

PRE-DENTAL INFORMATION SUMMARY

Academic Preparation

Academic preparation for medical school requires a bachelor's degree and completion of a set of prerequisite classes, usually science, which vary from school to school. Common classes are listed on the last page of this summary. For your degree, any major is appropriate. There is no preference in this regard, so study something you love! Competitive applicants have very high grades so pace yourself in order to succeed and remember that all grades will count when you apply even if you repeat classes.

Shadowing Dentists & Dental Experience

Dental experience is very important. It should be one of your first experiences. Observing a dentist in action will help you gather the information you need to fully commit to the profession and learn about a variety of dental specialties.

Competitive applicants complete 100-200 hours of shadowing and dental experience combined. Most students gain this experience by shadowing a general dentist for more than a semester.

Research Experience

More and more dental schools recommend students to have research experiences because dentists depend on research literature in dentistry to remain current in the field throughout their entire careers. Your research experience does not have to be medically related or in a lab. It can be in any discipline as long as it is with a professor or other researcher and is ***hypothesis-based research using the scientific method.***

- Undergraduate Research Opportunities
<https://www.umsl.edu/studentresearch/>

Service to the Community

Because you are preparing for a humanitarian profession, it is important to have volunteer experiences which demonstrate a commitment to service to others. This be ongoing throughout your college years, not done for a time then discontinued.

- <https://www.umsl.edu/studentinvolvement/service/index.html>

Leadership Experience

As a dentist, you will be a leader and team member in many ways – with your patients, your staff, your colleagues, and in your community. Examples includes offices held in organizations, committee work; leadership in church activities; coordinating a project; managing, training, supervising at work or in other activities; teaching experience, TA, tutoring, coaching, peer counseling or mentoring, etc.

Things to Remember

- What you do outside of class is important so don't neglect activities. However, remember that activities *complement* your coursework, but *they will not compensate for low grades*
- Keep contact information for supervisors and dentists you shadow or work within case you need recommendation letters. Even if you discontinue an activity, try to maintain a relationship with your supervisor.
- Record all hours of service and experiences. Writing reflections on what you learned in a journal will help when you write your personal statement for your application.

❖ **APPLICATION TIMELINE**

TIMELINE	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	
DAT	Register & Study			Take exam														
Rec. Letters	Request letters (Have all letters sent electronically to AADSAS)																	
Application	Prep - Write draft of Personal Statement (Essay) - Research Schools					- AADSAS Available online in early June - Fill-out the form & submit when ready			Application deadline: Oct.-Feb (Earlier is better)									
	Interviews																	
												Acceptance Notifications						
Financial Aid											Priority filing for federal financial aid							

❖ **THE DAT**

Take the DAT (Dental Admissions Test) when you have finished the necessary coursework. The DAT is administered throughout the year at local testing centers. For DAT registration, visit <https://adea.org/>.

The DAT is scored on a 1-30 scale and is divided into four areas: Natural Sciences, Reading Comprehension, Quantitative Ability, and Perceptual Ability. It should be taken 18 months prior to the dental school class you plan to enter. It is to your advantage to take it early, by April-June in the year you are submitting your application.

❖ **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Your application process begins in spring or summer at the end of your junior year or once you have completed the necessary requirements. Dental schools admit students once a year for fall only. You'll submit your application one year in advance of the year for which you wish to begin dental school.

▪ **AADSAS**

There are 66 accredited dental schools in the United States, and all of them receive applications via the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) <http://www.adea.org/>. AADSAS is a standard application that is forwarded to the schools you choose.

Your application includes demographic information, a list of all college course you have taken, a list of all your activities, and a personal statement explaining why you want to be a dentist.

After submission of the AADSAS application, supplemental material, such as letters of recommendation, will usually be required.

Most dental schools also require a personal interview. Please consult the preprofessional advisors regularly as you prepare your application.

❖ LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

You will submit your letters to AADSAS who will then distribute them to the dental schools. You can submit up to 4 letters. The following are what is usually required but may vary by school. Research schools early to find out what they require.

1. Science Professor
2. Science / non-Science Professor
3. Dentist
4. Dentist / Supervisor

What you need to do

- 1) Contact professors and dentists to see if they are interested in writing a recommendation letter for you.
- 2) If they agree, get their e-mail address which they use most frequently.
- 3) List their e-mail addresses on the application form online under “Evaluators” section.
- 4) As soon as you post letter writers’ names and e-mail addresses, AADSAS will send an e-mail to them. It is important to let your letter writers know they will be receiving e-mail from AADSAS. Ask them to check their junk mailbox regularly.

What your letter writers need to do

- 1) They will receive an email from AADSAS that will direct them to the AADSAS Evaluators portal.
- 2) They will be asked to provide their contact information. They only need to do this once, even if they evaluate multiple students.
- 3) They will post their recommendation letters through the portal. Step by step instruction are available to assist them.

❖ PREDENTAL GENERAL POLICIES REGARDING COURSEWORK

CLEP Credit & Correspondence Study	Not acceptable as part of the predental curriculum.
AP Credits	Dental schools take AP credits, but it is recommended to take coursework beyond introductory classes waived by AP.
“Online” Classes	Online <i>sections</i> of semester-based university classes or online/in-person hybrid sections of semester-based classes will usually be accepted. <i>Online classes which are not university semester based (independent study) will generally not be accepted.</i>
Two-year colleges credits	Many schools limit credits taken at two-year colleges to 60 credit hours
Repeats	All repeats are counted in your AADSAS GPA
Withdrawals	W’s or EX’s should normally be used only for emergencies, although they will not affect your GPA
GPA	Generally, the minimum GPA is around 3.0, but varies by schools and may be higher or lower. The average GPA for accepted applicants across all schools is 3.7 average for accepted students

▪ USEFUL WEBSITES

- Go Dental: General resources for Predental students --- <http://www.adea.org/godental/>
- University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) School of Dentistry <https://dentistry.umkc.edu/>
- Southern Illinois University SIU School of Dental Medicine <https://www.siu.edu/dental/>

PreDental Science Course Guide

This guide is designed for students preparing for a *range* of dental schools. It is not a comprehensive list. Requirements may vary by school.

The following classes are the most common required classes for dental schools:

- Biol 1821: ***Introductory Biology: Organisms and the Environment***
- Biol 1831: ***Introductory Biology: From Molecules to Organisms***
- Biol 2402: ***Vertebrate Anatomy***
- Biol 2403: ***Vertebrate Anatomy lab***
- Biol 3802: ***Vertebrate Physiology***
- Biol 3803: ***Vertebrate Physiology lab***
- Biol 4672: ***Principles of Biochemistry*** or Chem 4712: ***Biochemistry***
- Chem 1111: ***Introductory Chemistry I***
- Chem 1121: ***Introductory Chemistry II***
- Chem 2612: ***Organic Chemistry I***
- Chem 2622: ***Organic Chemistry II***
- Chem 2633: ***Organic Chemistry Laboratory***
- Physics 1011& Physics 1011L: ***Basic Physics I & Physics I Laboratory***
- Physics 1012& Physics 1012L: ***PHYSICS 1012 Basic Physics II & Basic Physics II Laboratory***

The following are advanced recommended courses that may be required by some dental schools.

- Biol 2012: ***Genetics***
- Biol 2482: ***Microbiology***
- Biol 3622: ***Cell Biology***
- Math 1100 or 1800: ***Basic Calculus or Analytic Geometry and Calculus I***
- Math 1320: ***Introduction to Probability and Statistics***