

PROFESSION OVERVIEW

Dentists (DDS or DMD) are licensed healthcare professionals who examine, diagnose, and treat conditions affecting the teeth, gums, and mouth. They also provide preventive care and address diseases that impact oral and overall health.



LENGTH OF PROGRAM (depending on specialty)

- **Dental School (DMD or DDS):** Four Years
- **General Practice Residency:** Optional 1 year
- **Advanced Education General Dentistry:** Optional 1 year
- **Specialties:** 2-6 years + optional Fellowship

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Most dental schools have similar prerequisite coursework, which is listed below. However, specific requirements can vary, and many programs require additional classes. Applicants should check each school's official website and consult the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools at <https://www.adea.org> for the most up-to-date admissions criteria.

*It is the applicant's responsibility to verify all prerequisite courses, requirements, and application deadlines for each school they plan to apply to.

One year of general biology*	BIOL 101/BIOL 102 or BIOL 107/108
One year of general chemistry	CHEM 201/CHEM 202
One year of organic chemistry	CHEM 311/ CHEM 312
One year of physics	PHYS 101/ PHYS 102 or PHYS 105/ PHYS 106
One semester of biochemistry	CHEM 317 or CHEM 414
One year of English	Gateway + a writing intensive course

To strengthen DAT and PAT readiness, students are encouraged to take Statistics, Art, Calculus, alongside the core prerequisites.

*ALL first year Biology students are required to complete Biol 101/102 instead of Biol 107/108

KEY COMPONENTS OF A COMPETITIVE MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICATION

Dental schools look for well-rounded applicants. The following list identifies criteria considered during the application process. Check the **ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools** for average grade point average (GPA) & Dental Admission Test (DAT) scores for programs of the interest; www.adea.org.

• Overall and science GPA	• DAT scores
• Extracurricular activities	• Dentistry-related experiences
• Research experiences	• Community service
• Leadership experiences	• Personal statement
• Interview	• Letters of evaluation (often including a letter from a dentist)

APPLICATION TIMELINE: FINDING THE RIGHT TIMELINE FOR YOU

Your timeline for applying to Dental school should reflect your readiness: academically, personally, and professionally. While some students apply in the summer before senior year to start Dental school right after graduation, others benefit from a more flexible timeline.

For students who need additional time to build a strong foundation in the sciences or adjust to college-level coursework, starting General Chemistry in the sophomore year and applying after senior year is an alternative timeline.

This extended timeline can support stronger academic performance and a more confident DAT preparation. Taking a gap year and applying during their senior year does not put students at a disadvantage. Applicants may use that time to gain clinical exposure, develop professional skills, clarify their goals, and shore up weaker areas on their application.

For more guidance, visit [Make the Most of Your Gap Year](#).

APPLICATION SERVICE

The American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) is the centralized application service for most U.S. dental schools. Applicants submit one primary application through AADSAS, which is then distributed to participating schools: <https://www.adea.org/godental/Apply>

Please note that **Texas dental schools** use a separate application system, the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS): <https://www.tmdsas.com>

STANDARDIZED TEST

The Dental Admission Test (DAT) is a required component for admission to nearly all U.S. dental schools. Administered by the American Dental Association (ADA), the DAT assesses academic knowledge and skills important for success in dental education. Students typically take the DAT after completing key prerequisite courses in biology, general and organic chemistry, and math, with additional preparation in reading comprehension and perceptual reasoning.

The DAT is offered year-round at Prometric testing centers, allowing flexibility in scheduling. For test registration, official preparation materials, and a detailed breakdown of content, visit the ADA's DAT page at www.ada.org/dat.

The DAT consists of four main sections. Each section is scored on a scale from 1 to 30, and dental schools commonly focus on the Academic Average (AA): the mean score of the Survey of the Natural Sciences, Reading Comprehension, and Quantitative Reasoning sections. The Perceptual Ability Test (PAT) is scored separately and is also considered independently during the application review process.

- **Survey of the Natural Sciences** (Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry) (1-30)
- **Perceptual Ability** (1-30)
- **Reading Comprehension** (1-30)
- **Quantitative Reasoning** (1-30)

The following resources can provide you with more information regarding the DAT

- American Dental Association (ADA): Official test information, registration, and preparation materials (www.ada.org/dat)
- DAT Bootcamp (limited free resources) - www.bootcamp.com/dat
- DAT Destroyer - High-yield practice questions (not free, but widely recommended)
- YouTube & Khan Academy (non-DAT-specific science content) - Useful for reviewing biology, chemistry, and math concepts
- [ADA Practice Test \(fee-based\)](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American Dental Association (ADA; www.ada.org)
- American Dental Education Association (ADEA; www.adea.org)
- American Student Dental Association (ASDA; www.asdanet.org)
- Explore Health Careers (<https://explorehealthcareers.org/>)
- Go Dental (<http://www.adea.org/GoDental/>)
- Summer Health Professions Education Program (<http://www.shpep.org/>)



Don't forget to check out **Handshake**!

Handshake is your one-stop source for internship and job postings, campus recruiting, career fairs, and career center resources. Once you're on the login page, enter your iwu.edu email address and click next. If you are already in the system, then you can just select "IWU Single Sign-on" and enter your IWU net-ID and password.

Please visit www.iwu.edu/career-center/handshake for more information on Handshake.