

- Dentists maintain oral health and by doing so help maintain their patients' overall health.
- In their practices, dentists
  - Help patients maintain oral health.
  - Use diagnostic ability and manual skills.
  - Treat and work with people from all age groups requiring good communication skills.
  - Examine the head, neck, and oral cavity.
  - Diagnose conditions using advanced technologies including radiography and computer generated imaging.
  - Restore and replace teeth damaged from decay, trauma or disease.
  - Help patients to improve chewing, speech, digestion of food, sleep patterns and appearance.
- Specialties are available within dentistry with further training following dental school including:
  - Endodontics (nerves), Oral Surgery, Orthodontics, Prosthodontics (appliances), Public Health and others.

## Education & Licensure

- Complete a bachelor's degree in any major along with prerequisite courses.
- Attend a 4 year professional dental school program following the undergraduate degree.
- Obtain a DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) or a DMD (Doctor of Medical Dentistry) degree. These are equivalent.
- Upon completion of dental school, pass a licensing examination.

## Preparation

- Observe a general dentist to make sure this is the right field for you, and you truly understand what it means to be a dentist. Plan on at least 100 hours of observation time, but more hours are required at some schools.
- Adopting a hobby or skill that develops and illustrates manual dexterity is recommended.
- Take the Dental Aptitude Test (DAT) to apply to dental school. The DAT is a standardized online exam taken about 15 months before beginning dental school (generally in the spring/summer following the junior year of college).
- Dental programs may differ slightly in their requirements. Many schools recommend courses such as art, business management, accounting, statistics, interpersonal communications, Spanish, cell biology, genetics, histology, microbiology, and molecular biology.
- Many schools require all prerequisite courses have at least a grade of C.

### Common Prerequisite Courses (required courses determined by each dental school but similar to this list)

Subject	Course	Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)
Biology-Need 20 credit hours for IU including general, A&P, & micro	General Biology	BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 & BIOL 23100 & 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 & upper level biology course plus lab
	Anatomy & Physiology (A&P)	BIOL 20300-20400 ( <del>BIOL 30100-30200</del> )
	Microbiology	BIOL 22100 or BIOL 43800
Chemistry-Need 12 credit hours for IU	Inorganic with lab	CHM 11500-11600 or CHM 12500-12600 or CHM 12300-12400 or CHM 12901 (CHM 11500 credit exam recommended along with CHM 12901 some students will earn 115 credit through course sequence—12901/25500 & 25600/33900) or CHM 13600
	Organic with lab	CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500
	Biochemistry	BCHM 30700 or BCHM 56100 or CHM 33900 or CHM 43300 or MCMP 20800 ( <del>CHM 33300, CHM 53300</del> )
Physics-8 hrs for IU	General	PHYS 22000-22100 or 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200 & 27200 or PHYS 17200 & 24100 (plus additional 1 hour lab such as PHYS 25200) or ENGR 16100-16200*
Social Science-3 hrs for IU	Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Communications	PSY 12000, ANTH 10000, SOC 10000, COM 11400
Humanities-3 hrs for IU	English Composition	ENGL 10600 or 10800 or SCLA 10100* (some schools require 2 semesters of English)
Other	Art	A course in jewelry making, sculpture, or ceramics is recommended or develop hobby
<b>Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional)</b>		<b>BIOL 39600</b> —0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to dental school and other health professions programs
*Ask individual dental schools if they will accept these courses toward requirements. <del>Courses</del> no longer offered.		

## Student Organization: Pre-Dental Club

### Program Information

- Requirements for dental programs and additional information about schools and admissions statistics can be found in the online [ADEA Dental School Explorer](https://access.adea.org/adeassa/ecssashop.show_product_detail?p_product_serno=340&p_mode=detail) database. A one-year subscription is \$25.  
[https://access.adea.org/adeassa/ecssashop.show\\_product\\_detail?p\\_product\\_serno=340&p\\_mode=detail](https://access.adea.org/adeassa/ecssashop.show_product_detail?p_product_serno=340&p_mode=detail)

### Applying

- The initial application to most dental programs is through an online common application called the [American Association of Dental Schools Application Service](https://aadsas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login) (AADSAS) <https://aadsas.liaisoncas.com/applicant-ux/#/login>.
- Some of the individual dental programs ask for supplementary information beyond what is included in your online application and then invite select students to interview.
- Students from Texas apply to Texas Dental schools through [TMD SAS](https://www.tmdsas.com/) <https://www.tmdsas.com/>
- Competitive applicants will have:
  - Strong academic performance including a GPA of 3.5 or higher
  - High scores on the DAT – generally 19 or better in each section
  - Leadership, teamwork, and communication skills
  - Undergraduate research experience
  - Volunteer and shadowing/observation experiences
  - Evidence of manual dexterity
  - Strong positive letters of recommendation (mostly from faculty and dentists)
- Early application is essential. The applications (AADSAS and TMD SAS) open in May and should be submitted in June or early July.
- Many factors will influence where you choose to apply. You do need to include the public school(s) where you are an in-state resident as this is often your best chance of admission.

### Fee Assistance

- [AADSAS Fee Assistance Program](https://help.liaisonedu.com/ADEA_AADSAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_ADEA_AADSAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_ADEA_AADSAS_Application/03_Application_Fees_and_Fee_Assistance_Program)  
[https://help.liaisonedu.com/ADEA\\_AADSAS\\_Applicant\\_Help\\_Center/Starting\\_Your\\_ADEA\\_AADSAS\\_Application/Getting\\_Started\\_with\\_Your\\_ADEA\\_AADSAS\\_Application/03\\_Application\\_Fees\\_and\\_Fee\\_Assistance\\_Program](https://help.liaisonedu.com/ADEA_AADSAS_Applicant_Help_Center/Starting_Your_ADEA_AADSAS_Application/Getting_Started_with_Your_ADEA_AADSAS_Application/03_Application_Fees_and_Fee_Assistance_Program)
- [Partial Fee Waiver for the DAT](https://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test/dat-fee-waiver-information) <https://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test/dat-fee-waiver-information>

### Employment Outlook

- According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm), the job outlook for dentists is excellent with an expected 6% growth through 2031. The median salary in 2021 was \$163,220. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>
- Many dentists have their own practice or work as part of a small practice which often offers greater flexibility in their work schedules. Entrepreneurial and business skills are valuable.
- Full time dentists spend approximately 36 hours per week in their practices.

### Diversity Matters

*The dental profession needs professionals who look just like you, and who share your life experiences. Race or ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, disability, age, geographic region, socioeconomic status, social and cultural identity, and nationality all add to a richer experience for all students in the dental school classroom, contribute to the dental profession, and ultimately lead to better outcomes for patients.*

### Programs in the Region

- [Indiana University](https://dentistry.iu.edu/academics/degrees-programs/doctor-dental-surgery/index.html) Indianapolis, IN <https://dentistry.iu.edu/academics/degrees-programs/doctor-dental-surgery/index.html>
- [University of Louisville](https://louisvilledentistry.university-tour.com/dmd/dmd-degree) Louisville, KY <https://louisvilledentistry.university-tour.com/dmd/dmd-degree>
- [Midwestern University](https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/il_dental_medicine.html) Downers Grove, IL [https://www.midwestern.edu/programs\\_and\\_admission/il\\_dental\\_medicine.html](https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/il_dental_medicine.html)

### More Information

- [American Dental Education Association](https://www.adea.org/) (includes AADSAS) <https://www.adea.org/>
- [American Dental Association](https://www.ada.org/en) (includes DAT) <https://www.ada.org/en>

### Other Careers to Consider

Dental Hygiene · Physician · Optometry · Orthotics & Prosthetics

### Preparing for your Giant Leap

[purdue.edu/preprofessional](https://purdue.edu/preprofessional)