



Prehealth Programs: Dentistry

CU-BOULDER ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER, PREPROFESSIONAL OFFICE
<http://advising.colorado.edu> (click on prehealth, at left)

The Profession

Opportunities in dentistry are growing rapidly as millions realize the benefits of preventive dental care. Advances in technology allow significant improvements in appearance, but more importantly, in overall health. Those students who excel in science, have good manual dexterity, and the desire to make patients' lives better and pain-free are qualified candidates for dental school.

UNDERGRADUATE PREPARATION FOR DENTAL SCHOOL

The majority of students accepted to dental school have an undergraduate degree; however, you are not required to have a bachelor's degree in order to be accepted. For those who do complete a degree, it need not be in the sciences. There are no majors preferred by admissions. Completion of at least 90 semester hours (or equivalent) with at least 30 hours of upper-division course work is required. AP credit hours will count toward the total credit hours required but will **not** be accepted for prerequisite coursework.

The dental program will take four years to complete and leads to a doctorate of dental surgery (DDS) degree.

SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY AT UCHCS

The most selective school in the nation, the School of Dentistry has a reputation for providing an innovative educational experience. Each class has only 50 students which creates opportunities for mentorship and personal attention from the faculty. Sixty percent of each entering class are from Colorado. Students from the affiliated WICHE states represent 30-35%. Only the most qualified students from states other than Colorado are admitted.

PREREQUISITES FOR UCHSC DENTAL SCHOOL

The CU Health Sciences School of Dentistry requires that you complete the courses listed below. All prerequisites must be taken for a letter grade. Course numbers refer to CU-Boulder courses only, but semester hours in parentheses are accurate for most schools. For specific requirements for schools in other states, refer to the Official Guide to Dental Schools, available from www.adea.org. You should also check the website of each school.

General Chemistry (2 sems. w/ lab)
CHEM 1111 *and* CHEM 1131

Organic Chemistry (2 sems. w/ lab)
CHEM 3311/3321 *and* 3331/3341

General Biology (2 sems. w/ lab)
EBIO 1210/1230 *and* 1220/1240 **Note:** MCDB 1150/1151 *and* 2150/2151 will not meet this prerequisite at CU School of Dentistry.

Physics (2 sems. w/ lab)
PHYS 2010 *and* 2020

Humanities including Lit. (2 sems.)
2 semesters

English Composition (1 sem.)
WRWG 1150, 3020, *or* 3030

Additional Suggested Coursework
Business, Psychology, Anatomy, Physiology, Biochemistry, Immunology, Communications

EXTRACURRICULAR EXPERIENCE

Dental schools are looking for well-rounded individuals whose energies and interests involve them in projects beyond the academic arena. Plan to have a balance between dental-related and non-dental extracurricular activities and projects.

You may wish to talk with the prehealth advisor about ideas for volunteer or paid dental experience. Wherever you end up volunteering or working, your experience will be invaluable from the

standpoint of self-knowledge. Is this profession for you? Do you have the empathy, commitment and endurance required of a health-care professional?

HELPFUL CONTACTS

You should take the time during your undergraduate career to nurture meaningful relationships with people who you respect, whether they be professors or professionals you meet during extracurricular work. If a professor's research excites you, try to become part of his or her team, or arrange to do independent study or research under his or her direction. If you are drawn to an individual, follow up on maintaining contact.

Inevitably you will need letters of recommendation, and heart-felt letters expressing enthusiastic support are much more helpful than the "boiler-plate" variety that emerge when professors are asked to submit dozens of letters for students they barely know.

In addition, being part of a network of people working in the field that is your passion can pay off in intangible ways down the road.

Application Year

DENTAL ADMISSIONS TEST (DAT)

Almost all dental schools in the U.S. and Canada require that you take the DAT. This exam consists of four sections: a survey of the natural sciences, perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning. The computerized test can be taken any time during the year.

You are encouraged to complete the DAT in the spring or summer preceding the anticipated year of admission and no later than October 1. This offers the advantage of getting the test scores to schools early enough to have a chance for an early interview, and to have your application considered through the entire application/acceptance process.

PREHEALTH PROGRAMS:

ADEA/AADSAS

Most dental schools in the US and Canada use the centralized application service (AADSAS) of the American Dental Education Association. You will submit your application and transcripts to this service and they will forward them to the schools of your choice. Applications are available online at www.adea.org/aadsas after June 1 of the year preceding matriculation. There is a fee of \$195 for this service; a few applicants may qualify for fee reduction. Early application is strongly encouraged because acceptances are offered as early as December 1. You may find specific application information about each dental school on their website.

COMMITTEE LETTER INTERVIEWS

Dental schools have begun requesting committee letters from those undergraduate institutions which offer this service. At the University of Colorado at Boulder, this process begins with a workshop in the fall before the application year. Faculty and prehealth advisors will interview each applicant in preparation for writing a summary committee letter. Information about registering for committee letter workshops will be distributed via the healthlist listserv or may be found at <http://advising.colorado.edu>.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Most dental schools require letters of recommendation. The following combination of letters are recommended: two from science professors (biology, chemistry and physics), and one from a non-science professor. In addition, you may submit one personal letter from a dentist.

Most dental schools prefer that students obtain a Committee Letter from a pre-dental faculty committee. It is possible, however, to apply with individual letters of recommendation. The Committee Letter process is explained on the Preprofessional Advising website at www.advising.colorado.edu/prehealth.

Letters of recommendation may be sent to the Credentials File Service in the Pre-professional Advising Office and they will then be forwarded to AADSAS at the time of application.

There is a fee associated with this service. Contact the prehealth advisor or the coordinator of the preprofessional file service at (303) 735-3000 for details.

INTERVIEWS

If you are granted an interview, congratulations—you have passed an important milestone. Take advantage of the mock interviews offered by the Preprofessional Advising Office. For more information call (303) 735-3000.

PREHEALTH STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) is an honorary prehealth society for those interested in health careers. Contact with other students with similar interests as yours can be very gratifying. You can e-mail AED at aed@ucsu.colorado.edu for more information.

The Student Association for Pre-health Professionals (SAPP) represents a community of students at CU-Boulder who are interested in pursuing health-related careers. Its goal is to provide an organization where students interested in all areas of medicine can come together and learn more about the many professions, receive academic or personal guidance, and get detailed advice on applying to graduate schools. Membership is open to all CU students. You can e-mail SAPP at prhth@colorado.edu or visit their website at: <http://www.colorado.edu/student-groups/prehealth>.

DENTISTRY

UCHSC SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY'S ADMISSIONS SELECTION CRITERIA

The quality of courses taken and the performance of the student in such courses during the undergraduate program will be weighed more heavily than the total number of science courses completed. The School of Dentistry seeks well-rounded applicants and uses a personalized, committee-run application process that takes into account the following selection criteria:

- applicant's most recent DAT scores
- cumulative grade point average
- science grade point average
- revised grade point average
- admissions committee interview with the applicant
- letters of recommendation
- applicant's personal statement

Vital Statistics (from the CU Health Sciences Center School of Dentistry, fall 2006)

Applications to acceptance ratio: 26/1

Colorado residents: 5:1

Total applications received: 1,322

Average age of students: 26

Average DAT score: 19.6

Number in class: 50

Average GPA: Cum: 3.71 Sci: 3.66

Degree conferred: DDS

Licensure requirements:

National, State and Regional Board Exams

In-state yearly tuition: approx. \$21,004

Medium annual earnings: \$123,000

All information in this publication is subject to change. Please check with the prehealth advisor, or with the appropriate school for up-to-date information.

Current discussions in the health sciences departments will probably lead to changes in the near future. Keep in touch!

The University of Colorado at Boulder is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution.

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