

ODHA STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROFILE – MUHAMMAD SAFWAN

SCHOOL: Canadian Academy of Dental Health



What made you want to become a dental hygienist?

Back home, I practiced dentistry and developed a deep appreciation for oral health and its impact on overall well-being. When I landed in Canada in February 2023, I brought with me not just my clinical experience, but a strong desire to continue contributing to the oral health profession in a meaningful way. Dental hygiene became my pathway—not just as a career choice, but as a calling to advocate for prevention, education, and community health. I saw dental hygiene as more than a job; it was a respected and evolving profession where I could grow, integrate my previous knowledge, and build meaningful relationships with clients.

But none of this would have been possible without the unwavering support of my family. My parents, whose sacrifices and prayers have always paved the way for my success. My wife—my true partner—who stood by me through every late night, every challenge, and every small win, always believing in me more than I believed in myself. My two beautiful children, my son and daughter, who were my motivation and light during even the most stressful days. My brothers, who cheered me on across every milestone, and my extended circle of friends and family whose encouragement made this journey not just possible, but deeply meaningful. Their love gave me strength, and their faith gave me purpose.

What type of practice setting do you hope to work in?

Now that I've graduated in June 2025, I envision myself working in a collaborative, client-centered general practice—one that values interprofessional teamwork and evidence-based care. My long-term goal is to eventually be part of a multidisciplinary setting, where dental hygienists are empowered to lead community outreach and health promotion initiatives. I believe my international background helps me bring a unique perspective to culturally competent care. I've already started networking with clinics that serve diverse populations and are committed to accessibility and equity.

If you do already have a job lined up, tell us about it!

Yes! I'm incredibly grateful to share that I've accepted a position at a progressive dental clinic that serves both urban and newcomer communities. The practice is prevention-focused and has a strong mentorship culture. The dentist and team truly respect the role of the dental hygienist—not just as a clinician or educator, but as a healthcare professional in their own right. I'll be part of oral health campaigns, fluoride programs in schools, and will assist in managing patients with periodontal disease in collaboration with the periodontist. It's more than just a job—it's a dream opportunity that aligns perfectly with my values and vision.

How will you celebrate your graduation?

Graduation is more than a milestone for me—it's a symbol of resilience, adaptation, and hard work. I plan to celebrate with the people who supported me from the moment I stepped off the plane: my family, close friends, and classmates who became like family during this intense journey. I will be organizing a small gathering featuring food from various cultures to celebrate our diverse backgrounds and shared success.

This moment belongs as much to my loved ones as it does to me. My wife and kids have sacrificed so much for this achievement. My parents—who never stopped praying for me—will be by my side, smiling with pride. My brothers and close friends have lifted me up every time I doubted myself. I also plan to take a few quiet days to reflect—maybe a solo day trip to Niagara or a lakeside retreat—to truly absorb the magnitude of this journey. It's not just about reaching the finish line—it's about honoring the people who walked beside me every step of the way.

What do you think dental hygiene students should know about their free student membership?

Your ODHA membership is not just a formality—it's your professional foundation. It connects you to a powerful network that advocates for your rights, supports your continuing education, and gives you a collective voice in the evolving field of dental hygiene. As someone who came to Canada with professional roots elsewhere, I quickly recognized how vital it is to be part of a strong professional body. ODHA gives you access to tools, mentorship, legal protection, and most importantly—a sense of belonging.

For students and new grads alike, I'd say this: when you're part of ODHA, you're never alone. You have a community that believes in your potential and stands behind you. Whether you're just starting out or aiming to specialize, ODHA is your partner every step of the way.

For more information on the ODHA student ambassador program, visit
<https://odha.on.ca/students/student-ambassador-program/>
