

# Dental School Preparation Guidelines

Each path to dental school is different. This guide is intended to help you navigate your own path.

## Every Semester you should plan to:

1. Successfully complete pre-professional coursework
2. Maintain excellent grades (3.5 and above to be competitive); math and science coursework is especially critical
3. Keep your legal and student behavior records clean! These records can impact both admissions and professional licensure
4. Explore and participate in meaningful activities and experiences
5. Get to know your faculty and instructors and meet with a Pre-Health Advisor

## Freshman Year – Year 1

School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on your academics; practice time management; seek help early if needed</li> <li>Start a resume - track activities and experiences; journal observations</li> <li>Be active; go to fairs and events and join the Pre-Dental Society student organization</li> <li>Explore service opportunities in the Fall and participate in the Spring</li> <li>Explore majors based on interests; all majors are equal to dental school admissions</li> <li>Register for PHLC 200 for your sophomore year (Spring)</li> </ul> <p><b>TIP: Volunteer in your Freshman year!</b></p>	<p><i>Of listed, choose what works for you</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in medically-related volunteering or employment</li> <li>Work at a Summer camp with a healthcare focus</li> <li>Seek shadowing opportunities</li> <li>Find experiences for next year</li> <li>Explore options for research if interested</li> <li>Shadow a dentist; start with your family dentist if possible</li> </ul>

## Sophomore Year – Year 2

School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a major based on your interests</li> <li>Continue participation in meaningful activities and experiences; shadow at the Creighton School of Dentistry</li> <li>Calculate completed Biology, Chemistry, Physics courses GPA</li> <li>Begin to research dental schools of interest for admissions requirements</li> <li>If completing Organic Chemistry in Sophomore year consider taking the DAT exam in summer; plan preparation and study time – can also take DAT in Junior year!</li> <li>If interested in research, consider a summer opportunity; apply early Spring</li> <li>Register for PDDS 300 for your Junior year if planning to apply after Junior year (Spring)</li> <li>If you want to apply after Senior year, request Guest status in PDDS 300</li> </ul> <p><b>TIP: Focus on non-medical volunteering, shadowing, and activities involving manual dexterity skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look into Summer Health Professions Exploration Program (SHPEP) if interested</li> <li>Begin or continue experience(s) in non-medical service, dental experience or service, healthcare employment, shadowing, or research</li> <li>Consider Study Abroad / Service Abroad if interested</li> <li>Some students will take the DAT exam after completing Organic Chemistry; can also take DAT exam in Junior year</li> </ul>

## Junior Year - Year 3 - IF Applying to Start Dental School after Senior Year

School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to a Pre-Health Advisor, review readiness and timeline to apply</li> <li>Participate in PDDS 300 Pre-Dental Seminar</li> <li>In the Fall decide when to take the DAT exam if not already taken; allow ample time for preparation</li> <li>Research selection factors: GPA, DAT score minimums, Letters of Rec, deadlines</li> <li>Identify who to ask for Letters of Recommendation (Fall)</li> <li>Brainstorm your personal statement and write draft by Spring</li> <li>By February, ask letter writers; follow-up with email and letter requirements</li> <li>Review American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) (Spring)</li> <li>If eligible, apply for Fee Assistance Program for AADSAS and DAT fees (early Spring)</li> <li>Maintain high grades and keep participating in meaningful activities</li> <li>In May begin entering information into your AADSAS application</li> </ul> <p><b>TIP: Focus on dentist shadowing if needed, non-medical service, leadership, and manual dexterity skills</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Primary Application by early June!</li> <li>Order transcripts to submit with Primary Application</li> <li>Take the DAT no later than early July</li> <li>Be prepared for programs requiring a secondary application; sometimes an additional essay</li> <li>Check Letters received</li> <li>Contact schools to check your file is complete – most schools will not interview until it is</li> <li>Consider your options if a dental school application is not successful the first time - explore Gap Year options to be prepared</li> <li>Follow up on your application status: Transcripts sent? Letters received? Academic Update?</li> </ul>

### Senior Year – Year 4 – IF Applying to Start Dental School after Graduation

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete any program-specific application requirements; secondary apps and essays</li> <li>Check your status in the application/admission process</li> <li>Continue to get good grades, pursue meaningful co-curricular, and experiential activities</li> <li>Update individual schools on experiences completed after submitting primary application</li> <li>Research financial options for dental school</li> <li>Interview at dental schools; schedule a practice Interview with the Career Center once you have interviews scheduled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow rules of application and acceptances</li> <li>Make interim and final decisions about dental school choice, if acceptances offered</li> <li>Notify schools not attending before deadline given</li> <li>Complete and submit IRS and financial aid forms</li> </ul>

### Junior Year - Year 3 - IF APPLYING AFTER SENIOR YEAR – (GAP YEAR)

School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review your timeline with a Pre-Health Advisor. Identify areas of your application that can be strengthened over the next four semesters (Fall)</li> <li>Enroll as a Guest Participant in PDDS 300</li> <li>Maintain high academic performance; figure your science GPA again</li> <li>Continue participation in meaningful activities and experiences</li> <li>Explore Gap Year options; employment, volunteer, academic, etc. and apply</li> <li>Continue to build faculty relationships and seek mentoring from dental students</li> <li>Register for full participation in PDDS 300 in your Senior Year (Spring)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take the DAT exam anytime in Summer or plan to take in Senior year (apply for Fee Assistance if eligible)</li> <li>Continue participation in meaningful activities and experiences</li> <li>TIP: By Year 4 complete at least two shadowing experiences with dentists, non-medical service, consider research, participate in shadowing at Creighton School of Dentistry, practice manual dexterity skills</li> </ul>

### Senior Year – Year 4 - IF APPLYING AFTER GRADUATION - TAKE A GAP YEAR

School Year	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk to a Pre-Health Advisor, review readiness and timeline to apply</li> <li>Participate in PDDS 300</li> <li>If not taken, schedule to take DAT no later than June or early July</li> <li>Research selection factors: GPA, DAT score minimums, Letters of Rec, deadlines</li> <li>Decide who to ask to write a Letter of Recommendation for you (Fall)</li> <li>Brainstorm your personal statement; write draft by Spring</li> <li>By February, ask letter writers. Follow-up with email and letter requirements</li> <li>If eligible, apply for Fee Assistance for AADSAS and DAT fees (if not taken yet)</li> <li>Review AADSAS requirements (Spring)</li> <li>Continue participating in meaningful activities, especially dental experience and service</li> <li>In May begin entering information into your AADSAS application</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit Primary Application by June</li> <li>Order transcripts for Primary Application</li> <li>Take the DAT by July (if not completed yet)</li> <li>Follow up on application status: Transcripts sent? Letters received?</li> <li>Complete program-specific requirements on secondary apps and essays by late Summer</li> <li>Follow up with dental schools to ensure your file is complete – most schools will not interview until it is</li> <li>Potentially, begin Gap Year experience after graduation, or prepare for a program in fall</li> </ul>

### GAP YEAR Following Graduation

Fall	Spring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Begin Gap Year employment, service, research or other experience</li> <li>Begin post-baccalaureate or Special Master's program immediately following graduation, if academic enhancement necessary</li> <li>Check your file is complete at each dental school</li> <li>Check your status in the application/admission process</li> <li>If you are in an academic program, get good grades</li> <li>Continue meaningful experiential activities; you can often UPDATE individual dental schools on additional experience after submitting your primary application</li> <li>Interview at dental schools; schedule a practice interview with the Career Center once your interviews are scheduled at dental schools</li> <li>Research financial options for dental school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow rules of application and acceptances</li> <li>Make interim and final decisions about dental school choice, if acceptances offered</li> <li>Notify schools not attending before deadline given</li> <li>Complete and submit IRS and financial aid forms</li> </ul>

### Summer before dental school matriculation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare for dental school enrollment – purchase books, make living arrangements, and attend orientation programs</li> <li>Follow-up on all financial aid forms and deadlines</li> <li>Take time to Relax. Congratulations!</li> </ul>
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