

## DENTAL (D.D.S.)

### ACADEMIC AND CAREER INFORMATION

#### NATURE OF THE WORK, EARNINGS, AND OCCUPATIONAL OUTLOOK

**Dentistry** is a branch of the healing arts and sciences devoted to maintaining the health of the teeth, gums, and other hard and soft tissues of the oral cavity and adjacent structures. Dentistry requires diagnostic ability and manual skills. Dentists should have good visual memory, excellent judgment of space and shape, a high degree of manual dexterity, and scientific ability. Good business sense, self-discipline, and communication skills are helpful for success in private practice. Learn more about the profession of dentistry. [Learn more about the profession of dentistry.](#)

**Earnings and Job Outlook:** Though earnings vary according to number of years in practice, location, hours worked, and specialty, the ADA reports that in 2017 the average net income for an independent private practitioner who owned all or part of his or her practice was \$197,190, while dental specialists earned an average net income of \$320,990. The overall median pay for a dentist was \$156,240. Employment of dentists is expected to grow at a rate of 7% from 2018-2028 (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2018).

#### TRAINING

There are 66 dental schools in the United States. Preparation to become a dentist entails earning a degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S) or a degree of Doctor of Dental Medicine (D.M.D.). The time-to-degree is typically 4 years. During the last 2 years, students treat patients, usually in dental clinics, under the supervision of licensed dentists. In California, dentists must be licensed by the Dental Board of California. There are many specialties in the field of dentistry in addition to general dentistry. [Find more information about the ten additional specialties recognized by the ADA.](#)

#### ACADEMIC PREPARATION

**Any major** is appropriate for dental school preparation. While a science major requires many of the same basic prerequisites, selecting a science major is not required for admission to any dental school. Students are advised to select a major they find interesting and to work at developing a broad-based, interdisciplinary foundation of knowledge and skills from which they can build upon.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Prerequisite admission requirements vary from school to school. For the specific requirements at individual dental schools, refer to “ADEA: Official Guide to Dental Schools” available for purchase, at the [American Dental Education Association \(ADEA\)](#).

### CSULB Courses which fulfill admission requirements for some dental schools:

*Students maintain responsibility for verifying course selection with individual dental programs.*

Coursework	CSULB Courses
One year of General Chemistry with Lab	Chemistry 111A & 111B
One year of Organic Chemistry with Lab	Chemistry 220A & 220B + 320 L (Chem. & Biochem. majors) OR 220A w/ 223A & 220B w/ 223B
One year of General Biology with Lab	Biology 211, 212 & 213
One year of General Physics with Lab	Physics 100A & 100B OR 151 & 152
One year of English (Composition and/or Literature)	English 100 AND one of the following 101,102, or 300
Additional courses in Biology, including Anatomy	Biology 208
One or more courses in Psychology	Psychology 100
One or more courses in Biochemistry	Chemistry 441A and/or 441B or 448
One semester to one year of Math (Calculus)	Math 119A OR 122 & 123
One course in Statistics	Biology 260 OR Statistics 108

## IMPORTANT FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

**STANDARDIZED TEST:** All United States dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admission Test (DAT).

**EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** Pre-dental students should be able to demonstrate their potential for independent critical thought, leadership, concern for others, and an understanding of the dental profession. Additionally, pre-dental students should work at developing and/or improving manual dexterity and eye-hand-coordination. The [UCLA School of Dentistry offers Pre-Dental laboratory courses](#) to strengthen perceptual skills. These courses are offered over weekend days a few times a year.

**CLINICAL EXPOSURE:** It is recommended that students engage in extracurricular activities such as volunteering in a dental setting and community service.

**LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION:** Generally, applicants must provide 2-3 letters of recommendations. Requirements and specifications vary by school.

**ADMISSIONS:** The ADEA Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (ADEA AADSAS) is an option for applying to many programs in one place.

**ADMISSIONS STATISTICS:** For the Fall 2019 entering class, about 54.5% of applicants were accepted to dental school. The **mean GPA** for accepted students was **3.55 (Total)** and **3.45 (Science)**. The average **DAT test score** was **20.3** (ADEA: Official Guide to Dental Schools, 2019).

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [American Dental Association \(ADA\)](#)
- [ADEA Associated American Dental Schools Application Service \(ADEA AADSAS\)](#)

For more information about dental school, visit [www.adea.org/GoDental/](http://www.adea.org/GoDental/) and see the HPAO website for further information on the application process, application assistance, and a list of upcoming workshops and events.