PREPARING FOR DENTAL SCHOOL: A GUIDE FOR FRESHMEN AND SOPHOMORES

2016-2017
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 on the HPPLC website.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Please note: If you plan to matriculate in 2018 or after you must complete the new requirements below.

Although students of all majors and educational backgrounds are encouraged to apply for admittance to the IU School of Dentistry (IUSD), the faculty of IUSD acknowledges that a strong foundation in Biology and Chemistry is essential to meeting the rigors of the curriculum. Therefore, the following minimum prerequisites must be completed before matriculation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IU School of Dentistry Requirement</th>
<th>IU Bloomington Courses that can be used to fulfill the requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 semester hours</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CHEMISTRY</strong>²</td>
<td>12 credits; you could select from: CHEM-C 117/127, CHEM-C 341, CHEM-C 342, CHEM-C 343, CHEM-N 330</td>
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<td>15 semester hours</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PHYSICS</strong></td>
<td>PHYS-P 201 and 202 OR 221 and 222</td>
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<td>8 semester hours of lecture and lab</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIAL SCIENCES</strong></td>
<td>Courses may include psychology, sociology, anthropology, communication studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HUMANITIES</strong></td>
<td>Courses may include English composition, literature, philosophy, history, foreign language</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 semester hours</td>
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¹ Students must complete the equivalent of 20 credit hours in the biological sciences. Only biology courses intended for science majors, as determined by the applicant’s undergraduate institution, will count towards this prerequisite. The following courses are strongly recommended: biology (lecture and lab), human anatomy or histology, human physiology, microbiology, immunology, cell biology, and biochemistry.

² Students must complete the equivalent of 12 credit hours in chemistry. Only chemistry courses intended for science majors, as determined by the applicant’s undergraduate institution, will count towards this prerequisite. The following courses are strongly recommended: general/inorganic chemistry (lecture and lab), organic chemistry (lecture and lab).

Most of the above prerequisites should be completed prior to submission of the AADSAS application, and all must be completed prior to matriculation. A minimum of 90 credit hours of coursework must be completed by the time of matriculation. An applicant with less than 60 hours at the time of submission will not be considered.

Advanced placement coursework or test credit may not be used toward fulfilling the above requirements, although it may count toward the minimum of 90 credit hours of coursework. Please note that applicants are strongly encouraged to complete a baccalaureate degree. Students are only very rarely admitted to dental school without having first completed a baccalaureate degree.

Upper-level science courses must be completed at 4-year institutions (i.e. colleges or universities that grant Bachelors Degrees). At least 30 semester hours must be completed at a four-year college.

Additional recommended courses include Spanish, art (ceramics, jewelry, three dimensional design) or instrumental music. You should engage in specific activities through which you can develop your manual dexterity skills (such as playing a musical instrument or doing three-dimensional artwork).
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 "predental 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 broad 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 taking several courses in the humanities and social science fields that genuinely interest you. If you decide to major in a nonscience area, then you should consider taking a couple of additional courses in chemistry and/or biology to bolster your background in the sciences. 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. Grades in college courses (science courses in particular), Dental Admission Test scores, academic letters of evaluation (recommendation letters), the personal interview, and 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. Applicants to IU School of Dentistry must observe a minimum of 40 hours with general dentists. However, admissions staff stated at a Dental Day during the fall 2015 semester that students admitted to the IU School of Dentistry have generally accumulated 100 hours of shadowing. Generally speaking, you are encouraged to complete significantly more hours of shadowing than a dental school lists as its requirement.

**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.

**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. We strongly urge enrollment in some small size or seminar type classes in which you work closely with your instructors. Make yourself known to professors during their office hours. Taking more than one small class from an instructor may be helpful. A small upper level class in
which you have demonstrated exemplary work may be ideal for obtaining a strong evaluation. At least three academic letters of evaluation must be received by IUSD. Two of the three academic letters must be written by science instructors. Personal evaluations are not required by the IU dental school, but an optional fourth letter can be helpful if it addresses 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. It is strongly recommended that all letters of recommendation be submitted on official letterhead because otherwise some schools may not accept them.

Requirements for recommendation letters vary from school to school. Some dental schools require a letter written by a dentist. You should check the websites of the individual dental schools where you plan to apply.

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. The Admissions Committee considers a number of non-cognitive variables in order to select those applicants who will best reflect the mission of IUSD. For the entering class of 2015, 72 of the 106 matriculants to the Indiana University School of Dentistry are Indiana residents. 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 earning competitive DAT scores and GPA.

How important are my GPA and DAT scores for admission?

The Admissions Committee reviews the overall GPA along with the BCP (biology, chemistry, physics) GPA as well as the total number of science credit hours. The Admissions Committee considers GPA and DAT in order to assess academic readiness for dental school; however high GPA and DAT scores alone do not guarantee acceptance. Average GPA’s for the 2015 entering class at the IU School of Dentistry are: science GPA 3.48, overall GPA 3.65. Note these GPAs represent the average. Accepted students’ GPAs range above and below these figures.

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 2015:

| Total applicants: 1508 | Indiana resident applicants: 213 | Non-resident applicants: 1295 |
| Size of entering class: 106 | Indiana resident matriculants: 72 | Non-resident matriculants: 34 |

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 strong preference is given to students with four or more years and to those who will complete degrees. For the 2015 entering class at the IU School of Dentistry, 87 had completed a B.A. or B.S. degree, 18 had completed masters degrees, and 1 student had completed three years of undergraduate course work but did not earn a degree.

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 but actually there is no prescribed list of activities. Enthusiastic participation and significant commitment in one or two activities over an extended period of time is preferred to superficial involvement in several activities over a brief period of time. 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 ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools, available at the front desk of the Health Professions and 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 can advise you on effective preparation to apply, factors in admission, and the use of the recommendation service. The Health Professions and Prelaw Center provides comprehensive resources for predental students through their website at www.hpplc.indiana.edu.

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. Request an advising session at the dental school or watch the website for upcoming information sessions and the opportunity to talk with current dental students.

4. Meet with a representative of the IU School of Dentistry. If you are on HPPLC’s email list for predental students, then you will receive an email informing you of visits by representatives from the IU School of Dentistry as well as visits from representatives of other dental schools.

5. Attend the orientation meeting for predental students, as well as those meetings of the IU Bloomington campus organization, Hoosier Dentist (watch for email messages from HPPLC about their new member meeting in the fall semester).
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.