

Health Professions Info Sheet

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, supporting bone and 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 that work in dental education, research and delivering care in the Armed Forces. Dentists can specialize in:

- Orthodontics/Dentofacial Orthopedics
- Endodontics
- Oral Radiology
- Oral Surgery
- Pediatric
- Periodontics
- Prosthodontics
- Public Health

Pre-Health Advising

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Osteopathic medical students complete four years of graduate school to obtain a DDS or DMD. Typically, students spend their first two years of dental school completing coursework around anatomy, microbiology, pathology, and physiology. The last two years of dental programs have students working 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

General Chemistry

Organic Chemistry

Physics

English

Math

Dental school also require above average scores on DAT's and a high GPA.

Accepted Student Profile

Students applying to dental school have:

- High GPA's in science and non-science courses
- Excellent scores on entrance exams (DAT)
- Leadership experience
- Volunteer experiences
- Excellent fine motor skills
- Shadowed 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 natural sciences, perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning skills.

Web Resources

AADSAS Application: http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Pages/default.aspx

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

American Dental Association: <http://www.ada.org/index.asp>

DAT: <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/index.asp>