting clinical trials and surveys. A proposal has been developed to establish a Center for Dental Hygiene Research. Faculty and graduate students conduct research, write grants, and disseminate findings nationally and internationally via journals and presentations.

6. Distance Learning. One course in the masters program is currently offered on TELETECHNET; with three other courses (DNTH414/514, 416/516, 604) scheduled to be offered Spring 01, Fall 01 and Spring 02 respectfully. The Master of Science in Dental Hygiene Program will be available on TELETECHNET in the near future.

7. Community Service. Community service is a large part of the Old Dominion University mission that is supported by the master of science in dental hygiene degree program. Faculty and graduate students serve as a resource to the development of Hampton Roads. Projects have been conducted with the American Red Cross, Operation Smile International, Chesapeake Care, Life Net, renal dialysis facilities, Veterans' Administration Medical Center and the Norfolk Naval Base, just to highlight some.

8. Alumni. Students continue to contribute to the quality of academic life at Old Dominion University long after they complete their masters' degrees. Alumni participate on the Dental Hygiene Advisory Board, return as speakers, provide externship experiences for current students and participate in both professional and social activities.

Therefore, the Dental Hygiene Masters Degree Program advances the major University goals in teaching, research and service.

Intended (Student) Outcomes for your program, Methods for Assessment, and Criteria for Success for each Intended Outcome

Intended Outcome 1

Expand the career opportunities, roles and choices of the graduates

Criterion for Success: At least 75% of the alumni perceive that the program expanded career opportunities, roles and choices.

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: Data were collected via a self-designed questionnaire sent to all alumni of the program who graduated between 1980-1995 (n=53). This period was selected to purposely exclude graduates from the original years of the program and also the most recent graduates who might not yet be established in their careers to contribute valid perspectives about the master of science in dental hygiene program. The findings are based upon a 69.8% response rate. Regarding factors which influenced alumni to pursue the master of science in dental hygiene degree program, results revealed that alumni perceived the program as very important for their professional growth (82.4%), career advancement (62.9%), and self-satisfaction (82.9%), and somewhat or very important in terms of salary advancement (51.4%), ability to change careers (54.3%) and for professional recognition (68.6%).

Alumni perceived the curriculum to offer "moderate to great emphasis" in the development of roles in classroom teaching (88.8%), clinical teaching (88.5%), and research (91.5%), while "some emphasis" was perceived for administration/management (45.7%) and "little emphasis" in sales and marketing (42.9%). Fifty-four percent perceived "little to no emphasis" on clinical practice. Findings suggest that the curriculum is preparing students in the specialized areas of education and research, but that curriculum offerings may need to be strengthened in administration/management and sales/marketing. More students are selecting these two areas of specialization than before; therefore, in addition to the existing course offerings in the College of Health Sciences and Business, the faculty will expand the 3-9 credit externship elective to include opportunities in administration/management and sales/marketing. Students will be advised of these opportunities. Because no master's candidates have ever selected clinical practice as an area of specialization and because applicants appear to be well prepared clinically, the faculty decided to delete this area of specialization in 1999.

Seventy-four percent of the alumni completed original research leading to a thesis, which supports the learning outcomes of acquiring initial competence in conducting oral health research and a foundation for doctoral education.

Of the respondents, only 11.4% indicated that they were not working. It is not known whether the 11.4% are unemployed by choice. Of those who were working, 51.4% were employed in academia (half of which are in tenured or tenure track positions) and 37.1% were in nonacademic employment settings. Of those in academic settings, one-third held the rank of associate professor, one-third held the rank of assistant professor, 5.6% were lecturers, and 22.2% were instructors. Seventy-four percent of the alumni agreed or strongly agreed that obtaining the master of science degree in dental hygiene increased their career opportunities. Eighty-three percent of the respondents worked full time and earned salaries within the median range of \$40-44,000. Since the inception of the program, 4 alumni have successfully earned DDS/DMD's, 4 are currently enrolled in PhD

programs and 2 hold Ph.D.'s. Additionally, 60% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they would consider pursuing a doctorate. Therefore, the master of science program provides an excellent foundation for doctoral education. In conclusion, learning outcomes that address oral health promotion/education and research are being achieved. The learning outcome on managerial/administrative competencies needs to be strengthened.

Intended Outcome 2

Graduate individuals who are satisfied with the Master of Science in Dental Hygiene Degree Program.

Criterion for Success: At least 75% of the alumni express satisfaction with the program.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: An overwhelming 77.2% of the alumni indicated that they would recommend the dental hygiene graduate program to other dental hygienists. Career satisfaction of the alumni was further supported by the fact that only 17% felt somewhat trapped in their current careers. However, one fourth of the respondents would not pursue the same graduate degree again, suggesting that a small group of alumni may be experiencing some career dissatisfaction or dissatisfaction with the masters degree program. Seventy-four percent of the alumni agree/or strongly agreed that obtaining the master of science degree in dental hygiene increased their career opportunities.

One major limitation of this assessment study is that the alumni span a 15 year period, from 1980-1995. During this time, changes have been made in the program and curriculum that certain alumni may be unaware of, or have never experienced. Therefore, opinions about past curriculum must be viewed within the context of the alumnus' years at Old Dominion University.

Intended Outcome 3

Graduate students to assume professional leadership roles.

Criterion for Success: At least 50% of the graduates will assume leadership roles within the profession.

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: One of the learning outcomes of the masters program is to develop and implement leadership skills for the betterment of oral healthcare. This outcome was assessed primarily by the section of the questionnaire that focused on professional involvement, i.e., scholarship and involvement in the professional association. Of the respondents, 54.3% have presented a research poster session at a professional meeting, 74.3% have made oral presentations at professional meetings, 54.3% have published refereed abstracts, 31.4% have reviewed manuscripts for a refereed journals, 20% have made presentations at research symposia, 57% have conducted original research, 43% have applied for research grants and 29% have successfully acquired funding, 46% have mentored students in research and 20% have mentored faculty in research.

Regarding professional association involvement, 100% of the respondents were members of the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA); 11.4% have held a national office and 17.1% have served on a national committee. At the state level, 32.4% have held state offices and 50% have served on state level committees. At the local level of the ADHA, 65% have held an office and 55% have served on committees. Leadership of the alumni is evident in the American Association of Dental Schools where 68.6% hold membership, and 3% have held committee membership. Six percent of the alumni hold membership in the International Federation of Dental Hygienists and one alumna is the editor of Contact International, IFDH's journal. In contrast, only 8.8% of the alumni held membership in the American Association of Dental Research/International Association of Dental Research and no one has held an office or committee assignment in that organization. In 1996, the AADR/IADR established a Section on Oral/Dental Hygiene Research. This new section should attract alumni involved in research. Based on these findings, it is concluded that the masters degree program develops leadership skills in its graduates. The faculty will continue to require DNTH516 Administrative Leadership and Professional Development in the core requirements for the masters degree program.