

DENTISTRY

There are three dental schools in Texas, all public institutions. All three dentals schools have a four-year professional curriculum. Career options include: general dentistry; dental public health; endodontics; oral & maxillofacial pathology, radiology, or surgery; orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics; pediatric dentistry; periodontics; and prosthodontics.

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Summary Information and Preprofessional Course Requirements for the Dental Schools in Texas ^a			
Dental Schools ^b	BCD	UTDB	UTSADS
Size of Class Admitted	95	84	96
Minimum Number of Predental Years ^c	3	3	3
Semester Hours Limit on Junior College Work	60	60	None
General or Inorganic Chemistry ^d	8	8	8
Organic Chemistry ^d (Semester hours)	8	8	8
Biochemistry ^e	3	3	--
Physics ^d	8	8	8
Biology ^d	14	14	14
English ^f	6	6	6

Additional preparation might include courses in Spanish, psychology, business management, computer literacy, art, physiology, anatomy, microbiology, histology and embryology.

- a Note: Please be aware that these requirements can change. Check with your health professions advisor, the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service website, or the director of admission of the professional school for any changes or additional requirements.
- b BCD = Baylor College of Dentistry (Texas A&M Health Science Center), Dallas
UTDB = The University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston
UTSADS= The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School
- c Baccalaureate degree highly desirable.
- d Courses as required for science majors-one year with laboratory.
- e Course as required for science majors (may not count toward 14 hours of biology).
- f Remedial or developmental courses or "English as a second language" courses are not accepted.

GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING TO TEXAS DENTAL SCHOOLS

Dental school admission committees consider the application in its entirety and give importance to the following factors:

1. Intellectual Capacity: consideration of undergraduate and graduate record; academic progression/regression; standardized test scores; academic awards and honors; research accomplishments; degree of difficulty of undergraduate academic program; pre-professional evaluation.
2. Interpersonal and Communication Skills: verbal communication skills (as demonstrated in the personal interview); written communication skills (as expressed in essay and in other areas of the application).
3. Motivation: knowledge of the profession of dentistry gained through observing in a dental practice; interest in life-long learning; success in overcoming adverse personal, family or life conditions.
4. Community Background and Activities: hometown or county of residence that has been designated as a health professions shortage area; race/ethnicity as it relates to service to underserved areas and/or underrepresented populations; commitment/desire to practice in an underserved region of the state; bilingual language ability; volunteer activities in the community.
5. College Activities: extracurricular involvement; leadership roles on the campus and in the community; volunteer work; employment history, especially as it occurred simultaneously with undergraduate academic preparation.
6. Integrity: any academic integrity violation; conduct of a crime; anything else in an applicant's background relating either positively or negatively to their standard of integrity.
7. Essential Functions: sensory and motor skills, cognitive abilities, communication skills, professional and behavioral skills.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

State Residency

By Texas state law, the enrollment of non-resident applicants to state funded medical and dental schools is limited to 10% of the entering class, so Texas residents are given preference in admissions. If there is a question about Texas residency, it will be necessary to complete a Residency Questionnaire. Please refer to www.utexas.edu/student/admissions/residency for further information or contact the Texas Medical & Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS).

Academic Performance

The GPA is a major factor in evaluating academic performance. Also considered are: (a) consistency of grades, (b) performance in required courses, (c) course load per semester, (d) number of colleges attended, (e) discrepancies between GPA and DAT scores, and (f) late attainment of academic success (i.e., trends in academic history).

Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended should be sent to TMDSAS (and AADSAS if applying outside of Texas). Dental schools will not require original official transcripts to be sent until acceptance is extended. The GPA will be calculated from grades for course work at all colleges attended and will be calculated by year, cumulative and science courses. All grades will be used in the calculations, regardless of whether courses were repeated. In recent years, the mean GPA's of accepted students have been around 3.55 (cumulative) and 3.50 (science).

Dental Admission Test (DAT)

The DAT is administered by computer on most any day of the year. Dental applicants should plan to take the test in the spring prior to applying to dental school. Applicants may obtain a registration booklet from their advisor or by contacting the Dental Admission Testing Program at 211 East Chicago Ave, 6th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611-2678 [Phone: (800) 232-2162; website: www.ada.org] Applicants may register on-line at: www.ada.org/prof/ad/testing/dat/registering.asp or by completing a paper application in the DAT booklet. After the applicant submits the application and fee payment, he/she will be notified regarding registration. The applicant will be instructed to call an 800-number to arrange a day, time and place (at a designated Thompson Prometric Testing Center) to take the test. A 48-hour advance notice is required for scheduling the test. The student will receive unofficial scores immediately after completing the test; dental schools and advisors will receive the results in about three weeks. If the student wishes to retest, he/she must wait at least 90 days. Examinees who have attended 3 or more DAT exams must apply for special permission to take the test again. The DAT is a one-half day exam comprised of multiple-choice questions over the following areas: Survey of the Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry – 90 min), Perceptual Ability (angle discrimination, form development cubes, orthographic projections, apertures and paper folding – 60 min), Reading Comprehension (dental and basic sciences – 60 min), Quantitative Reasoning (algebra, statistics, geometry, trigonometry and word problems – 45 min). DAT scores range from 1 to 30; a standard score of 17 indicates an average performance, nationally. The academic and perceptual averages for the TMDSAS applicant pool has been approximately 18, 17 over the last few years. For students matriculated in the three Texas Dental Schools, the averages have been approximately 19.5, 18.

The Application

Application to dental school is made in the summer of the year preceding entry. Early application is advised. It is recommended that applications be submitted as soon as possible after they become available. All three Texas dental schools participate in the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service, 702 Colorado, Ste 6.400, Austin, TX 78701 [Phone: (512) 499-4785; email: TMDAS@utsystem.edu]. The application is completed on-line and can be accessed by entering the following website: www.utsystem.edu/tmdsas . The application period extends from May 1 to October 15 for the next entry year. A student may be notified as early as December 1 regarding his/her acceptance. Texas residents are required to use the application service. The website is also a valuable resource for current application and admission information.

If a student is applying to an out-of-state dental school, he/she should check to see if the school participates in the Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS). Students may access the application through the electronic application service at <http://www.adea.org> . The electronic application is available in mid May; an application cycle closes on March 1 of the following year.

Notes:

1. Obtain an unofficial transcript from each college or university attended. Use these transcripts when recording your course information on the application; this will help to ensure accuracy of information. Also, be sure to request that official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended be sent to the application service.
2. Print a copy of the completed application and review it for accuracy before submitting it to the application service.
3. Print the required signature page and complete any secondary applications that may be required.
4. Regarding the personal statement, take some time to carefully construct the statement. It should be succinct, accurate and easily read. Admission committees look to these comments for indications of your motivation, values, attitudes and goals regarding a career in dentistry. The statement gives you the opportunity to tell the committee members more about yourself. Remember, this is their first view of you as a candidate before they meet you in the interview. Finally, ask someone who is not familiar with your background to read the statement; it should be clear to him/her.
5. Periodically check on the status of your application. Make sure that the application service has received all of the required information.

Health Professions Evaluation

A written evaluation from the Health Professions Advisory Committee at the applicant's school is preferred. If an applicant's institution does not have a Committee, two individual faculty letters are acceptable.

Baylor College of Dentistry also requires a separate letter from a practicing dentist. This letter may be included in the Health Professions Evaluation (from the applicant's school) or the dentist may send it directly to the Application Service.

Interview

An interview is required prior to a student's acceptance into dental school. An applicant may be invited to interview with the Admissions Committee during the fall prior to matriculation. The Committee will assess noncognitive factors such as communication skills, extracurricular activities and motivation for a career in dentistry.

Timeline for Application

A. Spring of Junior Year

1. Take the DAT.
2. Complete information sheet, if required, for health professions advisory committee at your school.

B. Summer between Junior and Senior Years

1. Complete applications to dental schools.
 - a. Texas dental schools through on-line application from TMDSAS.
 - b. Out-of-state dental schools through AADSAS.
2. Request your health professions advisor to mail an evaluation to the application services.
3. If necessary, retake the DAT (candidates must wait 90 days before retaking the DAT).

C. Fall of Senior Year

1. Interview at dental schools.

Suggested Reading

Following is a short list of reading materials that may be useful in preparing to enter dental school. This is a selected list; new books and other materials are constantly being published. Ask your advisor about any recent volumes, which may be helpful.

Dental School Catalogs. These may be available in your health professions advisor's office or you can often access a catalogue by visiting a dental school's web site.

Official Guide to Dental Schools (revised annually). Published by and available from: American Dental Education Association, 1400 K Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005; Tel: (202) 289-7201; Fax: (202) 289-7204. Website: www.adea.org .

Opportunities for Minority Students in United States Dental Schools. American Dental Education Association at above address, website, and phone number.

Dental Admission Testing Program: Applications and Preparation Materials (revised annually). Available **free of charge** to dental school applicants. It consists of sample examinations used in the DAT and enables candidates to become familiar with the types of material included in the test. Available from: Dental Admission Testing Program, 211 East Chicago Ave, 6th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611-2678; (800) 232-2162. American Dental Association website: www.ada.org .

DAT Tutorial. A tutorial is available that will introduce the applicant to the mechanics of taking the computerized DAT. It does not include sample questions, but it does provide the basic steps involved in working through the test. The tutorial is available for free at www.ada.org (requires Microsoft windows). Applicants can also purchase the tutorial on CD by submitting a letter and a \$20 money order to: DAT Tutorial, Dept of Testing Services, 211 East Chicago Ave, 6th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611-2678.

ASDA Handbook. Getting into Dental School: ASDA's Guide for Predental Students (\$30). Contains information on the admissions process, financial aid, as well as other dental career information. Purchase on-line from the American Student Dental Association at: www.asdanet.org/store/ .

NAAHP Publications -- *Health Professions Admission Guide: Strategy for Success. Write for Success: Preparing a Successful Professional School Application.* NAAHP, PO Box 1518, Champaign, IL 61824-1518; Tel: (217) 355-0063; Fax (217) 355-1287; website: www.naahp.org .

Dental Admission Test (DAT) Computerized Sample Tests. Available from ScholarWare at www.scholarware.com and from the KSF Review at: www.theksfreview.com/dat/php.

Commercial DAT Preparation Courses such as: Kaplan (www.kaplan.com) or Princeton Review (www.princetonreview.com).

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