Dentistry (D.D.S. or D.M.D.)

What does a dentist do?

- Help patients maintain oral health.
- Use diagnostic ability and manual skills.
- Treat and work with people from all age groups, (good communication skills required).
- Examine the head, neck & 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 several others.

How do I become a dentist?

- Obtain a bachelor’s degree in any major.
- Take appropriate prerequisite courses (see below).
- Attend a 4 year professional Dental school program following your 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.

What is the job outlook?

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for dentists is excellent.
- *Money* magazine, 2010, placed dentistry on its list of the 20 highest paying professions with an average salary of $142,000.
- Many dentists have their own practice or work as part of a small practice so they often enjoy greater flexibility in their work schedules. Entrepreneurial and business skills are valuable.
- Full time dentists spend approximately 36 hours per week in their practices.

What prerequisite courses do I need?

- Dental programs may differ slightly in their requirements.
- Specific courses for Indiana University are listed below.
- Many schools also recommend courses such as art, business management, accounting, statistics, interpersonal communications, Spanish, cell biology, genetics, histology, microbiology, and molecular biology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Purdue Course Equivalent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>General Biology</td>
<td>BIOL 11000/11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; 23100/23200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>BIOL 20300 &amp; 20400 or BIOL 30100 &amp; 30200 &amp; either BIOL 32800 or BIOL 59900 or BIOL 44202 for 8 hours total (not all dental schools require anatomy &amp; physiology)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Inorganic</td>
<td>CHM 11500 &amp; 11600 or CHM 12500 &amp; 12600 or CHM 12300 &amp; 12400 or CHM 10900 &amp; 11500 credit exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic</td>
<td>CHM 25500/25501 or CHM 25700/25701 (only 1 semester is required at IU but the majority of schools require 2 semesters so students generally take CHM 25500/25501 &amp; 25600/25601)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>BCHM 56100 or 30700 or CHM 33300 or 53300</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>PHYS 22000 &amp; 22100 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 27200 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 24100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>PSY 12000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or 10800 (some schools require 2 semesters of English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>A course in jewelry making, sculpture, or ceramics is recommended</td>
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The requirements for other programs can be found in the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools.

*Note: Exact courses may differ depending on major
What else do I need to do before I apply?

♦ You need to take the Dental Aptitude Test (DAT) in order to apply to dental school.
♦ The DAT is a standardized online exam taken about 15 months before you intend to begin dental school (generally in the spring/summer following the junior year of college).
♦ You need to shadow a dentist to make sure this is the right field for you and that you truly understand what it means to be a dentist. For IU, you need at least 40 hours shadowing a general dentist.
♦ Dental schools will want to see that you could handle a heavy course load while being active in extracurricular activities, providing community service, and gaining dental experience.
♦ Research is also viewed favorable.
♦ You need to have a hobby or skill that illustrates your manual dexterity.

How do I apply?

♦ The initial application to most dental programs is through an online application service called the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS).
♦ We encourage you to collect your recommendation letters using the Center for Pre-Professional Advising Letter Service.
♦ We can submit your letters electronically to AADSAS. After filling out the application you will also send your college transcripts (along with a transcript request form) to AADSAS for verification.
♦ Your online application will include a narrative explaining why you are interested in becoming a dentist.
♦ The individual dental programs will then ask for supplementary information and will hopefully invite you to campus for an interview.
♦ Early application is essential.

Where can I get more information?

American Dental Education Association (includes AADSAS)
http://www.adea.org

American Dental Association (includes DAT)
http://www.ada.org

American Student Dental Association (ASDA)
www.asdanet.org

Student National Dental Association (SNDA)
http://sndanet.org

Programs in Indiana
Indiana University
www.iusd.iupui.edu

For more information about dental school programs or your interests in the health professions, contact the Center for Pre-Professional Advising at 765-496-2690 or preprofessional@purdue.edu.

Information for this career guide came from the above websites; www.explorehealthcareers.org; the Bureau of Labor Statistics
http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos072.htm; and the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools.