



What is Dental School?

Dental school is a four-year Doctorate-level program in which students learn the science of oral medicine and patient care, and earn a DDS or DMD degree. Commonly students will complete a bachelors degree and the prerequisites from a regionally accredited institution and enter Dental school. Following graduation, students may choose to specialize in a specific area such as Endodontics, Orthodontics, Oral Surgery, Periodontics, or others, or they may decide to work in a general dentistry residency.

What should I know about Dental School?

Traditional dental schools are divided into two main parts. During the first two years students take mainly take biological, dental-oriented science courses. During the third and fourth years, students are involved in clinical study (often called rotations), which includes direct patient care, as well as some practical management skills. Students should be prepared to have a keen eye for detail and particularly a strong ability to work with their hands, as molding and crafting are large parts of their coursework .

Related Fields

Podiatry	Dental Hygiene
Chiropractic Medicine	Naturopathy
Physical Therapy	Nursing
Medical Doctor	Public Health
Optometry	Clinical Psychology

Where can I study Dentistry?

The only Dental school in Washington is at the UW (www.dental.washington.edu/), with approximately 66 DDS/DMD granting dental schools nationwide (to review these, see the ADA website: www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-schools-and-programs).

How do I get started?

While considering, preparing for, and attending Dental school, you should seriously and truthfully think about these questions and others: Is dentistry the only profession you can see yourself doing? Do you understand that you will likely go into substantial debt in order to pursue this dream? Can you accept that you may need to make sacrifices to prepare for and while completing Dental school? Students pursuing Dental school should remember the acronym "S-T-A-R-T". Additionally, a useful resource for getting started is the ADEA GoDental page: www.adea.org/GoDental/Application_Prep/The_Application_Process/Timeline_to_Apply.aspx.

Shadow

Shadowing is the act of working with, and observing a current professional practicing in a clinical setting. Often this can occur in a private practice, hospital, or possibly an experiential trip. Shadowing is a huge part of becoming a well-rounded and competitive applicant. One of the main purposes of shadowing is to help students become more aware of what it means to be a Dentist. Students will often work with Dentists in a variety of settings and specialties in order to gain a better sense of the day-to-day life of a Dentist. Shadowing opportunities are out there but they can be hard to find. Often students may find the most success with contacting their own Dentist to begin with, or through programs run through pre-health clubs or internships. One resource you can use is the ASDA shadowing guide: www.asdanet.org/index/get-into-dental-school/before-you-apply/predental-shadowing-guide.

Talk

Talk to someone! Being a student interested in going to Dental school means that a large part of your time should be spent learning as much as possible about the opportunities available to you to develop as a student. Working with your adviser, instructors, and classmates can all be incredibly helpful in helping connect you with the resources you will need. A large part of being involved with a professional health team is being able to rely on not only your own expertise, but also the skills and expertise of others. Therefore get started utilizing your communication skills early by consulting with friends, attending campus info sessions, and being involved in a pre-health community, such as joining the BC Docs and Dents club (studentweb.bellevuecollege.edu/docsanddents/).

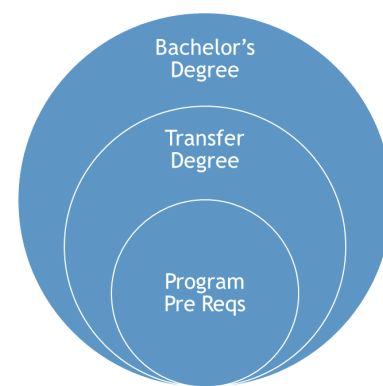
Academics

When applying to a dental school, it is important that you have complete the necessary prerequisites, and it is generally recommended (and sometimes required) that you have a bachelor's degree. Every dental school will have slightly different prerequisite requirements, but in general you will complete the following courses: *(as a community college student, it is recommended that you should consider completing the courses within the dotted grey boxes at your college prior to transferring to a university)*

Common Dental School Prerequisites	BC Course Equivalents	Notes to consider:
◆ One year of General Chemistry	CHEM 161, 162, 163	1. It is generally recommended that students not take all of the year-long science sequences at a community college. If possible, <u>students should take at least two or three sequences at a university.</u>
◆ One year of General Biology	BIOL 211, 212, 213	
◆ One year of Organic Chemistry	CHEM 261, 262, 263	
◆ One year of Physics	PHYS 114, 115, 116	
◆ English	ENGL 101	2. It is recommended that students take entire science sequences at one college/university.
◆ Calculus and/or Statistics (varies by school)	MATH 151 and/or MATH 130	
◆ Biochemistry	CHEM 405, 406	3. Prerequisites are subject to differ depending on the desired Dental school. Do your research!
◆ Microbiology (often recommended)	BIOL 260	
◆ Anatomy and Physiology (often recommended)	BIOL 241, 242	
		4. Depending on the Dental school, science and math classes can "expire" in 5-7 years.

In addition to the above prerequisite courses, please consider the following:

1. Most universities do not offer a "pre-dental" degree, though some have Pre-Professional school concentrations or options, focusing on necessary prerequisites
2. There is no particular major that "looks good" to a Dental School. You can major in whatever you would like and still be a competitive applicant. However, many students plan to take the majority of their pre-dental requirements within their bachelor degree (see diagram). Thus Biology, Microbiology, Biochemistry, Laboratory Medicine, Environmental Science, and other Life Science majors tend to be popular major choices.



Research

It is necessary to thoroughly research the Dental schools you wish to apply to. Generally speaking, students will apply to a wide range of 5-15 (or more) schools per application cycle. Each school will likely have a slightly different set of prerequisite courses they require. Therefore, it is important that you have a clear vision of the type of education you will want in both your undergraduate and Dental School experience. To get this vision or background information try attending information sessions early, making connections with the dentists you shadow, and thoroughly exploring university and Dental School websites. Two general resources are the American Dental Education Association (adea.org) and the American Dental Association (ada.org).

Test

All students applying to Dental school must first take the Dental Admissions Test, or DAT. This test covers a variety of life and physical sciences. Students should complete at least one year of college-level courses in General Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry before taking the DAT. The DAT should be taken a few months (approx. April) before students apply for Dental school Primary Applications (opens June 1, aadsas.liasoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login), which should be done one year prior to enrolling in Dental school. Learn more about the DAT on the ADA website: ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test.

What should I do now?

Students interested in getting started on the path toward Dental school can use a variety of resources at Bellevue College. The Docs and Dents Club here on campus is an excellent resource. Also, you should plan on meeting with an adviser. You can make an appointment with the Science Division/Pre-Professional Health advisor by contacting the Academic Advising front desk located on the second floor of the B building (or by calling 425-564-2212), or through the Science Division in L200 (or by calling 425-564-2321).

This is an unofficial guide only. It is the student's responsibility to research and communicate with all community college and university programs to which they intend to apply to establish prerequisites and admission requirements, as these vary and are subject to change without notice.

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