

Overview of Preparing for a Career in Dentistry

First Step: Exploring Dentistry

- What experiences have you had that make you interested in dentistry?
- What are your goals and expectations for a major?
- What skills do you associate with a good dentist? What activities/experiences would help you develop these skills?
- What can you do to learn more about careers in dentistry?

Second Step: Getting Involved

- What are your goals and expectations for volunteer experiences? What have you learned or could you learn about yourself and other people by serving others?
- Consider the populations you have served or worked with in any capacity. Do you have breadth and depth of experience with different groups of people?
- What are your research interests? What do you want to learn through research?
- Keep track of your experiences through college (volunteering, research, paid employment, shadowing, hobbies, student organizations, study abroad). Regularly reflect on and write about the competencies (skills and personal attributes) you develop and the ways you learn and grow in the course of each experience.

Third Step: Preparing Your Application

- Do you hope to apply after your junior year, or will you be a stronger applicant after taking a gap year (or two)?
- Develop meaningful relationships with faculty and supervisors by talking with them about their work and career paths, your coursework, and your interest in dentistry.
- Talk with an advisor at CPHA about steps of the application process the summer before you apply.

Fourth Step: Taking a Gap Year

- What would your goals and expectations be for a gap year?
- What area of your application might you strengthen during a gap year? How could you do this?

Planning Table

Fall	Spring	Summer

Pre-Dental Planning Guide

Keep in mind that course preparation varies from school to school. This is a summary of the most common requirements.

Course	Options at UW – Madison	For DAT
General Chemistry	Two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemistry 103 (lecture + lab) and Chemistry 104 (lecture + lab) • Chemistry 109 (lecture + lab) 	Yes
Organic Chemistry	Two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chemistry 341 (lecture) and Chemistry 342 (lab) • Chemistry 343 (lecture), Chemistry 344 (lab), and Chemistry 345 (lecture) 	Yes
Biochemistry	Two options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biochemistry 501 (lecture) • Biochemistry 507 (lecture) 	Helpful
Introductory Biology	Three options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoology 101 (lecture), Zoology 102 (lab), and Botany 130 (lecture + lab) • Biology 151 (lecture + lab) and Biology 152 (lecture + lab) • Biocore 	Yes
Physics	Four options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physics 103-104 (not calculus-based; lecture + lab) • Physics 207-208 (calculus-based; lecture + lab) • Physics 201-202 (for engineering students; lecture + lab) • EMA 201 and Physics 202 (for BME students; lecture + lab) 	Helpful
Introductory Statistics	Four options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics 371 • Biostatistics 541 • Statistics 301 • Statistics course in your major, such as Psychology 210 	Helpful
English, Literature, or Communications	6 credits: many options; look for literature and composition courses	No

(Some dental schools require coursework in Introductory Psychology, Introductory Microbiology, Anatomy, and Physiology. Also, 3-D Art may be helpful for the Perceptual Ability Test (PAT) portion of the DAT but is not required for the DAT or for dental schools.)

Resources

Tutoring resources available on UW campus

- Greater University Tutoring Services (GUTS) <http://guts.wisc.edu>
- Peer Learning Association (PLA) <https://win.wisc.edu/organization/pla>
- Chemistry Learning Center (CLC) <https://www.chem.wisc.edu/areas/clc>
- Physics Learning Center (PLC) <https://www.physics.wisc.edu/plc>
- Math Lab <https://www.math.wisc.edu/undergraduate/mathlab>
- Statistics Lab https://www.stat.wisc.edu/courses/Tutorial_Schedule
- Writing Center <http://www.writing.wisc.edu>

Professional organizations

- American Dental Association <http://www.ada.org/en>
- American Dental Education Association <http://www.adea.org>