

## Dental Hygiene Program

### Additional Admission Requirements

Students interested in the Dental Hygiene program must complete all admission requirements listed below by the acceptance deadline.

 **New for fall 2026:** Applicants must submit both the [Iowa Western application](#) for admission and the [Dental Hygiene Competitive Program application](#) once all admission requirements are met. This application will open in the **fall prior to the program start term** and **must be submitted by the acceptance deadline** to be considered for admission.

The Dental Hygiene program is accredited by the [Commission on Dental Accreditation \(CODA\)](#) and **has been granted the status of Accreditation with reporting requirements with intent to withdraw accreditation in August 2025**. The Commission is recognized by the **U.S. Department of Education** and can be contacted at:

**Address:** 211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 1900, Chicago, IL 60611

**Phone:** 312-440-4653

#### Program Locations, Start Dates, and Deadlines:

Location	Semester Program Begins	Acceptance Deadline	Program Capacity
Council Bluffs	Fall (August)	January 31	20

**Important:** Apply to Iowa Western for your intended start term and submit the **new for fall 2026 Dental Hygiene application** once all requirements are met. **Ensure all documents are submitted prior to the Acceptance Deadline.**

### Section 1: College Admission Requirements

To apply for Iowa Western, complete the following steps:

- **Submit an Application:**
  - Apply online at [www.iwcc.edu](http://www.iwcc.edu).
  - There is no application fee.
- **Request Transcripts:**
  - Have your final, official high school transcript, HiSET/GED transcript, or college transcript sent to Iowa Western. Official transcripts must be received before the acceptance deadline. For more details on submitting official transcripts, please refer to item 2 on the [Admissions page](#).
- **Optional Test Scores:**
  - Standardized test scores (ACT, SAT) are not required for admission.
  - If available, submit your most recent scores to help advisors determine placement in math and English courses.

**Note:** Completing these steps ensures acceptance to Iowa Western as a General Studies AS student with a secondary program of "Prep Dental Hygiene." Students can then enroll in general education courses required for the Dental Hygiene program. For help with registration or admissions requirements, contact us at [admissions@iwcc.edu](mailto:admissions@iwcc.edu) or call 712-325-3277.



## Section 2: Dental Hygiene Program Admission Requirements

To apply for the Dental Hygiene program, complete the following steps:

1. **Observation Requirement:**
  - Complete 16 hours of observation with a Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) and submit a completed Dental Hygiene Program Observation Form.
  - Observation hours must be completed within 12 months of the acceptance deadline.
2. **Complete Prerequisite Courses:**
  - Earn a grade of "C" or higher in each of the following courses:
    - ENG-105: Composition I
    - SPC-112: Public Speaking
    - CHM-132: Introduction to Organic and Biochemistry
      - *Prerequisite:* CHM-122 Introduction to General Chemistry OR one year of high school Chemistry with a grade of "C" or higher earned within the last two years.
      - *Prerequisite for CHM-122 Introduction to General Chemistry:* A grade of "C" or higher in one of the following:
        - One year of high school Algebra within the last two years,
        - MAT-743 Technical Math, or
        - MAT-102 Intermediate Algebra.
    - BIO-168: Human Anatomy & Physiology I with Labs
      - *Prerequisite:* A grade of "C" or higher in BIO-157 Human Biology or one year of high school Anatomy and Physiology with a grade of "C" or higher earned within the last two years.
    - BIO-173: Human Anatomy Physiology II with Labs
      - *Prerequisite:* A grade of "C" or higher in Anatomy & Physiology I with Labs.
3. **New for fall 2026 Submit a Dental Hygiene Application:**
  - The [Dental Hygiene application](#) opens in the fall prior to the program start term and must be submitted by the acceptance deadline.
  - All required attachments must be included when submitting the application. Incomplete applications will be returned for correction.

**Note:** Ensure all requirements are met **before** submitting the [Dental Hygiene application](#). For assistance, contact the Admissions Office at [admissions@iwcc.edu](mailto:admissions@iwcc.edu) or 712-325-3277.

### Recommended Course Sequence:

Semester	Courses	Credits
<b>First Semester</b>	BIO-157: Human Biology (may be waived)	4
	*ENG-105: Composition I	3
	MAT-743: Technical Math (may be waived)	4
<b>Second Semester</b>	*BIO-168: Human Anatomy & Physiology I with Labs	4
	*SPC-112: Public Speaking	3
	CHM-122: Introduction to General Chemistry (may be waived)	4
<b>Third Semester</b>	*BIO-173: Human Anatomy & Physiology II with Labs	4
<b>Fourth Semester</b>	*CHM-132: Introduction to Organic & Biochemistry	4

**Note:** Classes marked with an asterisk are required for acceptance.



## Section 3: Acceptance Process

1. **Eligibility and Application Review:**
  - Complete the College Admissions Requirements (Section 1) and the Dental Hygiene Program Admissions Requirements (Section 2), including the **new for fall 2026 Dental Hygiene application** prior to the Acceptance Deadline.
2. **Acceptance Deadline:**
  - Acceptance begins after the listed priority deadline:
    - **Fall Semester:** January 31
  - The program admits 20 students per year.
3. **Selection Process:**
  - Admissions reviews records based on a point system, which evaluates:
    - Grades in prerequisite science courses (Anatomy & Physiology I and II, Introduction to Organic & Biochemistry).
    - Completion of a bachelor's or master's degree.
    - Healthcare work experience (if applicable).
  - Dental Hygiene faculty make the final determination of acceptance from a blinded ranking list, considering:
    - Points awarded,
    - Prerequisite course grades,
    - Work experience,
    - And additional factors.
4. **Acceptance Notification:**
  - Students will receive an email notification from the Admissions Office approximately four to six weeks after the acceptance deadline.
  - The program admits 20 students per year.
5. **Alternate List:**
  - A **limited number of alternates** will be selected. If an accepted student declines their offer, alternates may be offered a spot in the program.
6. **Next Steps After Acceptance:**
  - Accepted students **must** complete additional steps before beginning the program, including:
    - Registering for classes
    - Attending a Dental Hygiene orientation
    - Submitting required health and background check documentation
  - These details will be provided in the acceptance email and follow-up communication from the Dental Hygiene department.

## Section 4: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. Why does the Dental Hygiene program have additional admission requirements?

The Dental Hygiene program is a rigorous academic program requiring students to have a strong foundation in human biology, anatomy & physiology, and chemistry to ensure success.

### 2. How competitive is the admission process?

Admission is highly competitive, with students ranked using a point system based on prerequisite course grades, prior degree attainment, and healthcare work experience. Only **20 students** are accepted per year.

### 3. Can I apply before finishing my prerequisite courses?

No. You must complete all prerequisite courses before submitting the [Dental Hygiene Competitive Program application](#).

### 4. How do I submit proof of healthcare work experience?



You must complete and submit the [Healthcare Work Experience Verification form](#) by the acceptance deadline to receive 2 points toward your application score.

## 5. Does the program have a waiting list?

No, the Dental Hygiene program does not maintain a waiting list. If you are not accepted, you may reapply in a future application cycle.

## 6. What if I don't complete the admission requirements in time?

You may reapply for a future admission cycle once all requirements are complete.

## Section 5: Dental Hygiene Program – Point System

Admission to the **Dental Hygiene program** is **competitive** and based on a **point system**. To be included in the point calculation, all required documentation **must be on file** with the **Admissions Office** by the acceptance deadline.

### 1. Science GPA (Maximum 40 Points)

Points are awarded based on the average GPA of the following prerequisite science courses:

- **BIO-168** Human Anatomy & Physiology I
- **BIO-173** Human Anatomy & Physiology II
- **CHM-132** Introduction to Organic & Biochemistry

GPA Range	Points Awarded
3.68 – 4.00	40 points
3.34 – 3.67	35 points
3.01 – 3.33	30 points
2.68 – 3.00	25 points
2.34 – 2.67	15 points
2.01 – 2.33	10 points

### 2. Prior Degree Completion (Maximum: 5 Points)

Students may receive **5 points** for prior degree attainment:

**Bachelor's or master's degree = 5 points**

**⚠ Only one degree is counted (points are not cumulative for multiple degrees).**

### 3. Healthcare Work Experience (Maximum: 2 Points)

Students may receive **2 points** for documented healthcare work experience.

#### Requirements:

- Work experience must be in a **healthcare setting** (e.g., medical or dental office).
- Must be verified using the [Healthcare Work Experience Verification form](#).
- Must meet **one** of the following:
  - **Full-time employment: Minimum of two years**
  - **Part-time employment: Minimum of four years**

## Section 6: Program Mission & Learning Outcomes

### Program Mission Statement

The **Iowa Western Community College Department of Dental Hygiene** is affiliated with **Creighton University School of Dentistry**. The program's mission is to educate **Associate of Applied Science Degree dental hygienists** in the broadest scope of clinical practice.

Graduates are **competent to provide comprehensive educational and clinical services**, reflecting the expertise of dental hygienists. They are prepared to serve in both **private and public health settings** to support **optimal oral health**.

All aspects of the program are **continually assessed** to maintain excellence and guide improvement. In alignment with the program's mission of **caring, commitment, and challenge**, the Dental Hygiene program provides a **positive, learner-focused environment**.

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### Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of the **Iowa Western Dental Hygiene Program** will:

- Utilize **evidence-based decision-making principles**.
  - Apply the **Dental Hygiene process of care** to meet the needs of diverse populations.
  - Operate **within an ethical framework** aligned with the Dental Hygiene scope of practice.
  - Motivate and effectively communicate with all populations to **promote high standards of oral health**.
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### Affiliated Program Information

The **Iowa Western Community College Dental Hygiene Program** was established in collaboration with **Creighton University School of Dentistry** in 1998.

#### Benefits of the Affiliation

- Students gain exposure to a **diverse educational and clinical experience**.
- The program combines **urban, private university resources** with the **intimate learning environment of a community college**.

Iowa Western has an **articulation agreement with Creighton University**, allowing students to pursue a **Bachelor of Science Degree in Dental Hygiene**.

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### General Program Information

- The **Infectious Control Policy** is available in the **Division Office**.
- **Clinical requirements** are completed at **Creighton University School of Dentistry** and selected off-site clinics.
- Applicants must be **at least 18 years old** on the first day of class.
- Classes are held **Monday through Friday during the day**.
- Courses must be taken **in sequence**, with a **minimum grade of "C"** required to progress in the program.
- There is **no waiting list** – new applications are accepted each year.



- Upon completion of the program, students must successfully pass:
    - The [Dental Hygiene National Board Exam](#)
    - The [CRDTS exam](#) or another **state/regional board exam**
    - A **jurisprudence exam** before obtaining licensure
  - The program **adheres to CDC and OSHA guidelines**. The [Infection Control Policy](#) is available in the **Division Office**.
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## Dental Hygiene Observation Form

### Observation Requirement:

To be considered for admission to the **Dental Hygiene program**, applicants must complete **16 hours of observation** with a **Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH)**. This experience provides insight into the role of a dental hygienist in a professional setting.

- Observation hours must be **completed within 12 months** of the acceptance deadline.
- This form must be submitted as part of the [Dental Hygiene Competitive Program application](#). Forms submitted separately will not be accepted.

### Submission Instructions:

- This form must be submitted as part of the [Dental Hygiene Competitive Program application](#).
- **Do not send this form separately** to the Admissions Office; incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Ensure the document is **legible, properly aligned, and free of shadows or glare** before uploading.
- Unreadable or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

### Observation Log

Date	Time In	Time Out	Hours
		Total Observation Hours	

### Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH) Certification

The following section must be completed and signed by the **supervising RDH** to verify the applicant’s observation hours.

I certify that the applicant has successfully completed the required observation hours in a **professional dental practice** setting under my supervision.

Printed Signature of RDH: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name of RDH: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Practice or Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Practice or Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number of Practice or Facility: \_\_\_\_\_



## Applicant Certification

By signing below, I hereby certify:

- I have completed the required **16 hours of observation** under the supervision of a **Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH)**.
- I understand that this form is a **required part** of the [Dental Hygiene Competitive Program application](#).
- I have reviewed the [Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice for Nebraska](#) and [Dental Hygiene Scope of Practice for Iowa](#), available on the [IWCC Dental Hygiene program webpage](#).
- I have reviewed the [Infection Control and Bloodborne Pathogen policies](#) on the [IWCC Dental Hygiene program webpage](#).
- I have reviewed the **Dental Hygiene admission criteria**, [program costs](#), and [Core Performance Standards](#) on the [IWCC Dental Hygiene program webpage](#).

Signature of Student:

Date:

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## Iowa & Nebraska Scope of Practice

[Iowa Scope of Practice](#)

[Nebraska Scope of Practice](#)

## Non-Discrimination Clause:

Iowa Western is committed to providing an inclusive environment. Please review our [Annual Notice of Non-Discrimination](#) for the latest information.

## Admissions Contact Information:

### Admissions Office:

- Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM
- Phone: 712-325-3277
- Email: [admissions@iwcc.edu](mailto:admissions@iwcc.edu)

