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Dental School Fact Sheet

What degree can I earn?

D.D.S.= Doctor of Dental Surgery **OR** D.M.D = Doctor of Dental Medicine
(degrees are equivalent, degree awarded depends on the dental school attended)

In 2023, there were 11,198 applicants nationally for dental school and 6,562 first time/first year enrollees. There are 71 dental schools in the U.S. and 10 in Canada.

What is the nature of this profession?

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat problems with teeth or mouth tissue. Many dentists own their own practice. Dentists also work in advanced dentistry, federal service and research. While the typical work schedule is 8 a.m.-5 p.m., schedules can vary to fit the desire of the dentist.

Where can I find additional information about dentistry?

American Dental Association www.ada.org and www.GoDental.org ("Like" ADEA GoDental on Facebook and follow them on Twitter @ADEAGoDental)

YOU CAN CHOOSE ANY MAJOR YOU WOULD LIKE AS LONG AS YOU FULFILL THE PREREQUISITES FOR DENTAL SCHOOL.

The following courses are strongly recommended as preparation for the DAT and Dental School:

BIO 120: General Biology I	CHM 115: Principles of Chemistry I
BIO 121: General Biology II	CHM 116: Principles of Chemistry II
BIO 355 or 375/376: Genetics	CHM 241: Organic Chem for Life Sciences I
BMS 208: Human Anatomy	CHM 242: Organic Chem for Life Sciences II
BMS 309: Lab in Human Anatomy (Cadaver)	CHM 461: Biochemistry I
BMS 212/213: Introductory Microbiology w/lab	PSY 101: Introductory Psychology
BMS 290/391: Human Physiology w/lab	SOC 101: Intro to Sociology
PHY 220: General Physics I	or SOC 105: Social Problems
PHY 221: General Physics II	

Other suggested courses: BMS 450, BMS 410, CMB 405, COM 201, ART 246 or 270, STA 215, CIS 150, Business & Psychology courses

Prerequisites vary and schools may or may not accept or have limits on AP/CLEP or community college credit for prerequisites. Research to make sure that you have met the prerequisites for the dental schools to which you intend to apply. See your faculty advisor or an advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center for assistance.

Prerequisite courses typically require a C or better grade.

DAT

Applicants typically plan to take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) at least one year before starting dental school. The DAT has four different sections:

- Survey of Natural Sciences (BIO, Gen&Orgo CHM)
- Perceptual Ability Test (PAT)
- Reading Comprehension
- Quantitative Reasoning

Each section is scored from 1-30, with the overall score being an average of all sections. A 19 signifies average performance on a national basis. **Effective March 2025, new scoring system implemented with a 200-600 range.**

The national DAT averages for applicants accepted to dental school fluctuate minimally from year to year.

Recently reported are:

Academic Average: 20.7 PAT: 20.5. Total Science: 20.4

GPA

To be considered for admission to dental school, a minimum cumulative collegiate GPA of 3.0 is typically required. A separate Science GPA is calculated based on Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Math (BCPM); as well as BCP and non-science GPAs. All attempts of each course are counted in GPA calculations if a student has repeated courses. Trends in GPA are also considered.

The national GPA averages for applicants accepted to dental school fluctuate minimally from year to year.

Recently reported are:

3.62 Cumulative GPA and 3.54 Science GPA.

Besides a strong GPA and DAT score, dental schools look for the following:

- **Dental related Clinical Volunteer/Work Experiences** (i.e. dentist shadowing, volunteering or working in dental offices or community health clinics, etc.)
 - *NOTE: Many schools require a specified number of dental shadowing/volunteering hours. University of Michigan requires 100, University of Detroit Mercy requires 60. It's best to shadow primarily in general practice offices, but good to see a variety of settings and specialties.*
 - See www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/preprofessional for a list of dentists in the area
- **Extracurricular and Leadership Activities:** visit www.gvsu.edu/studentorg to begin searching for organizations to join at GVSU
 - Pre-Dental Club; other clubs of interest
- **Community service** www.gvsu.edu/service (subscribe to their newsletter for frequent event updates)
- **Research experience** www.gvsu.edu/ours; Department websites: Listing of research by faculty member and discipline
- Activities that improve your **Manual Dexterity** (like sculpture, jewelry making, knitting/crocheting, building models, etc. anything to practice and improve your dexterity)
- **Strong letters of recommendation-** typically, students get letters from 3 faculty whom they have had for a class (two science, one non-science) & one practicing dentist (preferably one whom you have observed or has observed you in a clinical setting)
- Your ability to pass a **criminal background check** (CBC). Dental schools will conduct a CBC before allowing admitted students to begin dental school

The Medical and Health Humanities Certificate, Intercultural Communications Certificate, and the Research Scholar Designation are great ways to attain competencies professional schools are looking for in applicants.

Track your experiences. Create a copy of our Preprofessional Action Plan document (www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/actionplan) to log information you will need for your application process. This document has tabs for many items including your academic plan, experiences and hours, GPA calculators, potential letter writers, important contact info and more!

Want more information?

- Discuss other options and interests with your faculty advisor and/or CLAS Academic Advisor
- Plan to attend events sponsored by the CLAS Academic Advising Center to assist you through this process while at GVSU.
- Check out summer programs like the Summer Health Professions Education Program: www.shpep.org

Also follow us on social media!  [YouTube](#) [GVSU Pre-Professional Programs](#)
 | [Instagram](#) [@gvsupreprofessionaladvising](#)

To schedule an appointment with a Predental Advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center, visit www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising and click on "Schedule Appointment"