

DENTISTRY (DDS/DMD)



Dentists diagnose and treat problems related to teeth, gums, and other parts of the mouth. They provide advice and instruction on taking care of the teeth and gums and on diet choices that affect oral health. Dentists use a variety of equipment, including x-ray machines, drills, mouth mirrors, probes, forceps, brushes, and scalpels. They also use lasers, digital scanners, and other technologies. Dentists can have their own businesses, work alone, with partners, with a small staff, or be at established dental practices.

Dentists need to obtain a degree in Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Medical Dentistry (DMD). There is no difference between the two degrees and it typically takes 4 years to complete. The first two years usually cover the basic sciences and the last two years, diagnosing oral disease, surgery, and clinical study. All states require dentists to be licensed; requirements vary by state. In addition to general dentistry, dental schools may offer specialized postgraduate programs of study, in areas such as oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, or pediatric dentistry, which can take an additional 2 to 6 years to complete.

As an undergraduate Pre-Dental student, it is important to carefully review the prerequisite course requirements of all programs of interest as they vary. Many programs require between 75–150 hours of exposure to the dental profession through shadowing experiences. In addition to shadowing, applicants can participate in dental research and/or community service. Applicants are encouraged to become involved within the field of dentistry as much as possible. **The Dental Admission Test (DAT)** is typically required for admission. Please consult the **ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools** and/or the **online ADEA Dental School Explorer** for specific application requirements. We encourage you to meet with a Pre-Health Advisor at least once a semester to ensure satisfactory progress towards your goals!

DID YOU KNOW?

- A science major is not required. Students should choose a major based on their interests and an area that they find exciting, which at the same time, will keep them academically competitive.
- DENT 221: Introduction to Dentistry (1 unit) at USC is highly recommended for anyone exploring the dental field.
- Some dental schools require students to complete science prerequisites only at an accredited four-year U.S. university.
- One letter of recommendation from a dentist-mentor is highly recommended when applying to dental schools.
- **AADSAS** is the central application service for dental schools. It opens in June.
- Most dental schools will want applicants to discuss how they have developed their manual dexterity skills. Some activities or classes that could be useful include: Drawing, painting, woodcarving, creating 3-D artwork through jewelry-making, sculpting or ceramics, soap carving, sewing, crocheting, knitting, and learning a musical instrument that requires extensive hand-eye coordination (e.g., piano, violin).
- Dentists have the opportunity to own their own business right after dental school, which gives them independence and allows them to set their own goals.

COMMON CORE COURSES

Students are responsible for verifying the prerequisite coursework and policies of the schools to which they plan to apply.

Course	# of Courses	USC Course(s)
General Biology	2 courses with lab	BISC 120L and BISC 220L or BISC 121L and BISC 221L
General Chemistry	2 courses with lab	CHEM 105aL and CHEM 105bL or CHEM 115aL and CHEM 115bL
Organic Chemistry	2 courses with lab. Major may determine course selection.	CHEM 322aL and CHEM 322bL or CHEM 325aL and CHEM 325bL
Physics	2 courses with lab. Major may determine course selection.	PHYS 135aL and PHYS 135bL or PHYS 151L and PHYS 152L
English / Writing	2 courses	WRIT 150 and WRIT 340
Biochemistry	1 course is generally required. Lab is generally not required.	CHEM 350g (Fall only) or BISC 312 (Spring only)

Supplemental Requirements

The courses below are required by some dental schools. Please refer to individual school for specific prerequisite requirements.

Mathematics	This is a requirement for a handful of schools, and can be fulfilled by 1 course in Calculus and/or 1 course in Statistics. AP credits may or may not be accepted.	Calculus: MATH 125 or MATH 126 (Math 118 will suffice for BUAD majors) Statistics: MATH 208x or QBIO 305g or HP 340Lg or PSYC 274g or BUAD 310g
Psychology	1 course in Introductory Psychology	PSYC 100g
Upper Division Sciences	Coursework in upper-level Biology courses such as Anatomy, Physiology, or Microbiology are recommended, and can enhance one's dental school application. Note: A handful of schools will require at least 1 additional upper division course.	HBIO 301L or BISC 300L or BISC 307L