Choosing a Career in Dentistry

If you are thinking about a health science career, consider dentistry—a field offering many options for a rewarding and challenging career. A dentist can be an independent practitioner, work in a group practice, or in a public or private agency. You can practice general dentistry, specialize, or focus on research and/or education.

Becoming a Dentist

The first step toward a dental career is to complete at least three years in college (at least 87 semester or 130 quarter credits of pre-professional coursework). Many pre-dental students work toward a baccalaureate degree while completing pre-dental requirements. In fact, in recent years 53-88% of those admitted to the School of Dentistry at the University of Minnesota have had four or more years of college.

Your undergraduate courses will include English, biology, chemistry, math or related subject, psychology, and physics, as well as elective liberal arts classes. (See reverse side of this brochure for U of MN semester based requirements.)

Majors

"Pre-dentistry" is not an academic major. There is no preferred major for pre-dental students. Your major should be one that interests you and would provide an acceptable alternative if you are not admitted to dental school.

Early Admission

The University of Minnesota School of Dentistry offers an early admission program for all prospective applicants. Toward the end of sophomore year of undergraduate study, persons are encouraged to meet with the School of Dentistry Enrollment Management staff to plan their prerequisite and elective coursework. At that time, a provisional acceptance may be granted to qualified applicants for the appropriate entering first-year class. Qualified applicants must meet specific criteria and maintain a minimum 3.2 overall and 3.0 science GPA while completing specific prerequisite and elective courses. Individuals must also take the Dental Admission Test (DAT) and score at or above the national average. For further details, contact the School of Dentistry, Office of Enrollment Management, (612) 624-7149.

The Dental Admission Test (DAT)

The DAT is required for admission to all U.S. dental schools. Applicants to the U of MN must take the DAT by the fall, one year prior to their expected matriculation into the program. The computerized test is available at Sylvan Learning Centers. Scores from a fall test must be received by December 1, 2001.

You must register to take the test a least a month prior to the test date. The fee is $160.00. Test results will be sent to you and five designated schools. There is an additional charge of $5.00 per report for more than five test reports, if the request is made at the time of application to the DAT. The DAT has four subjects: (1) natural science, which includes biology, general and organic chemistry; (2) reading comprehension; (3) quantitative reasoning; and (4) perceptual ability, which include two- and three-dimensional problem solving. Standard scores range from 1 to 30. Scores for each of the subtests should be at or above the national average.

Test preparation materials are available in the School of Dentistry and the Health Sciences bookstore in Moos Tower.
Applying to Dental School

Over 90% of U.S. dental schools, including the U of MN School of Dentistry, use AADSAS, a centralized application service. You must use an official AADSAS application if you apply to an AADSAS school. The AADSAS fee is $125 for the first school and $30 for each additional school. The registration booklet outlines supplemental fees for individual dental schools. You may obtain application materials after June 1 from the School of Dentistry or by downloading it from the AADSAS website at http://www.aads.jhu.edu/index.html.

On the AADSAS application you must list courses completed, make a brief statement about your interest in dentistry, and designate the schools to which you are applying. DAT scores are not sent to AADSAS but go directly to your designated school. AADSAS schools may send you supplementary application materials and may charge an additional application fee. Your U of MN packet includes a supplemental application form.

To be considered for admission to the U of MN School of Dentistry, AADSAS applications must be postmarked by January 1, 2002. Supplemental materials must be postmarked by February 1, 2002. The admissions committee at the U of MN begins reviewing applications in early fall. Most candidates are notified of their acceptance or rejection between December and June.

Admission Criteria for the U of MN

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: The Admission Committee looks for proof that you can succeed in dental school. While a strong grade point average (GPA) is convincing (accepted students average about 3.5), other factors may be taken into account—improvement in academic performance, amount and difficulty of courses taken and completed each semester, and outside responsibilities you may have had while going to school. All required courses must be completed before enrollment. A pattern of repeated withdrawals or incompletes may be seen as an indication of an inability to carry a heavy academic load.

Repeating courses to improve grades is not recommended but may be wise if you need to improve your knowledge before continuing a course sequence or if you took required science courses more than five years ago. Grades from repeated courses are averaged together.

DAT SCORES: To be competitive, your overall score should be at or above the national average, including each of the subscores. However, lower scores on one or two of the subtests may not eliminate you if, they are balanced by high scores on some of the other subtests.

RESIDENCE: While all qualified candidates are considered, Minnesota residents are given preference. In addition, students from Montana, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, and Manitoba, Canada are given special consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Three letters of reference should be included with your AADSAS application, by people who have known you well within the past four years. One recommender should be an employer, if possible; the others may be college teachers, peers, college recommendation committees, college counselors, and other appropriate individuals.

INTEREST IN/KNOWLEDGE OF DENTISTRY:
This information is gleaned from sources like your personal statement on the AADSAS form and reference letters. Experiences in dental settings giving you an opportunity to see or participate in patient care are important. Direct observation of patient care is strongly recommended. For assistance in finding a practice in which to observe, contact the U of MN School of Dentistry.

HUMAN SERVICE EXPERIENCE: Experience in working closely with people in need on a one-to-one basis (e.g., as youth counselor, hospital orderly, big brother/sister) is important. Investigate health science and community service opportunities at the Career and Community Learning Center web site: http://www.clalink.cla.umn.edu

FINE DEXTERITY SKILLS: The admissions committee looks for hobbies or other experiences giving evidence of fine manual dexterity (e.g., sculpturing., drawing, sewing, playing the piano, building models).

OTHER PERSONAL FACTORS: e.g., communication skills, extracurricular activities.

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY: The test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) is required for all applicants who are non-native speakers of English. The TOEFL exam must include the Test of Written English (TWE). Applicants must have a minimum overall TOEFL score of 240 with a 21 on Part 1 Oral Comprehension and a 5 on the TWE. Applicants taking the MELAB must score at least 85 with a mean score of 85 in Part II, Listening. The test must have been administered not more than two years prior to applying to dental school.
Courses Required for Admission to the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement*</th>
<th>U of MN Courses Meeting Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH</td>
<td>EngC1011, EngC3027 (or upper level writing intensive course), and one additional course suggested (speech preferred)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATH</td>
<td>Math 1031 or 1051; Stat 3011. Science majors should take Math 1271/72 (calculus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHEMISTRY</td>
<td>Chem 1021 and 1022, Chem 2301, 2302, and 2311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHYSICS</td>
<td>Phys 1101 and 1102 (Biology majors should take 1201 and 1202, or Phys 1301 and 1302 as other science majors require.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOLOGY</td>
<td>ONE of the following two sequences: Biol 1009 plus 3211 and 2005 OR Biol 1001 and 1002 plus 3211 and 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOCHEMISTRY</td>
<td>BiolC 3021 or BioC4001 or BioC4331 BioC 5025 recommended laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSYCHOLOGY</td>
<td>Psy 1001, CPsy 2301, CPsy 3301 or Mgmt 4002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ELECTIVE COLLEGE COURSES
Elective courses should be selected to achieve as broad and liberal an education as possible. Consult a planning sheet for a list of preferred electives.

*All required courses must be taken A/F. S/N grading should be limited to 15% of four years of coursework or 10% of three years. See planning sheet for University of Minnesota semester based requirements.

**Each dental school bulletin contains the definitive statement of its admission requirements. Students are urged to become familiar with this information. The Official Bulletin of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry is available in 240 Williamson Hall, or may be requested by call (612) 625-2008 or 1-800-752-1000.

TIMETABLE
Since the decision to enter dentistry occurs at a variety of points in an individual's life, pre-dental students often follow different timetables in preparing for dental school. The following is one example:

**Year 1**
- Begin biology and composition. Complete inorganic chemistry and math or related subject
- Talk with dental professionals and explore dentistry through observation and participation in patient care

**Year 2**
- Complete biology, organic chemistry, and psychology.
- Register for DAT if organic chemistry and biology will be completed by end of spring semester, otherwise, take in the fall
- Continue to explore dentistry

**Year 3**
- Complete physics, composition, humanities and speech courses.
- Three year applicants initiate application process (as early as June 1 before third year begins)
- Do volunteer work

**Year 4**
- Complete remaining required courses.
- Four year applicants initiate application process (as early as June 1 before fourth year begins)
- Do volunteer work
USEFUL RESOURCES

*Admission Requirements of U.S. and Canadian Dental Schools*—an annual publication of the American Association of Dental Schools with information about each U.S. and Canadian school and a profile of each year's entering class.

   http://www.aads.jhu.edu/publications/admission_requirements.htm

*Iseek*—occupational information about most health fields in the state and where training is available

   http://www.isseek.org

TEST PREPARATION MATERIALS

*Dental Admission Test Preparation Materials, 1990*—a manual prepared by the American Dental Association, with a sample test included.

*Complete Preparation for the DAT* (Williams & Wilkins); *Dental Admission Test*—commercially produced review manual

SELECTED INTERNET WORLD WIDE WEB SITES

American Dental Education Association

   http://www.aads.jhu.edu/index.html

American Dental Association

   http://www.ada.org

University of Minnesota School of Dentistry

   http://www.umn.edu/dental

Dental Admissions Test

   http://www.ada.org/prac/careers/dat-01.html

TOEFL—Test of English as a Foreign Language

   http://www.toefl.org/

Minority Dental Student Scholarship Program

   http://www.ada.org/prac/careers/schol02.html

Financial Planning for Dental School

   http://www.ada.org/prac/careers/fin-plan.html

Health Science Internships/Volunteer Opportunities

   http://www.clalink.cla.umn.edu

Current dentistry planning sheets and other links

   http://www.cla.umn.edu/class/natsci

INFORMATIONAL PROGRAMS

- Dental Career Day (offered every other year)
- Applying to Dental School (Fall)

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

The University of Minnesota is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, religion, color, gender, national origin, handicap, age, veteran status, or sexual orientation.

5/02