



# Dental School Guide

2019 - 2020

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## Dental School Guide

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[Dentists](#) are, and have been, defined by their attention to detail, integrity, and concern for others in their profession. Currently Dentists can work in a variety of areas such as Orthodontists, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, General Dentistry, and Prosthodontists. General Dentistry is the most common practice with the current job growth predicted at 15% or higher with 6,400 openings from 2018 – 2026. The current entry level salary for Pennsylvania is \$54,000 with a median salary of \$113,000. Dental school can take approximately three to six years to complete depending on personal factors and articulation agreement.

### **Qualities that Dental school admissions committees seek in applicants\*:**

#### *Academically prepared*

Each dental school has its own stated admissions requirements, and it is important that pre-dental students are aware of them as they plan their pre-dental courses. There is much discussion in dental schools about encouraging – or – requiring prospective students to complete additional upper-level biology courses. Such courses *may* include biochemistry, anatomy and physiology, genetics, or histology.

#### *Good time managers*

The dental school curriculum demands a lot of time. Dental students typically balance 40+ hours per week of didactic courses, laboratories, preclinical courses, and clinical treatment of patients. Applicants who demonstrate that they can successfully balance heavy course loads with other responsibilities (e.g., work schedules or volunteer experiences) are viewed favorably by admissions committees.

#### *Exhibit strong ethical behavior*

The profession of dentistry makes a commitment to the public that will uphold high ethical standards. Dental schools seek students who are aware of the responsibilities of delivering high-quality oral health care and the role of dentists in society, who are sensitive to social problems, and who possess personal traits consistent with being a leader and a health care provider. Students can learn about these issues by shadowing dentists, taking ethics courses, and participating in volunteer health care experiences. Applicants can anticipate questions during dental school interviews about the ethical responsibilities of health care providers and ethical dilemmas they may have faced.

#### *Have a good understanding of the profession*

Most admissions committees consider it imperative that applicants shadow, volunteer, or work for dentists prior to applying to dental school. Otherwise well-qualified applicants with little or no exposure to the profession tend not to receive offers of admission. Be sure to check individual dental school admission requirements for any requirements regarding hours of shadowing experience.

Many applicants choose to shadow an orthodontist or oral surgeon because they believe a dental specialty to be their ultimate career goal. However, we strongly recommend that students *also* spend time with general dentists and explore both the benefits and what they consider to be the drawbacks or not-so-satisfying aspects of that profession.

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*Exhibit good eye-hand coordination; demonstrate an interest in art and aesthetics*

There are many ways to demonstrate eye-hand coordination or interest in art, including courses, hobbies, and extracurricular activities. Taking an art course in three-dimensional design or sculpture can provide a nice respite from an intense science curriculum and enhance creativity.

*Will rise to challenges*

The pathway to dental school can take many turns. Applicants who have overcome challenges in their lives tend to be viewed favorably by admissions committees. Being the first person in a family to attend college, having to work considerably while going to school, or overcoming other educational challenges can demonstrate an applicant's discipline and motivation to pursue professional education.

*Can address the missions of the institution and the profession*

Applicants whose career goals match the missions of a particular institution and the profession are viewed favorably. Individuals wishing to pursue careers in research and academics or individuals who demonstrate commitment to serving disadvantaged, rural, or other underserved populations may be viewed particularly favorably by specific institutions. It is not enough to merely indicate an interest in the favorably considered area. Applicants should be able to point to experiences that have led to these career goals and support their commitment.

\*Source: University of California, Merced Career Services Center

### Timeline for Dental School Application

[Dental Admission Test \(DAT\)](#) – February/March (Spring Junior Year OR the calendar year before you want to enter Dental school)

- Why? – It will take some time for the scores to matriculate into [Associated American Dental Schools Application Service \(AADSAS\)](#)

Letters of Recommendation – June/July

- Prepare for interviews using [BigInterview](#)

Deadlines of Application – August

- An early application does not weight as important as an outstanding application. Is yours complete and concise?
- You can start applying without your DAT if you need to.

### Important Notes

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- Do not underestimate the amount of time it will take to fill out applications. Anticipate to spend on average 30-45 minutes per application.
- Do not underestimate the expense of application. Start a savings account day one of college
- Do not estimate the difficulty of the DAT – Prepare.
- Have other people go over your application with you. More eyes on your application increase your success. Your career coach, academic advisor or professors can all help you with this.

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### Red Flags

Red flags are issues that could hinder your chances of a successful application to Dental school. Some red flags are:

- Felony Convictions
- Negative Social media posts (including comment sections online)
- Negative press
  - A juvenile offense that was published in the paper
- DUI's or other drug/alcohol related offenses
- Institutional affairs actions
- Poor GPA / Too many withdrawals
- Bad letters of recommendation
- Light courseloads with no other responsibilities. Dental school course loads are heavy, and committees want to see evidence that students can handle the workload.
- Uncompelling statement of intent. Committees want to be certain that the applicant is passionate about the profession and committed to the work.

## QUALIFICATIONS

### GPA

#### Average GPA of Matriculants

- Science: 3.46
- Overall: 3.55

A poor GPA will not kill your chances of Dental School admission but must be balanced with exceptional DAT scores and extracurricular activities.

#### DENTAL ADMISSION TEST (DAT)

\*Factor in the cost of the DAT when taking the DAT. The current cost is \$400.

The DAT is the exam required by Dental Schools for admittance into dental school. Plan on a DAT score of at least 20 to get into Dental school.

DAT will have a perceptual reasoning section called Perceptual Ability Test (PAT). Consider taking sculpture or having some training in 3D spatial reasoning.

### DAT Breakdown

Survey of the Natural Sciences – 90 minutes

- Biology – 40 questions
- General Chemistry – 30 questions
- Organic Chemistry – 30 questions

Perceptual Ability Test – 60 minutes

- Keyhole – 15 questions
- Top/Front/End Visualization – 15 questions
- Angle Ranking – 15 questions
- Hole Punctures – 15 questions
- Cube Counting – 15 questions
- Pattern Folding – 15 questions

Optional Break – 30 minutes

Reading Comprehension Test – 50 questions – 60 minutes

Quantitative Reasoning Test – 45 minutes

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- Mathematics – 30 questions
- Applied Mathematics (Word Problems) – 10 questions

### EXTRACURRICULARS

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Shadowing and Extracurricular experience should shape your application from freshman year to senior year. Types of Extracurricular activities include:

- Shadowing a dentist – over 250 hours
- Editor for spectator or club newsletter
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Volunteer work at hospitals
- Boys and Girls Club
- YMCA

\*Special Note: Pick activities that you like doing. It will show through on your application.

### [Associated American Dental Schools Application Service \(AADSAS\)](#)

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The central application system for the majority of American medical schools

Timeline of Applications: May – August

#### [Qualities of AADSAS](#)

- Similar to an Applicant Tracking System – Time consuming
- Contains Transcript Entries, Essay Sections, Coursework and Official Transcripts, Letters of Evaluation, Work and Activities
- [Personal Statement](#)
  - Who you are
  - What got you interested in Dentistry
  - What have you done academically to reach your goal of becoming a dentist
  - Future plans
- \*Bear in mind a personal statement is limited to 4500 characters by AADSAS
- Cost
  - AADSAS FEE - \$245
  - Additional Schools - \$93

\*This will be the same application for every school you send it to. Have another eye check it.

### Secondary Application

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An additional application to the primary application sent through AADSAS that is school specific.

Asks questions on personal character and why you are interested in that particular school

#### [Essay questions](#)

- Favorite novel
- Leadership roles
- Hardships
- Greatest academic achievements
- Examples of continuing service to the community

### Interview

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Students are usually notified that they are going to receive an interview via email. Check your spam filters accordingly. Dates will be sent to the student to be picked. Consider picking dates that will allow you to miss the minimum amount of class.

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Interviews events will vary. There are a couple of things that can happen. A lunch can be served, a campus interview can occur, and a meet up with current students can happen. The interview itself will either be in group, individual, or multiple-mini interview. If you get a chance to talk to current students, take the time to get insight on the campus climate. You will be at this campus for four years of Dental school.

**Special Note:** Multiple “mini interviews” can be jarring. The format is you’re provided a prompt and are given a brief moment to provide your answer to either a student or faculty member before you are given another prompt and have to answer to a different student or faculty member. It is important that you practice possible questions before you reach the interview stage. Remember that [BigInterview](#) is available to you.

### Helpful Hints

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- You will likely be rejected at least once. Dental Schools on average has an acceptance rate of **50%**. Different geographic area and prestige of schools will cause more selectivity.
  - Some schools are friendly to out of state students and some aren’t
- Continue to enhance your record if you do get rejected from all of your schools. You can always apply twice.
- You can take the DAT [up to three times](#). Average score gained depends on subject area.
- Applying to school is like applying to a job – apply to many. Many applicants will not reach the interview stage.
- GPA matters. 3.8 has a better chance than a 3.4
- The process is not done until the acceptance letter is signed and received by your school.
- Consider taking a [gap year](#). This can allow you time to strengthen your credentials

### RESOURCES

<https://www.rollins.edu/career-life-planning/documents/grad-school-dat.pdf>

<http://www.jdentaled.org/content/jde/81/11/1373.full.pdf>

[ASDA Guide to Perfecting your Personal Statement](#)

[DAT Bootcamp](#)

Resource to help students score better on the DAT. Free and Paid options.

[Orgoman DAT Destroyer](#)

Popular paid resource for the DAT Exam

[Crack the DAT](#)

Popular paid resource for the DAT Exam. Includes perceptual reasoning materials

[DAT Coursesaver Videos](#)

Videos for each section of the DAT. Some are free. Cost is \$50 for full set.