

Dental School Admissions Guide

Dentists diagnose, treat, and help prevent diseases, injuries, and malformations of the teeth and mouth. They improve a patient’s appearance by using a variety of cosmetic dental procedures; perform surgical procedures such as implants, tissue grants and extractions; educate patients how to take better care of their teeth and prevent oral disease; teach future dentist and dental hygienists; and perform research directed to developing new treatment methods and improving oral health. They also administer anesthetics and write prescriptions for antibiotics and other medications. The following is a brief guide to dental school admission requirements.

PREREQUISITES:

Each dental school establishes its own set of prerequisites. Below is a list of common prerequisite courses for admission into dental school. Please be sure to check the websites of the dental programs that you are most interested in to obtain a current list of undergraduate requirements.

General Biology:	BSC 114 and 115 (lab) and BSC 116 and 117 (lab) or honors equivalent
General Chemistry:	CH 101 and 102 or honors equivalent
Organic Chemistry:	CH 231, CH 232 and CH 237 (lab)
Physics:	PH 101 and PH 102 or PH 105 and PH 106 (or honors equivalent)
Mathematics:	2 semesters Math; MATH 125 required by some schools
Statistics:	PY 211, BSC 380, or CHS 425 recommended
English:	EN 101 and EN 102 or Honors EN 103 or EN 104 or AP credit
Highly Recommended:	BSC 300 (Cell Biology) BSC 450 (Biochemistry) BSC 315 (Genetics) PY 101 (Psychology) SOC 101 (Sociology) Other courses that enhance manual dexterity (sculpting, painting, drawing, ceramics, etc.) are also encouraged.

***All prerequisite courses must be completed with a grade of “C-” or higher.**

EXAM AND GPA:

The Dental Admission Test (DAT) is a standardized examination that consists of four multiple-choice sections that include natural sciences, perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning. The DAT is designed to measure general academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. It is required by all of the American dental schools. It tests your knowledge of science from the required coursework and, therefore, should not be taken until those courses are virtually complete. The months immediately following your completion of the course requirements is the best time to take the DAT. This may be the spring of junior year, the summer after sophomore year, or anytime during senior year or beyond; it will depend on your individual timeline. The DAT is a knowledge-based examination. To do well, you will need both strong test-taking skills and a thorough knowledge of the material covered by the exam. How you prepare is up to you. Your DAT score is good for three years at most dental schools, so taking the test in the spring of junior year does not necessarily mean that you must enter dental school right after college graduation.

Grade Point Average (GPA): Dental schools expect academic excellence. Good grades; typically an undergraduate GPA of 3.5 or *better* is required to be competitive.

TIMELINE:

<p>Freshman Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know your Health Professions Advisors Make an appointment • Visit your professors during office hours • Start taking basic sciences (See chart above) • Think about possible majors (Study what you love) • Begin getting involved with volunteer opportunities (campus and community) • Start shadowing • Join some student organizations (Pre-Dental Society) 	<p>Sophomore Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with next sequence of courses • Stay involved in extracurricular activities (shadowing, volunteer, etc.) • Begin to think about becoming an officer in your organizations • Visit Health Professions Office to begin to assess competitiveness • Identify Dental programs you are interested in (Fall). Develop DAT preparation plan. • BOTTOM LINE: Keep working on the things you established your first year!!
<p>Junior Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to Health Professions Advising Office about competitiveness. Attend mandatory applicant meeting (Fall) • Register for, study, and Take DAT (Spring/Summer) • Identify 5 individuals to write letters of recommendation (Fall) • Complete and Submit Application AADSAS (Summer) • Keep working on the things you have established thus far 	<p>Senior Year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on secondary applications • Wait to be contacted for interview from dental programs • Finish degree requirements • Continue with activities • Talk with HPAO about Plan B if necessary • Graduate

RESOURCES:

UA Health Professions Website: www.prehealth.ua.edu

ADA Guide to the DAT <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx>

American Dental Education Association <http://www.adea.org/>

American Dental Association <http://ada.org/>

Baffi-Dugan, C., Cannon, R. E., Bingham, R., & Corder, B. W. (2011). *Health professions admissions guide: Strategy for success*. Champaign, IL: National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions.