Pre-Dental Information Session

Who gets into dental school?
- Students with a 3.99 GPA?
- Students that speak multiple languages?
- Students with strong social skills?
- Students with unique personalities?
- Students who possess an above-average amount of drive?
- Students with certain majors?
- WHO?????
The holistic approach

- Schools are interested in well-rounded candidates.

Academics

What does this entail?
- GPA
- DAT
- Majors / Minors
- Educational Pursuits

Academics

- GPA
  - Is an important factor in your viability as a dental school candidate – but it is **not** the only factor.
  - Aim for consistency in your performance rather than a "roller coaster" performance.
  - Dental schools look at trends as well. A rough start can still yield a competitive candidate if the trend in grades is upward.
  - Science gpa and non-science gpa are equally important.
Question: What is the best major for a pre-dental student?

Answer: Whatever you love to learn about.

There is no preferred major for dental school (science or non-science).

All you need to do is to complete the prerequisite courses before your application year.

Consider your academic strengths and interests when choosing your major.

Core pre-requisites generally include:
- 2-3 quarters of Calculus
- 1 year General Chemistry
- 1 year General Biology
- 1 year of Organic Chemistry with labs
- 1 year of Physics with labs (calculus- or algebra-based)
- 1 year of English (FROM THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT)
- 2 quarters of Microbiology (For the UW School of Dent)

Ask an adviser if you have AP or IB credit.

Math 124/125 or QSci 291/292

Chem 142/152/162, Biol 180/200/220

Chem 237/238/239 + 241/242

Bioc 405/406 or 440/441/442

Phys 114/115/116 + 117/118/119 or

Phys 121/122/123, any general Microm

English from the English Department!
Rec Courses may include: 

Genome 361 or 371
Stat 311 or QSci 381 (other stats is also acceptable)
Ethics from Phil or B H

Academics

Individual dental schools may have additional pre-reqs, so be sure to research your programs of interest.

Other recommended courses include:
- Genetics
- Upper-division science electives (for non-science majors)
- Ethics
- Statistics

DAT
- Dental Admissions Test
- Typically taken at least one year before you plan to enter dental school
- Preparatory classes are helpful to some, but are not a necessity.
- Courses that you should complete before taking the DAT are:
  - general chemistry, organic chemistry, biology and English composition.

Passion

- Health Interest
- Service/Activism
- Scientific Curiosity
- Life Experience
Passion

- What are you passionate about?
- How will you demonstrate your passions?
  - Great places to get involved and branch out are:
    - Student groups on campus
    - Community Service
    - Community Leadership
- Your education in the classroom is valuable, but your education outside of the classroom is invaluable.

Caring

- Personal
- Community
- Clinical

You are entering a community-driven field. You will need to show that you are a compassionate human being.
- Our suggestion is that you find a population that you want to learn more about, and help.
- Remember, not all your experiences need to be directly healthcare-related. Widen your net and broaden your experiences!
Identity

- Involvement
- Role Model
- Identification

Possessing a strong sense of oneself is important. What makes you a unique and balanced individual? Dentists are people too. Don’t lose sight of what makes you you, as you prepare for dental school. As a healthcare professional, you are bound to encounter individuals who possess an identity that differs from your own. Coursework, volunteer opportunities, and travel can all help you explore and understand issues of multiculturalism.

Scholarship

- Policy
- Research
- Academic Potential
- Interests
- Leadership
Do you love to learn? A career in dentistry requires that you continue to actively learn after receiving your degree. Challenge yourself by taking courses in areas you have not explored before, or by taking honors courses. Reflect on your educational pursuits both inside and outside of class. Research, study abroad, and service-learning courses are excellent ways to document scholarship and diverse educational experiences.

Your leadership potential is important. Reflect on your experiences and how you have developed (or will develop) your skills as a leader.

A Career in Dentistry

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Ask yourself:
- Why do I want to work in dentistry?
- How important is this career to me?
- What are my motivations?
- Is there nothing else I can see myself doing with my life?

How do you know that dentistry is a good fit for your skills, abilities and life goals?

In order to know that it is a good fit, you will need to shadow dentists. For example, the UW School of Dentistry requires a minimum of 100 hours.
You are committing yourself to a life-long profession that will make enormous demands on your time and energy.

Start your shadowing early, and actively reflect on your experiences.

The holistic approach

- Remember, being balanced in all six categories will help you prepare to become a good dentist.

Next steps . . .

- Research programs.
- Complete the prerequisites.
- Shadow a dentist.
- Complete your major requirements.
- Develop relationships with faculty members.
- Plan your application timeline.
- Meet with your pre-dent advisers.
Researching Schools

- Keep in mind that there are many D.D.S. programs. Here are some things to think about:
  - Public or private?
  - Generally students will look at public schools in their state of residence. (e.g., if I were from California I'd start with California public schools.)
  - Is there an area of research that you're interested in? Look at programs that offer that specialty.

- Resources for researching schools include: The Official Guide to Dental Schools, adea.org, and individual school websites. You should also talk to your dentist mentors.

Letters of Recommendation

- Strong letters of recommendation are necessary for entrance into any dental school.
- Many schools require two letters from science faculty and one from a non-science faculty member. Letters from graduate students (TAs) are not always accepted.
- Many schools also require a letter of recommendation from a dentist.
- Students often will have letters collected online using the Letters of Evaluation Online (LEO) service offered through the Career Center.

Letters of recommendation

- A letter of recommendation should enhance your overall application. Therefore, it is imperative that your letter writers know you well.
- Finding faculty mentors will be important to shaping your identity as a student. You can cultivate these relationships by:
  - Attending office hours.
  - Introducing yourself.
  - Learning about their research and being an active learner in and outside of class.
  - Taking multiple courses from the same professor.
Meeting with a pre-dent adviser

- Download the Prehealth Reflection and Plan from the prehealth website.
- Submit your work as instructed on the website. Each response should be 1-3 sentences in length. If you are unsure about your response, then indicate that.
- Upon submission, your reflection and plan will be reviewed by a prehealth adviser. Once it has been approved, you will receive an email confirmation with appointment scheduling information. During busy times, this process may take several weeks.

Additional Resources

- Explore Health Careers: www.explorehealthcareers.org
- UW Prehealth Website: http://www.washington.edu/aae/gateway/advising/prehealth/
- American Dental Education Association: www.adea.org
- American Dental Association: www.ada.org
- Washington Occupational Information System: www.wois.org
- UW Student Health Consortium: http://health.asuw.org/Student_Health_Consortium/
- Email assistance: prehealth@uw.edu