

Undergraduate Dental School Preparation Timeline

REMEMBER THIS IS ONLY AN EXAMPLE **SO DON'T STRESS OUT!**

Freshman Year:

- **Bio 107/108**
- **Chem 127/128 (or 124/125/126)**
- **Math 115/116 (or 112/113/114)**
- **Engl 110/111**
- **Join clubs**
- **Start volunteering**

Freshman year is a time to explore your new school. Don't be too concerned with your post-graduate training yet; there's still a lot of time. However, it is important to do well academically from the start, so you should make academic success a high priority. Also, it's never too early to explore volunteering at a hospital or dentist's office as a way of learning about different fields of interest to you.

In addition, if you feel it is necessary, you may want to take non-credit courses in improving study skills, reading capacity, and time management.

Your freshman year is also an excellent time to get involved in an extracurricular activity

By doing this, you will have the opportunity to feel more a part of the community, reap many rewards and make a contribution to your community and yourself. There are organizations which are academically based, leisure based, community service based, and activist based.

The most important policy during your first year is not to over-commit yourself. It cannot be stressed enough that your priority is your schoolwork. Do not allow yourself to be spread so thin among your activities and responsibilities that you do not have the needed time to devote to your classes.

Sophomore Year:

- **Chem 243/244**
- **Physics 131/132**
- **Other courses needed to complete major**
- **Shadow a dentist**
- **Continue volunteer work**
- **Research (optional)**
- **Visit your professors during office hours**

By your sophomore year, you should be narrowing down some fields of interest. You should choose a major this year. Make it an area that you enjoy learning about. Dental schools do not require undergraduate degrees in science. However, students should seek degrees in fields which will afford them academic rigor, sharpen their skills in reading, writing, analytical thinking, research, and public speaking. Course load and performance throughout are significant to the admissions boards no matter your major.

Talk to faculty and professionals in different fields to help you evaluate possible career you did not begin as a freshman, start taking the requisite science classes and make an appointment during spring semester to plan your course of study with an academic advisor. Start making contacts with professors and ask for letters of recommendation if you have made a good impression. Keep your G.P.A. high, this is an important piece of your application which can be forgotten.

Junior Year:

- **Chem 245**
- **Other courses needed to complete major**
- **Study for and take DATs**
- **Continue volunteer work**
- **Research (optional)**
- **Start or narrow down your list of dental schools you want to apply to**
- **Get letters of recommendation from your professors**

This the most exciting year for students what want to start dental school in the fall following graduation. It is also the busiest and most stressful. So prepare yourself. If you haven't already, you should make an appointment to speak with an academic advisor about your courses, identifying the dental schools to which you will apply, your extracurricular activities, and your letters of recommendation. This year is the time to start getting your whole application package in order.

You will probably take the DAT in April, so you need to plan ahead and budget your time to prepare. Keep current with your coursework (do NOT get behind). Apply early for the DAT, and begin studying four to six months in advance. If you desire, take a prep-course, but no matter how you prepare, be ready. It is not advisable in most cases to retake the DAT.

As a junior, you should also be finalizing your decisions about where to apply and finishing your applications. The time following your Spring semester of your Junior year you should begin working on your personal statement. Once you have carefully created it, and feel it is strong, you should have it checked by someone whose writing style you respect for comments and suggestions.

Of course, doing well in your courses and gaining work experience continue to be priorities during your junior year.

Senior Year:

- **Other courses needed to complete major**
- **Apply to dental schools**
- **Interviews**
- **Graduate**

If you are invited to interviews, spend time preparing for them. Most interviews occur between September and March of your senior year. Final decisions may not be made until the spring or even summer for students placed on waiting lists.

In the beginning of the year you should double check that you will meet your graduation requirements.

After you have completed the interviews, the application process is complete. Don't forget to consider your alternatives, though, in case your dental school plans don't work out this year. -

* **Source: Temple** University, "Pre-Dental Manual,"
<http://www.temple.edu/healthadvising/dentman.html#TIME%20LLNE>