

PREPARING FOR DENTAL SCHOOL

ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

- A strong GPA (>3.5 overall, >3.4 in science pre-requisites)
- A DAT score of 19 or higher
- Three excellent letters of reference, at least two from science instructors
- Orientation to the profession (observation of practicing dentists, volunteer experience)
- Evidence of leadership and of service to others.

A competitive applicant for DDS programs will have taken the recommended coursework (see below), a GPA of 3.5 or higher, DAT scores of 19 or higher, good references, a background involving service and leadership (co-curricular/volunteer record), and an understanding of dentistry as a profession (shadowing/observation).

There is some variation in the pre-requisite coursework needed at the undergraduate level. Below is a listing of the undergraduate coursework required by most programs as well as some additional coursework that may be required by some programs.

Minimum Pre-Requisites:

Biol 130 – Cells to Organisms
Biol 150 – Organisms to Ecosystems
Chem 115 – Structure and Reactivity
Chem 116 – Energetics and Dynamics
Chem 250 – Organic Chemistry I
Chem 252 – Organic Chemistry II
Phys 141 – Principles of Mechanics
Phys 151 – Principles of Classical Physics

Additional courses for some programs:

Chem 340/Biol 444 - Biochemistry

Any major is acceptable; the biochemistry major overlaps substantially with the pre-requisite coursework.

PROGRAM COST and LENGTH

The length of DDS programs is typically 4 years. Average costs vary by state, but in 2021, tuition costs per year were roughly

Resident: **\$65,000-70,000**

Non-Resident/Private: **\$70,000-80,000**

Living costs are additional. *NB: Student loans are readily available to US citizens or permanent residents; international students may need to self-finance.*

LICENSING

To practice dental medicine in the US, you must earn a DDS or DMD degree from an accredited dental program and pass a national board exam. You must also obtain a state license and additional requirements to practice vary slightly from state to state.

PROGRAMS attended by LU ALUMS

Marquette University, University of Detroit Mercy, University of Louisville, University of Iowa, University of Minnesota, University of North Carolina

Miscellaneous

The director of admissions at a major DDS program passed along a couple of lists that might be of interest

Top 10 characteristics of a successful candidate to a health professions school:

1. Applies early and to more than one school
2. Demonstrates clear career goals
3. Knows personal strengths and fit with desired institutions
4. Is acquainted with admissions deans, directors, and staff
5. Submits strong letters of recommendation
6. Demonstrates strong ethical values and professional stature
7. Demonstrates strong record of leadership
8. Has a significant role in a meaningful research project
9. Balances multiple priorities
10. Demonstrates a passion for the profession.

and, some final thoughts from the director of admissions

- it is tougher to get accepted than you think
- wanting it badly is not enough
- being terrific academically is just the beginning
- be proactive and take ownership of the process
- be humble and hungry
- admission is a privilege, not an entitlement

The DAT covers biology, chemistry, reading, quantitative skills, and **perceptual ability**. Perceptual ability involves identifying 2D and 3D shapes, as well as 2D projections of 3D shapes. Practicing in advance is strongly encouraged.