

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 competencies 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, education of a diverse student body in a multicultural environment, the application of ethical principles in healthcare decisions, quality instruction, partnerships with healthcare professionals, businesses and agencies, and the education of dental hygienists for specialized roles guided by societal need.

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

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

1. Students. The program attracts students nationally and internationally, and boasts a 20% minority and 30% international contingency .
2. Faculty. The program maintains a distinguished faculty 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 globally.
4. Teaching Excellence. Graduate faculty in the School of Dental Hygiene are recognized for 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 Student Advisor, the Outstanding Achievement Award from the Dominion University Library, and the Teletechnet Teaching Award. Some 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. In 2001, the School establish a Center for Dental Hygiene Research, the only such center in the world. Faculty and graduate students conduct research, write grants, and disseminate findings nationally and internationally via journals and presentations. Collaborations have occurred with the College of William and Mary, the Diamond General Corporation, the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association and Eastern Virginia Medical School.
6. Distance Learning. One course in the accelerated bachelor's to master's program is currently offered on TELETECHNET. This course is also a core course in the BS in Health Sciences and MS in Community Health Programs.
7. Community Service. Community service, a large part of the Old Dominion University mission, is supported by the master of science in dental hygiene degree program. Collectively, faculty and graduate students serve as a resource to Hampton Roads' development and quality of life. Projects have been conducted with the American Red Cross, the Oral Health Coalition, Operation Smile International, Chesapeake Care, LifeNet, renal dialysis facilities, Veterans' Administration Medical Center, Physicians' for Peace, the state Division of Dental Health, 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, host 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 Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results

Intended Outcome 1

Expand the career opportunities, roles and choices of the graduates

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: At least 75% of the alumni will report pursuing career opportunities, roles and choices.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1: Of the 1996-2002 graduates (N=20), 75%(n=15) are employed in education, business or public health. About 15% (n=3) are in private practice. One is currently working on a PhD and one recently graduated from dental school. Findings suggest that the curriculum is preparing students for roles in education, research, administration/management and sales/marketing, and that the curriculum provides a foundation for doctoral study. More students are selecting the sales/ marketing and community health specialization than before. Eighty-five percent (n=17) of the alumni who graduated between 1996-2002 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 one was unemployed because her husband was in the process of being deployed to Guam. Of those employed (n=18), 66% (n=12) were employed in academia (half of which are in tenured or tenure track positions) and 17% (n=3) were in public health and business settings.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 1 to Improve Academic Program: Learning outcomes that address oral health promotion/education, research, sales/marketing, and administration/management are being achieved. The learning outcome in the areas of sales/marketing and managerial/administrative needs to be strengthened via expanding externship opportunities in settings that support the development of these competencies. Contacts will be made with several major companies in the oral care products industry to develop externship opportunities.

Intended Outcome 2

Graduate individuals who contribute to the evidence-base of dental hygiene practice and decision making.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: Number of papers published in the major dental hygiene journals and professional magazines, and number of presentations made at major dental hygiene meetings and conferences by alumni.

Criterion for Success: At least 60% of alumni contribute to the evidence base of dental hygiene as demonstrated by their publications and professional presentations at meetings, conferences and symposia.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2: Since 1996, an overwhelming 80% (n=16) of the alumni who graduated between 1996-2002 have published papers in refereed journals, and/or delivered national and international presentations and research poster presentations.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: Students must successfully complete and defend either a written thesis project or a written graduate project to a body of faculty and students.

Criterion for Success: 100% of the students will have their thesis or nonthesis project judged as at least satisfactory by a graduate faculty committee.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 2: During the period of 1996-2002, 85% (n=17) of the students completed theses judged by the faculty to be at least satisfactory, and 15% (n=3) of the students completed nonthesis projects judged to be at least satisfactory by a graduate faculty committee.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 2 to Improve Academic Program: The faculty will continue to mentor graduate students closely to ensure their successful completion and defense of written theses or graduate student projects. The faculty plan to continue student involvement in the Dental Hygiene Research Center activities including grant writing, publishing and making professional presentations.

Intended Outcome 3

Develop and implement leadership skills for the betterment of oral healthcare.

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: Monitor the level of professional involvement of alumni in the key professional associations (American Dental Hygienists' Association, International Federation of Dental Hygienists', American Dental Education Association, and the American Association of Dental Research/International Association of Dental Research).

Criterion for Success: At least 60% of alumni assume leadership positions in a professional association, receive awards for their work, actively engage in research that leads to publications, or make professional presentations.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3: Of the persons who graduated between 1996-2002, 75% (n=15) have presented a research poster session at a professional meeting, 15% (n=3) have made oral presentations at professional meetings, 75% (n=15) have published refereed abstracts, 20% (n=4) have published papers in refereed journals, one is the coauthor of a book, and two have published chapters in a book. One alumni who graduated in 1979 received the 2003 American Dental Education Association/GlaxoSmithKline Award for Excellence in Teaching. One current student received the Most Valuable Member Award from the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association. In terms of professional association leadership, one graduate from the 1996-2002 time period has served three years as President of the Tidewater Dental Hygienists' Association; one graduate has served a three year term as District III Trustee to the American Dental Hygienists Association; one graduate has served as Speaker of the House of Delegates for the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association; one has served as Historian for the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association; and one graduate currently serves as the American Dental Hygienists' Association's State Educational Network Liaison to the Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association. Based on these findings, it is concluded that the masters degree program develops leadership skills in its graduates.

Use of Assessment Results from Intended Outcome 3 to Improve Academic Program: The faculty will continue to require DNTH516 Administrative Leadership and Professional Development in the core requirements for the masters degree program. Students also will be encouraged to assume leadership positions within the Student American Dental Hygienists' Association while enrolled in the program.

Intended Outcome 4

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

Method for Assessing Outcome 4 and Criterion for Success: Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey that was implemented during academic year 2002-2003.

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

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 4: Given that the exit Graduate Student Satisfaction Survey was just implemented in academic year 2002-2003, no data are available to report at this time.