Admission to dental school is highly competitive. Generally speaking, a degree in dentistry requires four academic years of study. The first two years usually cover the basic sciences and the last two years, diagnosing oral disease, surgery, and clinical study. At the completion of the curriculum, students are awarded either a DMD (Doctor of Dental Medicine) or DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery) degree.

## Lower Division Subjects Required by Most U.S. Schools

| **Subject** | **Required Coursework** |
| --- | --- |
| One year of English | English 101 & English 102, 103 or Philosophy 5 |
| One year of Biology | Biology 6 & 7 |
| One year of Inorganic (General) Chemistry | Chemistry 101 & 102 |
| One year of Organic Chemistry | Chemistry 211 & 212 |
| One semester of Biochemistry | Chemistry 221 |
| One year of Physics | Physics 6 & 7 or Physics 66 & 67 or Physics 101 &102. Your undergraduate major may also determine your choice of Physics requirements. |

## Lower Division Subjects Recommended by Many U.S. Schools

| **Subject** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Humanities and Social Sciences | Dental schools like to see that you have taken a wide range of coursework and have a diverse educational background. It is recommended that you take several humanities and social science courses. See IGETC Area 3B and Area 4 for a list of courses offered at Pierce College. |

Note: All courses should be taken for a letter grade, not Credit/No Credit.

## Choosing an Undergraduate Major

“Pre-dental” is not a major at universities. You should give careful consideration to your choice of major and select an area of study that interests you. Most dental schools do not require a specific degree in order to apply. Instead, they are looking for a well-rounded applicant who does well in the dental school admissions requirements. Students should select an appropriate major that could lead to an alternative career, if necessary. The majority of entering dental students have a bachelor’s degree. However, students that have completed their junior year could be accepted.

Students applying to dental school need to plan carefully and complete not only the dental school admissions requirements, but also the requirements for their undergraduate major and the general education required by the undergraduate transfer institution.

## Dental School Selection Criteria

## Completion of the prerequisite coursework.

## Bachelor’s Degree or three or more years of undergraduate coursework.

## GPA in terms of overall college grades and science grades are a major factor in the selection process. For most dental schools, the average "competitive" applicant has a cumulative grade point average of above a 3.4.

## Score on the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). This computerized test measures general academic ability, comprehension of scientific information and perceptual ability.

## Community service/leadership/internship

## Letters of recommendation from science faculty, non-science faculty, and a supervisor from relevant clinical experience, research, or relevant work.

## Interviews with faculty from the institutions you apply to.

## Salary Information

In 2021, the California average annual wage was $130,883 for dentists ([labormarketinfo.edd](https://labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/oes-employment-and-wages.html)). The median is the point at which half of the workers earn more and half earn less.

## Recommended Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| American Dental Education Association | [adea.org/](https://www.adea.org/) |
| American Dental Association | [ada.org/en](https://www.ada.org/en) |
| American Student Dental Association | [asdanet.org/](https://www.asdanet.org/) |
| Dental Admission Test | [scholarware.com/](http://www.scholarware.com/) |
| 2021 ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools | <https://www.adea.org/officialguide/> |

## Select Dental School Websites

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| Loma Linda University | [dentistry.llu.edu/](https://dentistry.llu.edu/) |
| UCLA School of Dentistry | [dentistry.ucla.edu/](https://www.dentistry.ucla.edu/) |
| UC San Francisco | [dentistry.ucsf.edu/](https://dentistry.ucsf.edu/) |
| University of Pacific | [dental.pacific.edu/](http://dental.pacific.edu/) |
| USC School of Dentistry | [dentistry.usc.edu/](https://dentistry.usc.edu/) |

## Preparation Programs

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| Summer Medical and Dental Education Prep | [shpep.org/](http://www.shpep.org/) |
| UCLA Pre-Dental Program | <https://dentistry.ucla.edu/academics-admissions/pre-dental-programs> |
| UCLA PREP | <https://medschool.ucla.edu/apply/prep> |

## Hands-on experience

| **Website** | **Website address** |
| --- | --- |
| International Service Learning | <https://islonline.org/programs/program_dentistry/> |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Note: Information is subject to change without notice. Check with the individual campus for the most up-to-date information. *Web site links are provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) and/or Los Angeles Pierce College (LAPC) of any of the products, services or opinions of the corporation or organization or individual. The Los Angeles Community College District and/or Los Angeles Pierce College bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content.*