• Dentists maintain oral health and by doing so help maintain their patients’ overall health.
• In their practices, dentists
  o Help patients maintain oral health.
  o Use diagnostic ability and manual skills.
  o Treat and work with people from all age groups requiring good communication skills.
  o Examine the head, neck, and oral cavity.
  o Diagnose conditions using advanced technologies including radiography and computer generated imaging.
  o Restore and replace teeth damaged from decay, trauma or disease.
  o 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:
  o 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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Purdue Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology-Need 20 credit hours for IU including general, A&amp;P, &amp; micro</td>
<td>General Biology</td>
<td>BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; BIOL 23100 &amp; 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 &amp; upper level biology course plus lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology (A&amp;P)</td>
<td>BIOL 20300-20400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>BIOL 22100 or BIOL 43800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry-Need 12 credit hours for IU</td>
<td>Inorganic with lab</td>
<td>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 &amp; 25600/33900) or CHM 13600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organic with lab</td>
<td>CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>BCHM 30700 or BCHM 56100 or CHM 33900 or CHM 43300 or MCMP 20800 (CHM 33300, CHM 53300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics-8 hrs for IU</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>PHYS 22000-22100 or 23300-23400 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 27200 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 24100 (plus additional 1 hour lab such as PHYS 25200) or ENGR 16100-16200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Science-3 hrs for IU</td>
<td>Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Communications</td>
<td>PSY 12000, ANTH 10000, SOC 10000, COM 11400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities-3 hrs for IU</td>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or 10800 or SCLA 10100* (some schools require 2 semesters of English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>A course in jewelry making, sculpture, or ceramics is recommended or develop hobby</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional) **BIOL 39600—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. Courses 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 in the online ADEA Dental School Explorer database. A one-year subscription is $25.

**Applying**

- The initial application to most dental programs is through an online common application called the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (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 TMDSAS 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 TMDSAS) 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
- Partial Fee Waiver for the DAT

**Employment Outlook**

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 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 Indianapolis, IN https://dentistry.iu.edu/academics/degrees-programs/doctor-dental-surgery/index.html
- University of Louisville Louisville, KY https://louisvilledentistry.university-tour.com/dmd/dmd-degree
- Midwestern University Downers Grove, IL https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/il_dental_medicine.html

**More Information**

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