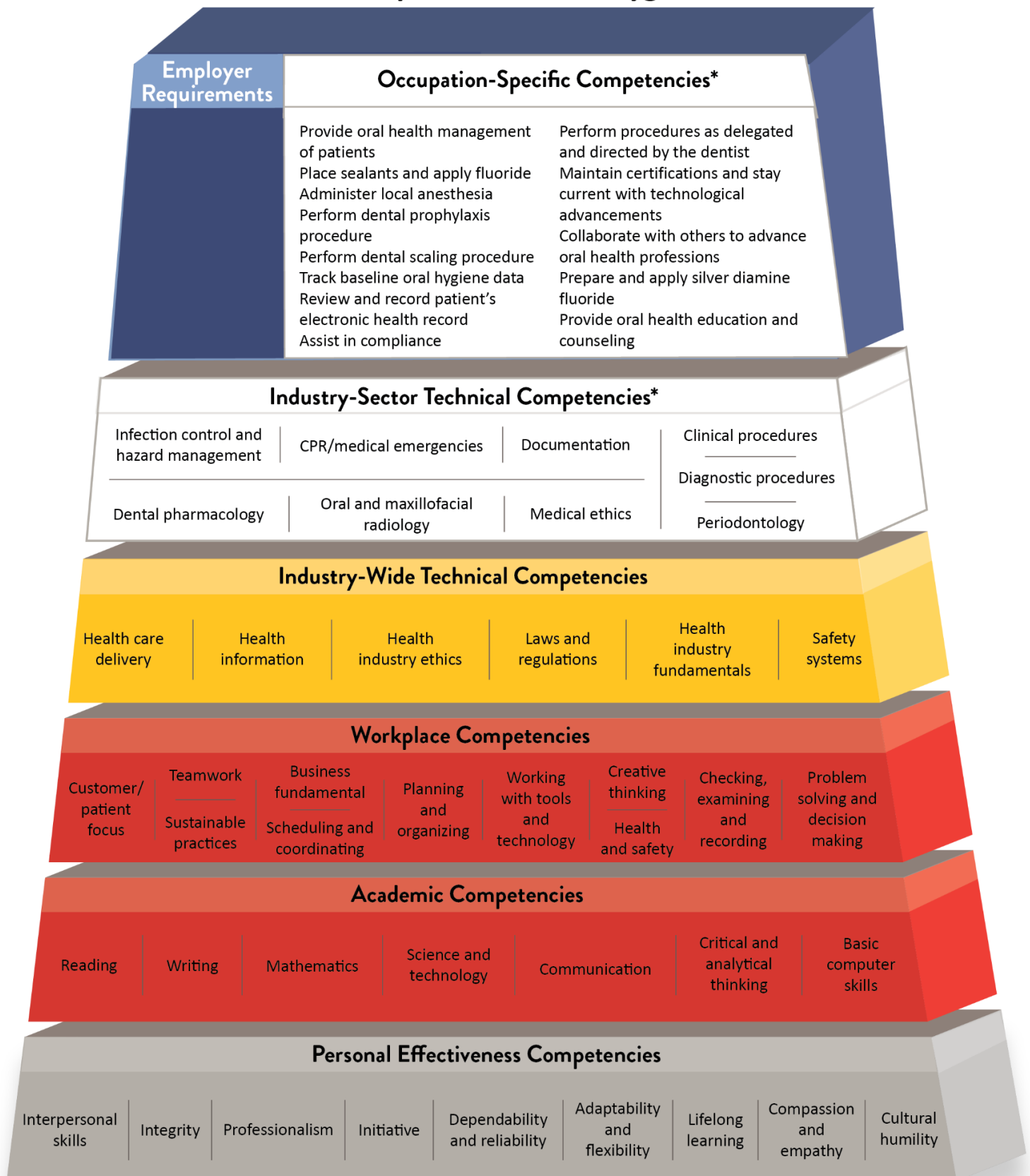


Minnesota Dual-Training Pipeline

Competency Model for Health Care Services

Occupation: Dental Hygienist



Based on: Fundamentals of Health Care Competency Model, Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor, February 2025. For more detailed information about competency model creation and sources, visit dli.mn.gov/business/workforce/health-care-services.

Competency Model for Dental Hygienist

Dental Hygienist – A licensed health care professional who works with the dentist, providing preventive, educational, and therapeutic services for the control of oral diseases and the promotion of both oral and overall health.

*Pipeline recommends the Industry-Sector Technical Competencies as formal training opportunities (provided through related instruction) and the Occupation-Specific Competencies as on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities.

Industry-Sector Technical Competencies

Related Instruction for dual training means the organized and systematic form of education resulting in the enhancement of skills and competencies related to the dual trainee's current or intended occupation.

- **Infection control and hazard management** – Understand and practice infection control to ensure a sanitary dental environment for clients.
- **Dental pharmacology** – Knowledge of how drugs and medications used in dental treatment affect patients.
- **CPR/medical emergencies** – Training including cardiopulmonary resuscitation on adults, children and infants, and medical emergency management.
- **Oral and maxillofacial radiology** – Understand general principles of radiology, radiation protection, regulations and recent concepts of imaging.
- **Documentation** – Understanding of written compilation of diagnosis and treatments that transpired during the visit.
- **Medical ethics** – Understand principles of medical ethics and how they apply in professional standards.
- **Clinical procedures** – Knowledge of core procedures in dentistry, how to accomplish them and the rationale behind them.
- **Diagnostic procedures** – Knowledge of evidence-based critical analysis and interpretation of assessments in order to provide the basis for the dental hygiene care plan.

- **Periodontology** – Understand periodontal diseases, assessment, and treatment options.

Occupation-Specific Competencies

On-the-Job Training is hands-on instruction completed at work to learn the core competencies necessary to succeed in an occupation. Common types of OJT include job shadowing, mentorship, cohort-based training, assignment-based project evaluation and discussion-based training.

- **Provide oral health management of patients** – Provide services including dental prophylaxis, scaling, sealant application, fluoride application, periodontal screening and administering local anesthetic consistent with accepted professional standards.
- **Place sealants and apply fluoride** – Knowledge of how to prevent the deterioration of enamel which can lead to infection and the need for restorative intervention.
- **Administer local anesthetic** – Able to perform safe and effective administration techniques.
- **Perform dental prophylaxis procedure** – Understand how to clean the teeth including removal of plaque, materia alba, calculus, and extrinsic stains as a preventive measure for control of gingivitis.
- **Perform dental scaling procedure** – Able to remove calculus buildup below the gum line to prevent bacteria that could cause bone loss.
- **Track baseline oral hygiene data** – Understanding of basic accepted principles for baseline oral hygiene data.
- **Review and record patient's electronic health record** – Ability to reflect nature of contact, condition and care of patient and treatment provided. This includes patient's vital signs and medical and dental histories.
- **Provide oral health education and counseling** – Knowledge about good nutrition and its impact on oral and overall health. Also know how to teach about good teeth brushing and flossing practices.
- **Perform procedures as delegated and directed by the dentist** – Able to do so in accordance with state regulations and law.
- **Assist in compliance** – Understand policies and procedures relative to infection control, exposure control, safety and HIPAA issues.

- **Maintain certifications and stay current with technological advancements** – Know how to stay informed and up to date in CPR at a level required for Minnesota licensure, and conduct completion of courses in medical emergencies and infection control as required under the collaborative practice in community settings statute. Know how to help increase knowledge of specific topics in the field as well as stay informed on new technological advancements.
- **Collaborate with others to advance oral health professions** – Ability to commit to advancing oral health professional practice, development of collaborative partnerships, and to increasing access points for oral health care delivery.
- **Prepare and apply silver diamine fluoride** – Know how to stop tooth decay with the process of silver diamine fluoride.

Updated October 2025