



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Is the Southwestern College Dental Hygiene Program an accredited program?

Yes, the Dental Hygiene Program is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation and has been granted the status of "approval without reporting requirements (March 2023)." The Commission is a specialized accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education and can be contacted at (312) 440-4653 or at 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611.

2. Do I need to complete all my prerequisites before I apply?

Yes, all prerequisite courses must be completed prior to application. In-progress courses/ transcripts will not be accepted. The dental hygiene semesters have 11 to 14 units and will have students in class upward to 30 hours.

3. Can prerequisite courses from other schools be used?

Yes, if the school is WASC or regionally accredited and if the course is equivalent to our requirement. If the course can be substituted, forms must be submitted to the dental hygiene program to complete the substitution process. Please call (619) 216-6665 ex.4851,4852 or 4853 to schedule an appointment to meet with the Dental Hygiene Counselor.

4. I took some of my science courses over 7 years ago, will they apply to the prerequisites for the program?

No. All science prerequisite courses must be within 7 years. If courses are over 7 years or getting close, we recommend trying to audit the course as a refresher.

5. Do I have to meet with a counselor before applying?

*It is highly recommended to establish a Student Education Plan (SEP) at Southwestern College. This plan helps students confirm all AS Degree Dental Hygiene required course work is complete. Counseling appointments can be made by calling (619) 216-6665 (Ext. 4851) or in-person at the Higher Education Center at National City, Student Services. **You must obtain a Southwestern College Student ID number to make an appointment. Apply to the college online to obtain an ID number.***

6. How do I apply to Southwestern College?

Apply Online using the link on the college's homepage.

7. Is there an Advanced Placement option in the Dental Hygiene Program?

No, Advanced Placement is not an option.

8. Is California residency required for admission to the Dental Hygiene Program?

No. See the Admissions and Records web site for detailed information on Residency requirements.

9. How do I request an application to the Dental Hygiene Program?

Application period will open in January with a February deadline for submission. Application is available Online only during the filing period.

10. Is there a waiting list to get into the Dental Hygiene Program?

No, admission is on a lottery system once per year. Please review the DH Information Packet for details.

11. When does the program start?

The Dental Hygiene Program starts once a year, every Fall semester (August). Incoming students receive current information at orientation, which occurs in Summer before the Fall semester starts.

12. Approximately how much time must one devote to the Dental Hygiene Program once enrolled?

Total hours, including study time, is approximately 60-65 hours per week.

13. What is the estimated cost of program?

The cost for the 2-year program is approximately \$13,000 to \$15,000. This cost includes instruments, materials, supplies, textbooks, uniforms, etc. It does not include replacement materials or equipment, national and clinical board examination cost, or living expenses.

14. Do I need dental office experience?

No. Any office experience will give you a better idea of the dental hygiene career. If you can volunteer or observe in a dental office it would provide more information to ensure you have chosen the right career. We recommend volunteering to get your teeth cleaned in our clinic by a current student.

15. I am a dental school graduate from a foreign country. Do I have priority for admission to the dental hygiene program?

While we value your past education and degrees, we are unable to give you advanced standing. Prerequisite science courses must have been taken within the past seven years. Additionally, you must meet with a SWC counselor to ensure you have met all general education requirements.

16. If I am a graduate of a dental assisting program, do I have to take all courses offered in the dental hygiene program.

YES. Incoming students may want to meet with the program director for more detailed information.

17. Do I have priority having been or being an RDA?

Persons with a dental assisting certificate or RDA license are not given priority placement in the program.