

ODHA STUDENT AMBASSADOR PROFILE – Tuqa Al-Musawi

SCHOOL: Fanshawe College



What made you want to become a dental hygienist?

My journey toward becoming a dental hygienist began with a deep appreciation for health sciences, which I cultivated through my bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Medical Sciences at Western University. Growing up in Iraq, I witnessed firsthand the impact that low oral health literacy and limited access to care can have on individuals' overall well-being. One pivotal moment that shaped my passion was watching my mother experience tooth loss at a young age due to uncontrolled diabetes—without ever being informed about the link between her systemic health and oral health. That experience instilled in me a strong sense of purpose and a desire to pursue a profession where I could educate and empower others to take charge of their oral health.

Dental hygiene attracted me because of its client-centered and preventive focus, and its powerful role in promoting overall health. The multifaceted nature of the profession—spanning education, advocacy, research, and clinical care—excites me and aligns with my commitment to making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

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

As I enter the profession, I envision myself working in a setting that values interprofessional collaboration and client-centered care. My long-term goal is to work in both clinical and community-based settings, particularly with non-profit organizations that focus on improving access to preventive oral health services. I am especially passionate about supporting underserved populations and ensuring that equitable care is available to all.

I hope to contribute not only through direct clinical care but also through community initiatives and education programs that address oral health disparities. Eventually, I see myself combining clinical practice with research to contribute to advancing evidence-based care in dental hygiene.

How will you celebrate your graduation?

Graduation is a meaningful milestone, and I plan to celebrate it by taking time to reflect with my family, who have supported me unconditionally throughout this journey. I also want to express my gratitude to the incredible mentors and faculty members at Fanshawe College who have guided me, inspired me, and served as role models throughout my education. Their support and encouragement have played a significant role in shaping the dental hygienist I am becoming. After years of hard work and growth, I'm looking forward to celebrating this achievement with the people who helped make it possible. I also hope to take a moment to unwind before diving into the next exciting chapter of my career.

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

Dental hygiene students should know that their ODHA membership is more than just a resource—it's a community. It offers valuable tools, professional development opportunities, and advocacy that support both students and practicing dental hygienists. Being an ODHA member has helped me stay connected to the profession, access current research, and prepare for life after graduation. It empowers students to stay

informed, engaged, and ready to make a positive impact in the field. I strongly encourage all students to take advantage of what the ODHA has to offer—it truly enhances your journey as both a learner and a future professional.

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