The dental hygienist is responsible for providing treatment that helps to prevent oral diseases such as dental caries (cavities) and periodontal disease (gum disease) and for educating the patient to maintain optimal oral health.

**Pre-Dentistry**

Dentistry is devoted to maintaining the health of teeth and gums, as well as other hard and soft tissues of the mouth. Early detection of oral cancer and systemic conditions that manifest themselves through the mouth are necessary for the maintenance of general health. The dentist is, in fact, a person dedicated to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of all oral diseases and conditions. In addition to general dentistry careers, dental school graduates can pursue additional studies in one of the following dental specialties: dental public health, endodontics, oral and maxillofacial procedures, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics.

**Pre-Medical Laboratory Science**

Medical Laboratory Science (also known as Medical Technology or Clinical Lab Science) is an allied health profession concerned with performing laboratory tests that are used in the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of disease and in the maintenance of health. The clinical lab scientist performs a full range of laboratory tests from simple pre-marital blood tests to more complex tests to uncover diseases, such as AIDS, diabetes, and cancer. The clinical lab scientist is also responsible for confirming the accuracy of test results and reporting laboratory findings to the pathologist and other doctors.

**Pre-Medicine**

The medical profession (allopathic, osteopathic, or podiatric) offers a wide variety of career options and specialties. On most medical teams, the physician serves as the primary diagnostician, healer, and patient advocate remains central to the provision of health care in our country. Although most physicians provide direct patient care, some medical degree recipients concentrate on basic or applied research, become teachers or administrators, or combine various elements of these activities.

**Pre-Mortuary Science**

Completion of a professional program in mortuary science leads to licensure as a funeral director/embalmer. Morticians deal with funeral planning, death registration, embalming, and the grief and bereavement issues of families and friends of the deceased.

**Pre-Nursing**

The nursing profession offers a wide variety of career opportunities. Nursing training programs range from associates to bachelors educational levels. Students who earn the BSN are prepared to assume staff nurse level positions in areas such as public health, gerontology, pediatrics, industrial settings, emergency medicine, psychiatric and mental health facilities, and acute care agencies. Students who desire advanced nursing degrees will find graduate programs leading to the masters and doctor of philosophy degrees in a variety of specialty areas.

**Pre-Occupational Therapy**

Occupational Therapy is a health care profession using purposeful activity (occupation) as a means of preventing, reducing, or overcoming physical, social, and emotional challenges in people of all ages. An occupational therapist works with individuals whose participation in daily activities has been impaired by physical injury/illness, developmental/learning disabilities, psychological/emotional problems or the aging
process. The occupational therapist carefully evaluates each person to
determine physical and/or mental strengths and weaknesses, and, in
conjunction with other health professionals, develops a program using
purposeful activities and adaptive equipment to encourage the patient’s
involvement in meaningful daily living.

Pre-Optometry
Optometry is the primary health profession dedicated to caring for
vision. Through academic and clinical training, optometrists acquire the
knowledge and skills needed to diagnose, treat, and prevent problems
of the visual system. Providing health education, managing curative
or preventive regimes, and supplying vision care to special groups of
patients are all parts of an optometrist’s work.

Pre-Pharmacy
Pharmacists are responsible for drug therapy and drug distribution
and must possess the scientific and technical knowledge necessary to
evaluate drug therapy for each individual patient. They must develop
skill in personal relations with patients and other health professionals.
Above all, they must be able to make good use of acquired knowledge
and experience in arriving at sound judgments and policy decisions.

Pre-Physical Therapy
Physical Therapists assess and treat disabilities and promote wellness
to individuals of all ages. Their primary objective is to promote optimum
human health and function. The physical therapist conducts physical
evaluations to determine the patient’s potential for rehabilitation and life
style changes indicated, as well as educates the patient and family.

Pre-Physician Assistant
The physician assistant (PA) practices medicine with the supervision of
a physician. As a result of extensive medical training, the PA can assume
many tasks traditionally performed only by a medical doctor, thereby
helping the physician to be more efficient. The PA diagnoses and treats
a wide range of common medical problems, and assists the physician in
the management of complex chronic illnesses. Many PAs make hospital
and nursing home rounds and assist in surgery. A very important part of
the PA’s role is to educate the patient and the community about illness,
family planning, social services, health hazards, baby and child care, and
other aspects of health promotion and disease prevention.

Pre-Public Health
Public health is the science and art of creating healthy communities
through education, research, and promotion of healthy lifestyles. In public
health, the focus is on health promotion and disease/injury prevention, in
contrast to the medical model of care, which focuses more heavily upon
diagnosing and treating illnesses and conditions after they occur.

Pre-Radiation Science Technology
Radiation science technology comprises several disciplines that
utilize radiation for diagnosis or treatment, including but not limited
to radiography, nuclear medicine, diagnostic medical sonography
(ultrasound), or radiation therapy technology. Students should explore
options in radiation science to see which field best fits their skills and
interests. The career options available to students interested in radiation
sciences continually expands as technology develops.

High School Preparation
Students planning to pursue advanced work in any of the pre-health
programs should begin with a strong college preparatory course
program in high school. In addition to meeting the University entrance
requirements, it is recommended that pre-health students finish four
years of the same foreign language in high school and take as many
years of mathematics and science as possible. It is especially important
for students to consult with their high school guidance counselor when
choosing to earn college credit prior to graduating through options such
as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Dual
Enrollment/Dual Credit options. Some health professional schools will
not accept or will limit acceptance and applicability of prerequisite credit
earned by examination (AB/IB or other).

Admission

Program Admission
Students who have met the overall University admission requirements
established by the Board of Regents are eligible for admission to the
Explore Center. The University admission requirements are outlined in
detail on the Admissions website (http://admissions.unl.edu).

Some UNL colleges have admission requirements in addition to the
overall University admission requirements, and pre-health students will be
advised accordingly as they choose the majors they would like to pursue.

Admission Deficiencies/Removal of Deficiencies
Because admission requirements establish the level of knowledge and
skills which are needed for a student to succeed at UNL, students who
are admitted with core course deficiencies in foreign language and
geometry are expected to quickly remove them. Deficiencies must be
removed before a student is eligible for graduation.

Advising

For most, but not all, health careers, pre-health students will need to
choose an academic major in which to complete their undergraduate
degree before attending a health profession school. Professional
academic advisors in the Explore Center engage pre-health students in
major exploration, degree planning, and academic course work selection
processes. By working closely with all of the UNL colleges, Explore
Center advisors can help students design a general academic plan
for one or more semesters that will allow them to progress toward a
degree, while also exploring the variety of opportunities offered by the
University. Students are encouraged to enroll in exploratory courses to
help identify majors of interest. Additionally, all UNL students are required
to complete the Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) requirements
(http://ace.unl.edu).

Pre-health students are encouraged to meet with a professional
academic advisor in the Explore Center early in their first semester at UNL
to discuss interest areas and to develop a plan for major exploration. Pre-
health students should continue to meet with an Explore Center advisor
at least once per semester and participate in Explore Center workshops
until they have declared their major. Additional information concerning
major exploration can be found on the Explore Center website (http://
explorcenter.unl.edu/undecided/majors-careers).

Students are assigned to a professional academic advisor in the Explore
Center but may see any advisor in the Center. Professional advisors in
the Explore Center are available on an appointment and/or walk-in basis
Monday through Friday in 127 Love (Library) South and can be reached at
402-472-3605 or explorcenter@unl.edu.
Academic Policies

Academic Load
Pre-health students may enroll in a maximum of 18 credits in the fall and spring semesters. Students should refer to the Office of the University Registrar’s website (http://registrar.unl.edu) to determine the number of credits they may enroll in for each of the summer sessions.

Grade Rules
Pass/No Pass
The Pass/No Pass grading option was designed to enable students to take courses in areas of interest where they may feel they have had minimal preparation without adversely affecting their grade point average. Grades of P (pass) are interpreted as a grade of C or better. Neither grade P or NP (no pass) contributes to the grade point average.

Pre-health students should always seek assistance from an Explore Center advisor in determining whether they should take a course through the Pass/No Pass option. Students may or may not be able to take courses Pass/No Pass depending on their intended majors and health profession interest areas.

Student Recognition
Pre-health students who complete at least 12 graded semester hours with a 3.60 GPA are eligible for the Explore Center List of Distinguished Students.

Transfer Credit Rules
The Explore Center does not offer a degree and advisors do not make transfer evaluation decisions. The determination of which transfer courses will meet graduation requirements in a specific college cannot be made until the student declares a specific major within one of the UNL undergraduate degree-granting colleges.

College Requirements

ACE Requirements
Consistent with the mission and values of the University, Achievement-Centered Education (ACE) is based on a shared set of four institutional objectives and 10 student learning outcomes. The ACE program was approved by faculty in all eight undergraduate colleges and endorsed by the Faculty Senate, the student government, and the Academic Planning Committee in January 2008 for implementation in the fall 2009. ACE aligns with current national initiatives in general education.

Key characteristics of ACE that demonstrate the benefits of the program to students:

• Students receive a broad education with exposure to multiple disciplines, critical life skills and important reasoning, inquiry, and civic capacities.
• ACE is simple and transparent for students, faculty and advisors. Students complete the equivalent of 3 credit hours for each of the ten student learning outcomes.
• Students connect and integrate their ACE experiences with their selected major.
• Students can transfer all ACE certified courses across colleges within the institution to meet the ACE requirement and any course from outside the institution that is directly equivalent to a UNL ACE-certified course. Courses from outside institutions without direct equivalents may be considered with appropriate documentation for ACE credit (see academic advisor).

ACE allows faculty to assess and improve their effectiveness and facilitate students’ learning.

ACE Institutional Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes
To meet the ACE program requirement, a student will complete the equivalent of 3 credit hours for each of the ten ACE Student Learning Outcomes (a total of 30 ACE credit hours). See the ACE website (http://ace.unl.edu) for the most current information and the most recently certified courses. Students should meet with an Explore Center advisor to discuss the planning and completion of ACE courses and requirements.