

## *What you need to know about becoming a* **Dentist (DMD or DDS)**

Dentists focus on the oral health of adults and children. All dentists are trained to practice on the entire population, with some dentists choosing to specialize in a variety of fields, including pediatrics, endodontics, and surgery. Dentists use the latest in radiographic and computer imaging to identify and treat disease of the teeth and to support bone, gingival tissues and other tissues in the oral cavity, head and neck. Dentists restore and replace damaged teeth and correct mal-positioned teeth to improve speech, chewing and appearance. Dentists also provide instruction and advice on oral health care and preventative measures to their patients.

### **Where do they work?**

Dentists typically work in private practice settings. There are dentists who work in dental education, research and in care delivery in the Armed Forces. Dentists can specialize in

- Orthodontics/Dentofacial Orthopedics
- Endodontics
- Oral Radiology
- Oral Surgery
- Periodontics
- Pediatrics
- Prothodontics
- Public Health

Dental students complete four years of graduate school to obtain a DDS or DMD. Typically, students spend their first two years of dental school completing course-work around anatomy, microbiology, pathology and physiology. In the last two years of dental programs, students work with patients in a clinical setting. All states require dentists to be licensed in order to practice, and additional training may be required to specialize in the nine recognized specialties.

## Education

Entrance to dental schools is very competitive.

### Academic requirements include

- Biology (BIO 105 and 106)
- General Chemistry (CHE 110 and 111)
- Organic Chemistry (CHE 210 and 211)
- Physics (PHY 110 and 111)
- English (ENG 110)
- Math (MAT 190 and 150)

### Recommended courses include

- Studio Art
- Psychology (PSY 105 or PSY 250)
- Biochemistry (CHE 310)
- Microbiology (BIO 232)

## Accepted Student Profile

Dental school programs have many applicants and are very competitive.

Students applying to dental school have

- High GPAs
- Excellent scores on entrance exams (DAT)
- Leadership experience
- Community service experience
- Excellent fine motor skills
- Experience shadowing a practicing dentist

## Application

Dental schools use a centralized application service called ADEA Association Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS). Letters of evaluation and transcripts must be sent through the service.

Dental schools also require the Dental Admission Test. This test evaluates knowledge of natural sciences, perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning skills.

## Web Resources

AADSAS Application: [www.adea.org/AADSAS](http://www.adea.org/AADSAS)

American Dental Education Association : [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org)

American Dental Association: [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

Dental Admission Test : [www.ada.org/dat.aspx](http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx)