



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.

Common Prerequisite Courses (pre-reqs 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	General Biology	BIOL 11000-11100 or BIOL 13100 & 23100 & 23200 (lab) or BIOL 23000 & upper level biology course plus lab
	Anatomy & Physiology	BIOL 20300-20400 or BIOL 30100-30200
	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)
	Organic with lab	CHM 25500-25600 or CHM 26100-26200 or CHM 26505-26605 or MCMP 20400-20500
	Biochemistry	BCHM 30700 or 56100 or CHM 33300 or 33900 or 53300 or MCMP 20800
Physics- 8 hrs for IU	General	PHYS 22000-22100 or 23300-23400 or PHYS 21800-21900 or PHYS 17200 & 27200 or PHYS 17200 & 24100 (plus additional 1 hour lab such as PHYS 25200)
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 (some schools require 2 semesters of English)
Other	Art	A course in jewelry making, sculpture, or ceramics is recommended
Pre-Med Planning Seminar (optional)		BIOL 39600-0 credit 10 week class covering how to apply to dental school and other health professions programs

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)
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](http://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Education%20and%20Careers/Files/dat_examinee_guide.pdf?la=en) 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](http://www.adea.org) (includes AADSAS) <http://www.adea.org>
- [American Dental Association](http://www.ada.org) (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](http://www.adea.org/officialguide/) 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](https://www.dentistry.iu.edu/) Indianapolis, IN <https://www.dentistry.iu.edu/>
- [University of Louisville](http://louisville.edu/dentistry/) Louisville, KY <http://louisville.edu/dentistry/>
- [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

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