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

Career Description
- Dentistry is the field of healthcare devoted to maintaining oral health. Oral health can have serious impact on a patient’s 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.

Becoming a Dentist
- Complete 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.

Prerequisite Courses
- Dental programs may differ slightly in their requirements.
- Many schools require all prerequisite courses have at least a grade of C.
- Also, many schools 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 Equivalents (specific courses may vary by major)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology-</td>
<td>General Biology</td>
<td>BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 &amp; 23100 &amp; 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 &amp; upper level biology course plus lab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need 20</td>
<td>Anatomy &amp; Physiology</td>
<td>BIOL 20300-20400 or BIOL 30100-30200</td>
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<tr>
<td>credit hours</td>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>BIOL 22100 or BIOL 43800</td>
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<td>for IU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chemistry-</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)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need 12</td>
<td>Organic with lab</td>
<td>CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500</td>
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<tr>
<td>credit hours</td>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>BCHM 30700 or 56100 or CHM 33300 or 33900 or 53300 or MCMP 20800</td>
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<td>for IU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physics-</td>
<td>General</td>
<td>PHYS 22000-22100 or 23300-23400 or PHYS 21800-21900 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 27200 or PHYS 17200 &amp; 24100 (plus additional 1 hour lab such as PHYS 25200)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 hrs for IU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Psychology, Anthropology,</td>
<td>PSY 12000, ANTH 10000, SOC 10000, COM 11400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science-</td>
<td>Sociology, Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 hrs for IU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities-</td>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>ENGL 10600 or 10800 (some schools require 2 semesters of English)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 hrs for IU</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>A course in jewelry making, sculpture, or ceramics is recommended</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Med</td>
<td>BIOL 39600</td>
<td>0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to dental school and other health professions programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>(optional)</td>
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Job Outlook

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the job outlook for dentists is excellent.
- The median salary in 2015 was $158,310.
- 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.

Preparation

- Observe a general dentist to make sure this is the right field and you truly understand what it means to be a dentist. Plan on having at least 100 hours but more hours for some schools.
- Having a hobby or skill which illustrates manual dexterity is recommended.
- Dental schools will want to see 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.
- Students need to 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).

Applying

- The initial application to most dental programs is through an online common application called the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS).
- We encourage you to collect your recommendation letters (generally 4) using the Pre-Professional Advising Letter Service. We submit your letters electronically to AADSAS.
- The individual dental programs ask for supplementary information beyond what is included in your online application and then invite select students to interview.
- Early application is essential.

Fee Assistance

- AADSAS Fee Assistance Program
  http://www.adea.org/GoDental/Application_Prep/The_Application_to_Dental_School_ADEA_AADSAS/Fee_Assistance_Program.aspx?_zs=S4sdd1&_zl=SLpt3
- Partial Fee Waiver for the DAT see the DAT Examinee Guide 2017 (page 22)
  http://www.ada.org/~/media/ADA/Education%20and%20Careers/Files/dat_examinee_guide.pdf?la=en

More Information

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

Requirements for dental programs and additional information about schools and admissions statistics can be found in the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools which is released every other year. It may be purchased through the ADEA website as a print book or as a digital release. (http://www.adea.org/officialguide/)

Programs in the Region

- Indiana University Indianapolis, IN https://www.dentistry.iu.edu/
- University of Louisville Louisville, KY http://louisville.edu/dentistry/
- Midwestern University Downers Grove, IL https://www.midwestern.edu/programs_and_admission/il_dental_medicine.html

Information for this career guide came from the above websites; Explore Health Careers www.explorehealthcareers.org; the Bureau of Labor Statistics http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm; and the ADEA Official Guide to Dental School