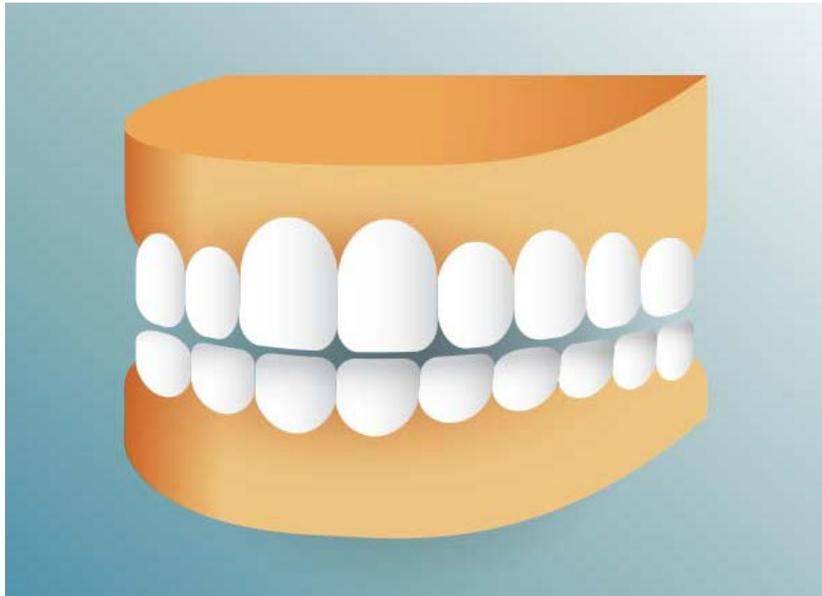


Pre-Dental Guide



UT Austin
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Preface

The information presented in this document provides important resources for UT Austin graduate and undergraduate students planning on applying to dental school. Remember, it is important to research dental schools and evaluate their fit before you apply.

Additional Pre-Health Professions resources including pre-requisites, timelines and application information for the following Health Professions: Medical, Physician Assistant, Pharmacy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Optometry or Veterinary can be found at: <http://cns.utexas.edu/health-professions/health-profession-pathways>

Selecting a Major

So what should you major in at UT? A common myth is that you have to major in a science degree as a Pre-Dental student; however, this is not true. We recommend that you choose a degree based on your interests. It is important to choose a major based on your academic interests rather than one that you think looks good to dental schools. Choose a major that you are passionate about, whether it is a major in Liberal Arts, Business, Public Health, or something else entirely, completing the prerequisites for dental schools can be accomplished.

Certain degrees may cover the pre-dental prerequisites; however, dental schools also accept students who show broad interests in their academic coursework through a non-science major. Major in any subject you want!

Explore Majors/Health Professions further at one or more of the following resources:

- Wayfinder <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/wayfinder/explore/path/index>
- My Next Move <http://www.mynextmove.org/>
- Occupational Outlook Handbook <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/home.htm>
- Explore Health Careers: <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>

Explore a Dental Career further:

- GoDental.org is the official resource for those on the path to dentistry and other oral health careers: <http://www.adea.org/GoDental/Pages/default.aspx>
- The American Dental Education Association (ADEA) - <http://www.adea.org/>
- The American Dental Association is an excellent resource for news and information about the dentistry. <http://www.ada.org/index.aspx>
- ADEA Video Mentors <http://www.youtube.com/user/ADEAVideoMentors>

Pre-Dental Self-Assessment

The assessment below is designed to assess Dental School application strengths. If you are a new Pre-Dental student, please use this assessment as a planning guide for your Pre-Dental Pathway. (Please check out the New-Pre Health Longhorn Information page at the Health Professions website: <http://cns.utexas.edu/health-professions>).

Are you working towards submitting a well-rounded application?

Start by Developing Your Personal Qualities

Individuals who are successful in their pursuit of a career as an occupational therapist possess a set of qualities that they develop as young adults. These include qualities like good judgment, self-discipline, maturity, compassion/empathy, integrity, intellectual curiosity, strong work ethic, leadership/accountability, reliability, motivation/persistence, honesty, and cultural competency. Develop these qualities through the experiences and activities you choose to get involved with.

I want to develop my following qualities:

How are you going to develop these qualities? (Be specific!)

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Get Involved & Gain Experience

There are several ways you can get involved. Get involved in what you are interested in - this is key! There are many things you can do to boost your application, including but not limited to: volunteering, shadowing, studying abroad, and/or participating in a summer program. Get involved on campus, tutor, mentor, teach, participate in Rec Sports - the list goes on and on! If you are considering adding studying abroad to your list, check out the study abroad section in this guide. Always remember to be yourself and do what you enjoy.

Volunteering

Professional school admissions committees will look favorably upon any experience in which you are giving back to the community. A community service activity where you are directly helping people face-to-face is of the most value, and making an ongoing commitment to that service gives you time to grow and gain real value from the experience.

Volunteer Experience	Dates (can list time period or individual dates)	Hours	Responsibilities

What have I learned about myself through these volunteer experiences?

Have I involved myself in a diverse set of experiences? What skills have I enhanced/gained through these experiences? (For example: I have become a better communicator through my volunteering experiences at the local hospital – explain how you have done this)

I want to explore the following volunteer activities:

Quick Tip: It is a good idea to balance your volunteering and make sure to have some of your volunteering in a healthcare setting. Health Care volunteering combines volunteering with exposure to the dental field (e.g. Project Smile.) Get in the habit of tracking your volunteer hours, as most professional school applications will ask for an estimate of the time you spent volunteering.

Shadowing

Shadowing means working directly with a health care provider in their professional environment. You have the opportunity to observe how they plan their day, how they interact with their patients, how they chose their career, and how they feel about current events!

Dentist Name or Name of Experience	Specialty	Hours	Type of Experience: Shadow/Volunteer/Paid

What have I learned from these experiences?

I want to reach out to the following dentists to ask about shadowing:

Quick Tip:

Finding a dentist or healthcare provider who is willing to allow you to shadow can be a challenge, but it is worth the effort. Many students start with their own health care providers. You may also network with other pre-health students to see where they have shadowed.

Direct Patient Care Experience – Get Hands-On Experience!

It can be good to gain some hands-on experience to add to your application. You can do so in many different ways. You can get a phlebotomy certification, go through an EMT Basic course, become a Certified Nursing Assistant, or become a scribe. Find one that you are interested in by doing informational interviews. Speak to a Pre-Health Professions Coach about these different ways to gain experience.

Leadership

Leadership can be developed in many different ways. Leadership needs to be demonstrated. Think about how you are developing your leadership qualities and skills. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Tutoring
- Mentoring
- Teaching / TAing a course
- Get involved in Student Organizational leadership

Name of Organization	Position/Title (ex: Director Communication, President, Member, etc.)	Total participation time (ex. 2 years, 3 semesters, etc.)	Duties/Activities participated in with this organization/group

What is the most important thing I have learned about myself from these experiences?

Brainstorm some specific ways you can develop your leadership skills:

Student Organization Involvement

Extracurricular activities help you become a well-rounded student, because you develop not only knowledge and thinking skills but also social skills, group work, empathy, team building, organizational and motivational skills relevant when participating in an organization.

I am a part of the following student organizations:

I want to join the following student organizations:

Academics

Academics include your GPA and DAT Scores. How well are you doing? Are you taking between 14-17 credit hours per semester? Are you keeping your grades up? Use the GPA calculator in your UT Direct account to figure out your GPA.

Overall GPA _____

*This includes all course taken at UT and other institutions

BCPM GPA (Biology/Chemistry/Physics/Math *also includes Statistics*) _____

Quick Tip:

To be competitive for professional school, you will need a GPA in the range of 3.4 to 3.8 and above. This means you need to be making A's and B's with more A's than B's. If you feel that you are behind in your classes, please don't wait until you get your first poor test score to ask for help. There are numerous resources on campus to help you with tutoring! Start with visiting your faculty members & teaching assistants during office hours.

Your DAT Score

DAT Section	My Score	Avg. Score
Survey of Natural Sciences		
Perceptual Ability Test		
Reading Comprehension Test		
Quantitative Reasoning Test		
Biology		
Genetics		
Organic Chemistry		

Get in the Habit of Personal Reflection

Your insights about who you are as a person and how your experiences have shaped you will be of tremendous benefit when it is time to write your personal statement (a required part of your professional school application). Keep a journal handy so you can jot down your thoughts and observations!

***Once you have completed this assessment, if you have not made an appointment with a Pre-Health Professions Coach, we recommend that you do so to discuss these topics as well as your application strengths as a whole. ***

Track Your Progress

Why do I want to be a dentist?

What characteristics do you have that you feel will help you be an excellent dentist?

Have you had experience working with people from backgrounds different from your own? What impact has it had on you?

Self-Evaluation

Mark Yes or No for each question. This will allow you to identify areas in which you feel strongest and areas in which you wish to grow.

Can you explain to someone why you want to be a dentist?	Y	N
Is your GPA above a 3.5?	Y	N
Have your grades improved over time?	Y	N
Have you shadowed more than one dentist?	Y	N
Does your application reflect a diverse set of extracurricular activities over time?	Y	N
Have you shown consistency with your volunteer activities/community service?	Y	N

Get to Know Your Faculty

This can be challenging at UT Austin—the campus is huge, and most of the classes in your first year have large numbers of students. Even though the professors can sometimes seem tough or intimidating, most of them are very approachable one-on-one. Visit your professors during office hours, even if you are doing well in their class. It will make your request for a future letter of evaluation much easier! Get to know your faculty, check out the video on the HPO YouTube page for some tips!

Who are your letter writers?

I would like to ask the following faculty for letters of evaluation:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

I would like to ask the following third letter writer for a letter of evaluation; this letter will add a different dimension to my application:

- 1) _____

****Once you have completed this self-assessment, if you have not made an appointment with a Health Professions Coach, we recommend that you do so in order to discuss these topics as well as your application strengths as a whole. Make sure to track your progress!*

Notes:

Dental School Prerequisites Time Line

A Note from Your HP Coaches:

The timeline on the next page is a recommended timeline that includes the minimum requirements for dental school. There are many different pathways to dental school and not every student is prepared to apply after the third year of undergraduate school. Many students take an additional year to prepare for dental school, applying in the summer after the fourth year.

Completion of these courses prepares you for Texas and most out-of-state U.S. dental schools.]

This time line shows how students interested in a career in dentistry may complete the minimum pre-dental requirements at The University of Texas at Austin. It serves as a “snapshot” of what is required and the length of time in which it may be completed. The footnotes are important for a complete understanding of this time line.

[Requirements can change at any time. Check often for updates and review application service and school web sites for changes that may occur between updates.]

FIRST YEAR	<u>Fall</u> Biology I Chemistry I Calculus Rhetoric	<u>Spring</u> Biology II Chemistry II Chemistry <u>OR</u> Biology lab Statistics
SECOND YEAR	<u>Fall</u> Genetics Organic Chemistry I Chemistry <u>OR</u> Biology lab Organic Chemistry Lab English	<u>Spring</u> Microbiology Organic Chemistry II
THIRD YEAR	<u>Fall</u> Physics I Physics I lab Biochemistry	<u>Spring</u> Physics II Physics II lab
FOURTH YEAR	Any additional courses you would find beneficial can be taken.	

Pre-Dental Activities and Application Timeline

First and Second Years

- + Subscribe to the *HPOinfo Emails* [here](#).
- + Take an average to heavy course load: 14-16 hours is considered an average course load. It is okay to take 12-13 hours your first semester at UT Austin.
- + **Get to know your professors.** You will need faculty evaluations when you apply to professional school. Two from science faculty are recommended.
- + Be sure your major code indicates that you are a pre-dental student. This is indicated by a "14" (code for pre-dental students) at the end of your major code (e.g. E00114).
- + Meet with a Pre-Health Professions Peer or Coach in the Health Professions Office to discuss health careers, goals, and preparation, especially how to make the most out of your first two years.
- + Declare a major by your second year on campus.
- + Get involved in extracurricular activities (e.g., student organizations, volunteering and shadowing in dental settings, community service).
- + Attend the Health Professions Fair each year, generally held in February or March, to visit with representatives from dental schools and other health professions programs.
- + Attend dental school presentations. All three Texas dental schools visit the UT campus during the academic year.
- + Keep viable career alternatives open.

Third Year

- + Complete minimum pre-dental requirements by May of your third year.
- + Prepare for and take the DAT, ideally no later than the end of your third year.
- + Visit dental school web sites; decide where you will apply.
- + Ask faculty who know you well if they will write evaluations in support of your dental school application; you will need two faculty evaluations. Science faculty letters are recommended.
- + Ask for a letter of recommendation from a dentist you have shadowed/worked with.
- + Attend dental school presentations. All three Texas dental schools visit the UT campus during the academic year.
- + Attend the Health Professions Fair, generally held in February or March, to visit with representatives from dental schools and other health professions programs.
- + Complete and submit dental school primary and secondary applications early in the summer, after your 3rd year.

Fourth Year

- + Most dental school interviews take place during the late summer and through the fall semester.
- + Acceptance offers to dental school begin in December.
- + Complete UT Austin degree requirements necessary for graduation.
- + Continue in pre-dental activities and additional courses to prepare for dental school and to strengthen your application in case you need to apply again.

Can I Take Courses Away From UT?

Completing your coursework at UT (your home institution) is considered best preparation for health professions schools. For students who find it necessary to take courses away from UT, we offer the following recommendations.

KEY: UT: Take classes at UT Austin
 4YR: If necessary, okay to take class at other 4 year institution
 CC: If necessary, okay to take class at community college

	Pre-Medical	Pre-Dental	Pre-Veterinary	Pre-Optometry	Pre-Pharmacy	Pre-Physician Asst	Pre-Physical Therapy	Pre-Occupational Therapy
Biology & Chemistry	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT	UT
Physics	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR or CC	Not Required	4YR or CC	4YR or CC
Statistics, Calculus	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR or CC	4YR or CC	4YR or CC	4YR or CC
English & Rhetoric	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR	4YR or CC	4YR or CC	4YR or CC
Other Pre-requisites	Generally, it seems to be okay to take other prereqs away from UT Austin, if needed; however, students should contact individual professional schools' admission offices for questions about specific courses.							

General Recommendations:

1. Taking courses away from UT can give the impression that the student is avoiding UT Austin's rigorous courses; therefore, it is important to earn excellent grades at both community colleges and other four-year institutions.
2. It generally appears to be okay with professional schools to take government and history requirements at other four-year institutions or community colleges.
3. For other general requirements students can check with professional schools' admission offices.

Studying Abroad?

Most health professions schools require that prerequisites be taken at U.S. accredited schools, and some will accept credits from Canadian accredited schools.

Although exchange program courses and some affiliated program courses are counted as in-residence credit by UT Austin, according to Texas state law, foreign course work cannot be counted in the GPAs for application to graduate and post-baccalaureate professional schools. The rules and policies can vary among the professional schools. Students who plan to study abroad should research this carefully for the schools and application services they plan to apply to. Look in the education requirements, transcripts, and FAQ sections of their web sites for information about foreign course work and study abroad.

UT Austin faculty-led courses are "in-residence" courses as well as U.S. credits, and so courses like Organic Chemistry II (CH 320N) taught in Spain by UT Austin faculty can be used to satisfy a prerequisite. However, for many students, taking these rigorous courses in only 5 weeks may not be recommended. It is important that pre-health professions students master these courses and retain this knowledge for success in entrance exams and in advanced studies.

The UT Austin Health Professions Office very strongly recommends that our students satisfy their health professions prerequisites at UT Austin. Use the study abroad opportunity to study the culture and language of that country and to satisfy general education requirements if approved by your academic advisor. Science courses that are not considered direct preparation for the health professions can be considered as well. (Examples: research, ecology, environmental science; but NOT cell, molecular,

microbiology, anatomy, physiology which figure heavily into your preparation and readiness for professional school and the admissions committee's assessment of your application)

FAQ - Foreign Applicants, Coursework from Foreign Schools and Study Abroad

Do you accept foreign coursework?

No! State law requires that academic work taken at foreign colleges, universities or preparatory schools shall be excluded from the calculation of the grade point average for students seeking admission to graduate or post-baccalaureate professional school.

Foreign coursework will not count towards satisfying any of the required coursework.

Undergraduate foreign coursework that appears as transfer credit on the transcript of a regionally accredited US college will count towards the 90-hour requirement. Each individual transfer course credit granted by the US school must be listed on the transcript. Lump sum credit with no specific course and hour identification will not be accepted.

See full content on the TMDAS web site: http://www.tmdsas.com/medical/foreign_Coursework.html

What about Claiming AP/IB Credit for Prerequisites?

While we generally recommend that as a Pre-Health Professions student you not "claim" AP/IB credit for prerequisite courses such as Biology, Chemistry, English, Physics, and Mathematics, these are important decisions that you must make and that require your careful consideration.

It may seem like a convenient way to eliminate hours from your degree plan and accelerate your path to professional school, but claiming credit can actually be detrimental to your preparation for success on entrance exams and in professional studies. Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses vary in rigor, and they are generally not equivalent to the rigor of UT Austin courses. However, your AP/IB courses can be very good preparation for taking these courses at UT Austin, providing the opportunity to master that material, become better prepared, enhance your GPA, and demonstrate your academic ability and readiness for advanced study in health professions schools.

Unless you are academically very well prepared, it is best to start with the introductory courses. Please consult with your academic advisor for help in determining your readiness for higher level science courses. Most schools that accept AP/IB credit will expect you to take additional upper-division course work in that area of study.

Here are some specific recommendations:

Science Courses

Biology and Chemistry

If you claim credit in courses like Biology I and Biology II, you may not be adequately prepared for the rigorous next course here at UT Austin (Genetics). If you claim credit for Chemistry I and Chemistry II, your first college level chemistry course at UT Austin will be Organic Chemistry I.

Honors students in Biology and Chemistry may claim test credit, register in the honors sequence for Biology or Chemistry, and will take additional upper-division credits in those areas, making up for the lack of first-year hours in those disciplines.

Your UT Austin faculty will expect you to be prepared to learn and understand the material conceptually and theoretically in order to understand test questions well enough to earn A's on your exams. They will teach material beyond the textbook that was not presented in your high school courses. You will be in second year courses with many students who took General Biology and General Chemistry here and are well prepared to handle the exams in the more advanced courses. They will set the standard for the grade scale or curve in your classes.

Physics

Physics is required to prepare for some health professions schools. In some cases, you will be tested on Physics in your professional school entrance exam. We strongly recommend taking physics at the college level if you are preparing for a professional school that requires physics.

Calculus and Statistics

For the Texas medical schools, if you take statistics in the classroom here at UT Austin, you can use statistics to satisfy the math prerequisite. Then if your degree plan or any of your science courses require calculus, you can decide with your academic advisor whether to use credit-by-exam or take the course(s) in the classroom.

For all health professions schools, both in Texas and out-of-state, it is important to check their admissions web sites for any restrictions and preferences on credit-by-exam.

Non-Science Courses

It is usually acceptable to claim credit-by-exam for general education or core curriculum requirements such as history and government. Claiming this type of credit may give you time to take the courses that will prepare you for professional school and school entrance exams. On the other hand, critical thinking skills and an understanding of ethics, society, community, cultures, history, and human behavior are important for your success now and throughout your professional and personal life. Taking college level courses is a good way to develop these areas of knowledge.

English Literature, Rhetoric, Writing

If you claim credit for freshman writing and literature courses, we recommend taking additional courses in the classroom at the college level. Even if your high school verbal skills were strong, this type of academic skill weakens over time if you do not use it.

Verbal skills are extremely important to your success in your undergraduate course work, your entrance exams, in professional school, and as a health care professional. You must be able to read efficiently, at a good rate, with high comprehension and critical thinking skills. You must develop and maintain a good vocabulary, not just for the sciences but also for social and behavioral sciences, ethics, policies and regulations, and procedural information. Many admissions deans recommend reading well-written novels in addition to your textbook material.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Although the **Texas medical and dental schools** accept AP credit for admission, **some out-of-state schools** do not. These schools vary in their policies and perspectives on credit-by-exam. For example, Texas medical and dental schools recommend taking additional upper-division courses in the same subject area to make up for using AP credits for prerequisite courses. The credit-by-exam policies vary among the **health profession disciplines** and from school to school within each professional area.

Review the information on our prerequisite courses lists and check individual school admissions web sites or contact their admissions offices to be sure about each school's expectations. Taking courses in the college classroom will help you to compete for admission and to succeed in professional school. We strongly recommend that you use these courses as building blocks that will be the foundation for your future career.

To Q or Not to Q (or to switch to pass/fail)

No admissions committee for any health professional school likes to see "Q drops" on a transcript. This is an indication that something became too much for you to handle and that you chose to drop the course rather than see it through. There are times when the Q-drop is the best course of action, however, keep reading to see how your choice may affect your competitiveness for professional school.

More of a problem if:

1. **Q-dropping is a pattern on your transcript.** Two Q-drops can signal a possible pattern; three Q-drops create a definite pattern.
2. **It occurs in a context of inconsistent grades.** To be competitive for professional school, you should be making A's and B's with more A's than B's. If you have semesters which include B's and C's – even one or two C's, your grades are inconsistent by a professional school's standard.
3. **It's one of your prerequisite courses for professional school.** In this case, you might consider sticking with the class on a pass/fail basis. Then you only need to earn a D to earn credit. **Check with your academic advisor** about whether you can use the pass/fail option.
4. **It's any science-based course,** since the bulk of professional school curriculum will be science based.

Less of a problem if:

1. **It's the only Q-drop on your transcript at time of application to professional school.** You will want to choose wisely however, depending on the course. If you are taking a lower division or introductory course, keep in mind that upper division courses will be more challenging. You may want to hold on to that "one and only Q-drop" for later.
2. **It's a non-science course.** While professional schools want you to do well in all classes, they are likely to be less concerned if you dropped a sociology or business class.

What if there are non-academic reasons for needing to Q-drop?

Sometimes personal or family emergencies and other special circumstances make it difficult to find time for and focus on your studies. Sometimes for new students it is difficult to make the transition to UT. If you are dealing with something that is getting in the way of your school work, it is very important that you get help.

1. Talk to your academic advisor and/or an advisor in your college student division office
2. Check out the support services at the Counseling and Mental Health Center

When is switching to pass/fail a better option?

This should really only be undertaken when you are reasonably certain that you can pass the class, in other words, earn at least a D. An F from a pass/fail course is just the same as an F from a letter grade course. If you are taking a pre-requisite course that you must repeat (and you meet the above criteria of being reasonably sure you can pass), you should consider the pass/fail option. This will allow you to continue your exposure to the material for the entire semester. This will create a much stronger foundation when you repeat the course.

What if I keep the class and then I make a C or lower?

No one wants to explain a poor grade in a class, but there is actually much to be learned about being responsible for your grades (see exercise below) Talking about how you might change your strategy going forward can be not only a sign of maturity and integrity, it can also demonstrate your resilience. All of these qualities are important to future health professionals.

What did you learn from this experience?

While it can be tempting to blame others for the need to Q drop a class, you must understand that the responsibility is 100% yours. To help you identify your responsibility, ask yourself these questions.

1. Could I have met with the professor to see what I could do to improve my understanding?
2. (If my professor was difficult to understand or hard for me to follow) Did I look for other sections of the courses to sit in on so that I could learn the material in a different way?
3. Could I have identified that I needed assistance earlier in the semester? (In time to have possibly salvaged my grade)
4. Could I have managed my time better so that I had appropriate time to devote to the class?
5. Could I have checked out resources for tutoring through the Sanger Learning Center?
6. Could I have adjusted my priorities (lowering especially those which are non-academic) to allow focus on my studies?

Preparing for the possible professional school interview question

You will want to spend some time reflecting on what you could have done differently so that you did not have to drop the class (see above). If you are asked about the Q-drop, you should be able to explain where things went wrong, what you learned from the experience, and how you might choose differently in the future. Remember the Health Professions Office does mock interviews and can help you practice your response

Academic Assistance

Academic Support

Sanger Learning Center's resources can help you achieve your academic goals. You can get help with course content. You can make an appointment to meet one-on-one with a tutor for an hour-long session. Together, you and your tutor will tackle difficult homework problems and review course concepts. You can also receive coaching on how to understand and work those science exam questions that you need to earn an A. Visit JES A315A for drop-in tutoring for mathematics, physics, and chemistry courses. It's a great way to study alone or in groups and is especially good for completing homework assignments. Attend free classes for calculus refreshers and exam reviews.

Utilize Faculty Office Hours

Your grades in a given course will ultimately be determined by the professor who is teaching it. If you are struggling in a course, your first request for help should go to the professor. Not only are they experts in the content being taught, but they also have established the method by which you will be evaluated. Be prepared to explain to the professor what you have been doing to grasp/retain the content and where you believe you are falling short. This not only communicates your commitment to learning, it also gives the professor a starting point for your discussion.

Visit with Your Teaching Assistants (TAs)

These students are hired to help expand the reach of the professor, providing another source of assistance. While they don't have the expertise of a professor, they have mastered the course previously, often with the same professor. TAs are great for quick questions and – depending on their skill level and availability – can be great “tutors”, explaining concepts in a way that may be easier for you to grasp.

Improve Your Study Skills

Visit us in JES A332 to speak with a learning specialist about your study-related questions and concerns. Meet weekly with a peer academic coach to develop and implement study strategies to help you succeed at UT Austin. Attend monthly workshops on study strategies and time management.

Attend Course-specific Study Groups

Supplemental Instruction offers optional weekly discussion sections for students enrolled in some historically difficult, large-format courses, including calculus. The PLUS program provides peer-led study groups for a number of difficult, upper-division courses. Visit the Sanger Learning Center website for additional Academic Support Resources: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc/support>

The Sanger Learning Center is housed in undergraduate studies and is also part of the Vick's Center who serves students across campus who are exploring majors and careers, as well as undeclared students enrolled in the School of Undergraduate Studies. If you need help finding a major connect with the Vick's Center:

<http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc>

DAT Information

Most dental schools require that applicants take the Dental Aptitude Test (DAT). The DAT is administered by computer at Prometric Testing Centers and students can register for the DAT through the American Dental Association's (ADA) website. The test is usually taken Spring semester, junior year and covers four areas of study: 1) a survey of natural sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry); 2) reading comprehension; 3) quantitative ability; and 4) perceptual ability. Note that physics is not covered on the DAT. In the future, a section may be added to assess critical thinking skills.

Students can prepare for the DAT in a variety of ways, including taking a test preparatory course or by purchasing study materials individually. Students can be successful using either strategy, so you should weigh your personal needs when deciding on an approach.

Scheduling Your Exam & Preparation

To learn how to register for the DAT along with prep tips, fees, score reporting and more, please be sure to check out the DAT page on the American Dental Association website: <http://www.ada.org/dat.aspx>

COURSE CONTENT TESTED ON THE DAT

- BIO 311C, BIO 311D, BIO 205L or 206L (Biology)
- BIO 325 (Genetics)
- CH 301, CH 302, CH 204 (General Chemistry)
- CH 320M, CH 320N, CH 220C (Organic Chemistry)
- E 316K (Literature)
- * M 316 (Statistics)
- * CH 369 (Biochemistry)

Courses marked with an asterisk (*) are recommended but not required for the exam

Need a GPA Booster?

A post-baccalaureate program is for students who have already completed an undergraduate degree, and are interested in a health professions career. They need either to finish pre-requisite courses and/or need to improve their academic standing for a more competitive professional school application.

What Different Post-Bacc Programs are Available?

Essentially there are two different types of programs for students hoping to attend med or dent school:

Basic Sciences: This type of program is for students who have not completed the basic requirements for medical school. Generally this is for “career changers” who have decided to pursue medicine. The coursework can be done in a formal post-bacc program or individually at a local university.

Advanced Sciences/GPA Boosters: This type of program is designed for students who were science majors or have completed the basic science requirements. These are for students who:

- Want to stay academically engaged during a gap year while applying to medical or dental schools.
- Need to raise their GPA to become a more competitive medical school applicant.

How Do I Get In?

Selection criteria vary around the country. Most programs require at least a 3.0 GPA and either an MCAT score of 20 or a **DAT score of 16**. Applications for the fall semester are usually due by March of that year. Check with individual programs so as not to miss deadlines

Follow this link for a list of programs around Texas: <http://cns.utexas.edu/health-professions/post-bacc-information>

Check out TAMHSC's Post Bacc Program: <http://bcd.tamhsc.edu/student-development/postbac.html>

Research Schools Before You Apply!

Thinking about what type of dental school you are looking for? Not sure what you want in a school? Check out the following possible criteria for evaluating a dental school's fit for you!

What type of dental school am I looking for?

1. Size of your cohort
2. Prestige of the institution
3. Training facilities
4. Opportunity to do research
5. Support programs –tutoring, counseling, student health services, childcare
6. Community building – student organizations
7. Options for financial aid/scholarship
8. Outreach/Service to Community
9. Family/Friends (Support in close proximity)
10. Lifestyle - outdoorsy, athletic, cultural arts, etc.
11. Centers/ Institutes /Programs that align with your Dental School Goals

ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools: <http://www.adea.org/publications/Pages/OfficialGuide.aspx>

Texas Dental Schools (Public)

- Texas A&M University Baylor College of Dentistry (Dallas) <http://www.tambcd.edu/>
- The University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston <http://www.db.uth.tmc.edu/>
- The University of Texas Dental School in San Antonio <http://dental.uthscsa.edu/>

My Top Ten Schools Are:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

Follow the Time Line for Applying to Dental School

Fall Semester

- Begin compiling list of experiences; include details such as dates, hours, tasks and responsibilities
- Begin drafting personal statement and optional essays
- Meet with a Peer Coach in the Health Professions Office if you have questions about or want to review application process
- Ask evaluators for letters of evaluation
- Set up an Interfolio account
- Research schools to determine where to apply

January

- For those that are ready, take DAT; We recommend taking these exams no later than April

February/March

- Attend Health Professions Fair, usually held in February or March to visit with professional schools and have a professional headshot taken for your application
- Gather letters of evaluation
- Work on personal statement and optional essays
- Create TMDAS ID

April

- Send friendly reminder to recommenders at the end of the month if haven't already submitted letters of evaluation
- Work on personal statement and optional essays

May

- **Applications open about May 1**
- Obtain official transcripts from all institutions attended. Review for accuracy of information and use as reference for completing application
- Print and read application service instructions; Make a plan or "to do" checklist
- Be sure to read instructions about score reporting; these vary year-to-year and by schools
- Contact the Health Professions Office and schedule a meeting with a Health Professions Coach if desired
- Finish personal statement and write optional essays
- Submit when application is complete (this includes your Spring grades) and you are confident you've done your best! (**Earlier is better**)

June/July

- Submit when application is complete (this includes Spring grades) and you're confident you've done your best! (**Earlier is better - ideally end of June**)
- Complete and submit secondary application(s); applications are not complete until secondary applications are submitted

August/September

- Schedule mock interview with Health Professions Office
- Interviews begin in early August

October

- Interviewing continues until December, maybe January in some cases
- **Deadline to submit TMDAS is October 1 (Earlier is better - we encourage submitting by end of June)**
- **Deadlines vary by schools for AADSAS**

REMEMBER

It is important to make sure to do your research on the Dental Schools you plan to apply to before doing so. Check out the [ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools](#) to help you get started and answer school specific questions.

Overview of Dental School Application Services and Resources

There are two application services that you will use to apply to Dental School in the United States.

- **TMDSAS** (<http://www.tmdsas.com/>) Application service will be used for all Texas Schools. Be sure to review the [TMDSAS Application Timeline](#) to ensure you submit your application early (June or July). *Early applications are encouraged!*
- **AADSAS** (<http://www.adea.org/AADSAS/>) application will be used for out-of-state schools. Also, be sure to check the school's website directly for any specific questions you may have regarding their program.

Helpful Resource:

- ADEA AADSAS Application Information
http://www.adea.org/dental_education_pathways/aadsas/Applicants/Pages/default.aspx

Texas Dental Schools Requiring Secondary Applications

Some health professions schools require secondary applications to be completed in addition to the primary application through TMDSAS & AADSAS. These applications are not considered complete until the secondary application is submitted. Most secondary applications require an additional fee and the majority of secondary application fees are non-refundable. Baylor College of Dentistry does require a secondary application.

Letters of Evaluation

Letters are key pieces to your professional school application. The number and type of letters vary from school to school. For additional details and guidelines check with TMDSAS or AADSAS. Check out HPO's YouTube Channel for tips in a video on "Getting to Know Your Faculty Members."

- TMDSAS [instructions](#) to help applicants
- Review resources on [HPO's Pathways Page](#)

Writing Your Personal Statement

PERSONAL STATEMENT BRAINSTORMING & CONTENT PLANNING

Please read the Personal Statement resources below and then you are welcome to meet with a Pre-Health Professions Coach to discuss your ideas before starting your personal statement.

PERSONAL STATEMENT POWERPOINT ON WHAT IT'S ABOUT AND HOW TO GET STARTED

- Writing Your Health Professions [Personal Statement](#)

FIND & READ YOUR ESSAY PROMPT BEFORE STARTING

- [TMDSAS](#) Application Essay Prompts
- Other Application Essay Prompts: Find your prompt before you start - [website links](#)

TOOLS TO HELP YOU BUILD YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

- View HPO's [Application Resources](#) page for a list of action verbs, a strengths and skills word list, and much more to help you prepare your materials.

PERSONAL STATEMENT & ESSAY WRITING, REVISING, REVIEW & FEEDBACK

The [University Writing Center](#) is an excellent resource to utilize when writing application essays. Their trained Writing Consultants can help you at any stage of writing, from getting started to making recommendations for a polished finished product.

Interview Tips and Preparation

Dress Professionally:

- View our Dressing Guide <http://tinyurl.com/InterviewDressGuide>

Practice Improving Your Interview Skills:

- Schedule a Mock Interview/Feedback session with a Pre-Health Professions Coach by visiting our office or calling our front desk (512-471-3172)
- View HPO's [Application Resources](#) page for a post-interview self-evaluation form as well as other resources

Prepare & Practice

Be prepared to discuss your strengths and weaknesses, obstacles and inspirations, current events and personal attributes. The following sample questions are meant to provide you with a better understanding of why the interviewer might be asking the questions that they do. By asking you certain questions, interviewers are attempting to gain a better understanding of your personality.

- Tell me about yourself.
- What kind of community/volunteer work have you done?
- What is the most rewarding experience of your life?
- Who is your favorite author?
- Have you worked while you have been in school?
- Have you had the opportunity to travel abroad?
- What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- Tell me about the most difficult period of your life. How did you deal with this?
- What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses?
- What is the most difficult decision that you've had to make?
- How do you plan to finance your dental school education?
- How are you going to decide which dental school to attend?
- How do you handle adversity?
- Why should we pick you instead of someone else?
- Why do you want to be a dentist?
- What will you do if you are not accepted to dental school?
- When did you first decide that you wanted to pursue a dental career? Was there a specific cause for your decision? Has anything happened since that time to strengthen or weaken your decision?
- Can you see other careers in which you could achieve the same goals or meet the same needs?
- What steps have you taken to find out more about medicine/dentistry as a career?
- If accepted to dental school, what field of dentistry would you prefer?
- Where would you like to start practicing?
- How do you study? How do you manage your time?
- What courses do you find most enjoyable, most difficult? Why?
- Describe your hobbies and interests.
- Describe your best/least favorite course at UT and why it falls into that category.
- Why did you choose _____ as your major?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

- Describe a situation where you've worked with people from different backgrounds.
- What type of person do you enjoy being with? What type of person irritates you most and how have you dealt with these types of people?
- What about yourself would you most like the interviewer to know?
- Do you have any particular populations you would like to work with? Have you worked with this type of population in the past?
- How do you handle stress?
- How would you keep health care costs down?
- What is an HMO? / What do you know about managed care?
- What characteristics does a good dentist possess?
- What current event in medicine/dentistry have you heard about or been following?
- What are the advantages and limitations that you see going into dentistry? (Be specific)
- What problems do you predict that medicine/dentistry will face in the next decade?

Research Current Events

ADA NEWS

A great place to keep up on news and important issues in the profession of dentistry

<http://www.ada.org/news/news.aspx>

ADVOCACY

Learn about policy and legislation affecting dentistry

<http://www.ada.org/advocacy.aspx>

JADA ONLINE

The Journal of the American Dental Association

<http://jada.ada.org/>

THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF BIOETHICS

Published by MIT Press and Bioethics Education Network

www.bioethics.net

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO ARCHIVES

www.npr.org

WALL STREET JOURNAL

<http://online.wsj.com/home-page>

Financing Your Dental Education

According to a study done by ADEA, annual tuition and fees at dental schools averaged between \$33,000 and \$47,000 annually, and is dependent on the school's residency requirements. There are many things to consider when looking into financing your dental education. Some questions you can ask yourself can consist of:

- Evaluating your financial resources
- Evaluating your financial status
- Determining your eligibility for financial aid

Looking for more information?

Looking at the financial aspect of your dental education may also be a factor in your dental school search.

Check out the ADA Financial Resources Page: <http://www.ada.org/105.aspx>

Go Dental has some great resources:

<http://info.adea.org/DEPinternal.aspx?id=2229&terms=Paying+for+dental+school>

ADEA Money Matters Resources:

http://www.adea.org/GoDental/Money_Matters/Resources.aspx#sthash.VwP1WkGY.dpbs

Add It Up! Don't forget to include all Living Costs (Cost of Attendance is often more than tuition alone.)	
Tuition:	
Rent:	
Food:	
Entertainment:	
Health Insurance:	
Laboratory Fees:	
Car Insurance:	
Gas:	
Other Travel:	
Other Expenses:	

Pre-Health Professions Services

Applying to Professional School? We are here to guide you!

See a HP Peer Coach if you have questions in one or more of the following topic areas:

- Going over pre-requisites ("What do I have to take to get into X school?")
- Shadowing opportunities ("how to find, importance of, what is")
- Leadership opportunities ("how to find, importance of, what are")
- Patient care experience ("how to find, importance of, what is")
- Clubs/organizations
- How to ask for letters of recommendation/evaluation
- Course load ("Is this reasonable to take in one semester?")
- Study habits/tutoring resources
- Test-taking strategies
- How to use HPO services

Pre-Health Professions Coaching Appointments

Schedule a Pre-Health Professions Coaching session to meet with a Pre-Health Professions Coach. These appointments cover:

- Progress checks ("How am I doing?; What else do I need to do?")
- Application Strategies/resources
- Choosing letter writers ("Who should I ask?")
- Academic turnaround ("I am worried about my GPA")
- Potential gap year planning/Post-Bacc discussions
- Academic dishonesty/legal issues
- Reapplication strategies
- Study abroad timeline
- Alumni or Post-Bacc Student questions

TO Q or NOT TO Q Discussions

Not sure what to do? Thinking of dropping a course? Then you can schedule an appointment with a Pre-Health Professions Coach about deciding on Q dropping or the pass/fail option. Check out our TO Q or NOT TO Q guide in this guide before your appointment.

Personal Statement Brainstorming

Come speak to a Pre-Health Professions Coach to discuss your ideas before starting your personal statement. We will help you brainstorm ideas for the content of your essays. We have additional personal statement resources [here](#).

We no longer review personal statements in the Health Professions Office. However, we have developed a partnership with the University Writing Center for personal statements. The [University Writing Center](#) is an excellent resource to utilize when writing application essays. Their trained Writing Consultants can help you at any stage of writing, from getting started to making recommendations for a polished finished product.

Interview Prep Appointments

Discuss interview strategies and practice a couple of interview questions with us! You will go over any questions you have and practice a couple questions of your choice with a Pre-Health Professions Coach in this 30-minute appointment. You will receive tips and feedback to help you in your professional school interview. Dressing up for your HP Interview Prep appointment is optional, if you would like feedback on your clothing choice and you want to test whether it will be comfortable, or they can just discuss appropriate attire with you.