

PREPARING FOR DENTAL SCHOOL: A GUIDE FOR FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES

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HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER

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The Health Professions and Prelaw Center (HPPLC) advises freshmen through graduate students who are preparing for careers in dentistry. Admission to dental school is competitive, and it is important for you to have correct and up-to-date information. Read this document carefully, attend appropriate meetings, and use the resources in the HPPLC office.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

The minimum requirements for the Indiana University School of Dentistry are listed below.¹ In order to enhance performance in dental school, the pre dental student frequently takes more than the minimum science requirements.

	IU SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY REQUIREMENT	IU BLOOMINGTON COURSE
ENGLISH:	One semester of English composition	ENG-W 131 or 170 ²
BIOLOGY OR ZOOLOGY (WITH LAB):	Minimum of 8 semester hours	BIOL-L 111, 112, and 113 or BIOL-L 112, 113 and 211
ANATOMY (WITH LAB):	Minimum of 4 semester hours	ANAT-A 215 ³
PHYSIOLOGY (LAB NOT REQUIRED):	Minimum of 3 semester hours	PHSL-P 215, ³ BIOL-P 451, ⁴ or ANAT-A 464 ³
GENERAL PHYSICS (WITH LAB):	Minimum of 8 semester hours	PHYS-P 201 and 202 or P 221 and P 222
GENERAL/INORGANIC CHEMISTRY (WITH LAB):	Minimum of 8 semester hours in major level classes.	CHEM-C 117 and CHEM-N 330 ⁵
ORGANIC CHEMISTRY (WITH LAB):	Minimum of 4 semester hours	CHEM-C 341 ⁶ and 343
BIOCHEMISTRY (LAB NOT REQUIRED):	Minimum of 3 semester hours	CHEM-C 483 ⁷ or 484 ⁸ or BIOL-M 350 ⁹
PSYCHOLOGY:	One semester	PSY-P 101 or higher

¹ For specific requirements of other schools to which you expect to apply, consult the *Official Guide to Dental Schools* in the HPPLC office **early** in your college years.

² Please note that an exemption from a degree requirement, such as composition, is not equivalent to credit and cannot be used to fulfill the English requirement. Other writing courses above the level of English Composition may be substituted, including courses that meet intensive writing requirements.

³ Offered through Medical Sciences. See course descriptions under the Biology section in the *College of Arts and Sciences Bulletin*.

⁴ Preferred.

⁵ In order to obtain the best preparation to meet the requirements for all dental schools, pre dental students should complete the sequence of courses for chemistry majors through CHEM-N 330, including CHEM-C 341, 342, and 343. Students should complete CHEM-C 342 and 343 before CHEM-N 330. The IU dental school will accept CHEM-C 118 in place of CHEM-N 330. However, based upon the recommendations of the IUB Department of Chemistry, the Indiana University School of Dentistry encourages all IUB pre dental students to take CHEM-N 330 rather than CHEM-C 118. HPPLC recommends that pre dental students complete CHEM-N 330 instead of CHEM-C 118 to meet the general/inorganic requirements for admission to dental schools. Please also be aware that many dental schools require two semesters of organic chemistry.

⁶ Pre dental students should not enroll in the alternate organic chemistry course CHEM-R 340. CHEM-R 340 will not be accepted to meet the admission requirements of the IU Dental School.

⁷ CHEM-C 342 is a prerequisite for CHEM-C 483. It is strongly recommended that students complete CHEM-N 330 before CHEM-C 483.

⁸ CHEM-C 484 has a prerequisite of CHEM-C 342.

⁹ Prerequisites for BIOL-M 350 are BIOL-M 250, BIOL-M 255, and CHEM-C 341.

Required science courses (except biochemistry and physiology) must include laboratories. Students may be admitted with a minimum of 90 semester hours of undergraduate work, preferably with an "A-" average or better, although most students complete an undergraduate degree prior to matriculation. Additional useful sciences include molecular biology, cell biology, microbiology, genetics, endocrinology, and histology. Additional recommended courses include social and behavioral sciences, medical terminology, Spanish, speech, and art (ceramics, jewelry, three dimensional design) or music. **It is very important that you engage in specific activities through which you can develop your manual dexterity skills (such as playing a musical instrument or doing three-dimensional artwork).**

Students interested in the seven year B.S./D.D.S. program should consult with a pre dental advisor in the Health Professions & Prelaw Center early. The dental degree is granted by the IU dental school, and the undergraduate B.S. degree is granted by the Biology Department, I.U. Bloomington.

Please consult the publication *ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools*, available in the Health Professions and Prelaw Center, for information on the requirements for other schools.

Please note: Students should be aware that some health professions programs will not accept Advanced Placement credit or credit-by-examination towards meeting admission requirements, or accept such credit only under restricted circumstances. Students should also be aware that receiving an exemption from a degree requirement is not generally considered equivalent to Advanced Placement credit, credit-by-examination, or credit from coursework.

MAJOR

Indiana University Bloomington does not offer a "pre dental major," and dental schools do not have a preference for any specific major. There may be people who suggest that there is a "preferred" major. Our information that there is not a "better" major comes from dental school admissions officers – the people who make the admissions decisions. The Indiana University School of Dentistry prefers students who have a broadly conceived education which includes strengths in the humanities and the social sciences as well as the required physical and biological sciences. You should consider a major which you enjoy, in which you perform well, and one that might serve as a basis for graduate work or a different career path if you decide not to attend dental school. If you decide to major in a science area, you should consider minoring in a humanities or social science field. If you decide to major in a nonscience area, you should consider minoring in biology and chemistry. Facility in a second language is strongly recommended.

FACTORS IN ADMISSION

There is no set formula for admission to dental schools. Schools and committees vary in their preferences. College grades (science grades in particular), Dental Admission Test scores, academic letters of evaluation (recommendation letters), the personal interview, and perceptions of individual character and personality all can be important. It should be noted that a low GPA and DAT cannot be overcome by an excellent interview; however, a low grade or one semester of poor grades will probably not keep a good candidate out of most dental schools. **Admissions committees also consider it very important that you have engaged in some type of activity to develop your manual dexterity skills.** Dental schools are also keenly interested in candidates who have **actively** investigated the dental profession.

DENTAL ADMISSION TEST

The Dental Admission Test (DAT) is an exam conducted by the American Dental Association and is designed to assess academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. Information about the test and application may be obtained at the ADA website at www.ada.org. The test is administered by computer at Prometric Testing Centers throughout the country.

Students should become acquainted with the content of the test early in their undergraduate years. Your coursework in biology, general/inorganic chemistry, and organic chemistry will provide important preparation for the DAT exam. If you are prepared and have completed coursework in these areas, it is recommended that you study and take the DAT during the summer after your sophomore year. Physics is not covered on the DAT. For the Indiana University School of Dentistry, applicants with scores of less than 17 on the DAT in Academic Average, PAT, Reading Comprehension, or Total Science will be required to retake the DAT before they can be granted an interview.

ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

As part of your application for dental school you will be required to submit academic evaluations written by your professors. Evaluations are usually requested from professors in the sophomore and junior years, and at the conclusion of the class, rather than a year later. If you have had particularly

noteworthy achievements in a freshman class, these too may contribute to a valuable evaluation. HPPLC offers a recommendation service that can help you in obtaining letters of recommendation for your application. ***We strongly urge enrollment in some small size or seminar type classes in which you work closely with your teachers. Make yourself known to teachers if they have time to talk during office hours. Taking more than one small class from a teacher may be helpful. A small upper level class in which you have demonstrated exemplary work may be ideal in terms of an evaluation request.*** At least three academic letters of evaluation must be received by IUSD before you will be granted an interview. Two of the three academic letters must be from science professors. Personal evaluations are not required by the IU dental school, but they can be helpful if they address specific ways in which you have prepared for dental school, such as through gaining exposure to dentistry, developing manual dexterity, or building interpersonal skills through community service.

Requirements for recommendations vary by school. Consult HPPLC resources or see a HPPLC advisor before the end of the sophomore year to discuss this.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are my chances of being accepted at the Indiana University School of Dentistry?

Many state-supported schools show preference to their own state residents, and so students often have the best chance for acceptance at dental schools in the state where they are residents. The percentage of acceptance for Indiana residents is considerably higher at the Indiana University School of Dentistry than for out-of-state residents. Preference is given to candidates with stronger GPA's. For the entering class in 2010, 71 of the 101 matriculants to the Indiana University School of Dentistry were Indiana residents. The suggested ***minimum*** overall grade-point average (GPA) and science GPA is 3.3 on a 4.0 scale.

How important are my GPA and DAT scores for admission?

One of the most important criteria used by the Indiana University School of Dentistry for selection is your science GPA, followed by your overall GPA and DAT scores. **Average** GPA's for the 2010 entering class at the IU School of Dentistry are: science GPA 3.55, overall GPA 3.60. Note these scores represent the mean. Accepted students' GPAs range above and below. Interest in dentistry has increased sharply over the past years. It is increasingly important to be well prepared with a clear understanding of the profession based on extensive observation in addition to good DAT scores and GPA.

How many students apply to the Indiana University School of Dentistry? How many are admitted each year?

These statistics are for the class matriculating in 2010:

Total applicants: 1667	Indiana resident applicants: 191	Non-resident applicants: 1476
Size of entering class: 101	Indiana resident matriculants: 71	Non-resident matriculants: 30

What are my chances for admission after three years of preparation?

Students are eligible for admission to the Indiana University School of Dentistry after three years, although preference is given to students with four or more years and to those who will complete degrees. For the 2010 entering class at the IU School of Dentistry, approximately 72 had completed a B.A. or B.S. degree, 6 had completed four years with no degree, 3 had completed three years, and 20 had completed masters or doctorate degrees.

Is participation in extracurricular activities required?

Dental schools prefer students with interests and experiences beyond academics; however, such activities should not interfere with academic performance. Students ask if there are preferred activities. There is no correct list of activities. Enthusiastic participation (commitment) rather than "joining" or "membership" is critical. Some students are heavily committed to service organizations in

the community. Some are involved in undergraduate research. Others work many hours to support their educations. Perhaps one of the keys is your ability at the time of your application to speak with conviction and pride about what you accomplished in your undergraduate education, in the classroom, and beyond.

I AM NOT FROM INDIANA. HOW CAN I LEARN ABOUT OTHER DENTAL SCHOOLS AND THEIR ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS?

Consult the publication *Official Guide to Dental Schools*, available at the front desk of the Health Professions & Prelaw Center. Information is also available through the website of each dental school. You may link to them through the following website: www.adea.org. Requirements for different schools differ as do admissions profiles.

HOW CAN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS AND PRELAW CENTER HELP ME?

Advisors at the Center specialize in helping students prepare for dental school. They will discuss course selection and sequencing, the application process, factors in admission, and the recommendation service with you. Helpful information on the DAT, the application process, and recommendations are found at the Center.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT A CAREER IN DENTISTRY?

1. In addition to reading this guide, please read about preparing for a career in dentistry and about other health professions on the HPPLC website at www.hpplc.indiana.edu.
2. Observe dentists in your hometown or here in Bloomington. Consider summer work (volunteer if necessary) with a dentist or dentists.
3. Attend the Indiana University School of Dentistry Dental Day, which is held every year during the fall semester. The program includes an opportunity to talk with current dental students.
4. Schedule an appointment with Dr. Robert Kasberg, Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Director of Admissions for the IU School of Dentistry during one of his campus visits. Dr. Kasberg visits the Center twice each semester during the school year to talk with students about careers in dentistry and admission to the school.
5. Attend the orientation meeting for pre dental students, as well as those meetings of the I.U. Bloomington campus organization, Hoosier Dentist (watch for email messages from HPPLC about their new member meeting in the fall semester).

We encourage you to use e-mail to ask questions, check your recommendation files, and communicate with our pre dental advisors. Send e-mail to an individual pre dental advisor or to hpplc@indiana.edu. Please check the HPPLC website for notices of upcoming meetings, campus visitations, and other items of interest.

This document has been prepared for Indiana University - Bloomington students by the Health Professions and Prelaw Center. Please note that specific requirements and policies can change at any time without notice. Students are responsible for obtaining the most current information directly from the application services, schools, and programs in which they have an interest.