



Health Professions Student Center

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



Pre-Dentistry

Using a blend of science, technology, and personal expertise, dentists give their patients a reason to smile every day. They provide prevention education and treat health issues to improve lives. Compassion, empathy, and a strong mind for science are important qualities for success. Dentists can serve as general practitioners or specialize in any of a number of unique fields, including endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, prosthodontics, and dental public health.

Explore Your Options

Pre-dentistry is not an undergraduate degree. The academic prerequisites for professional school may be combined with any field of study. You may pursue any undergraduate major that interests you, and in which you have a desire to succeed, and still qualify for dental school.

WSU students majoring in subjects from art to zoology have gone on to earn advanced degrees at professional schools all over the country.

And at WSU you are not locked into a major. If your interests change, we'll work with you to revise your goals and your academic plan.

Programs leading to a dental degree require a core set of science and general education courses be completed prior to admission (see reverse for course listing). On average, after earning your bachelor's degree, you'll spend another four years completing your dental studies.

Enrolling as an undergraduate at WSU does not lead directly to any professional dental school. Normally, you will begin the complex application process during your junior year.



The Cougar Advantage

The WSU Health Professions Student Center provides opportunities and resources to help you discover the path that is best for you.

Your Health Professions specialist can guide you through the nuances of preparing for a career in dentistry:

- Course selection
- Essay writing workshops
- Resume reviews
- Practice interviews
- DAT preparation
- Requesting recommendation letters
- Networking and volunteering
- Gaining industry experience
- Reviewing application criteria
- Selecting professional schools

Meeting with both your HPSC specialist and your academic advisor at least once a semester will maximize the combined support and expertise available to you.



Peer Support

With more than 300 active student clubs on campus, you're bound to find one that fits your style.

The WSU Pre-Dental Club can provide you with an academic and social support system and opportunities to connect with highly motivated students whose goals are similar to your own. Find study partners, get involved in community service projects, gain leadership experience, meet current healthcare professionals, and build your personal portfolio.

Learn more at facebook.com/WSUPreDentalClub. 

✓ Preparing for Dental School

Admission to all dental schools is extremely competitive. Long before you begin to fill out the paperwork, you will need to work diligently to build a portfolio showcasing your academic success, personal achievements, dental experience, career goals, and your compassionate character.

Your academic success is an important factor in the application process. Specifics vary from school to school, but most dental programs require a cumulative GPA of 3.50 or higher.

Dental admissions committees will consider your entire portfolio, including:

- DAT scores
- Evidence of compassion and empathy for the sick, elderly, injured or disabled
- Personal integrity and high ethical standards
- Strong English speaking and writing skills
- Volunteer participation that involves compassion for your fellow human beings, such as coaching, teaching, working on blood drives, in a soup kitchen, at a food bank, or on charity fundraisers, and many other possibilities
- Evidence of personal leadership, either with organizations or through life experiences
- Additional language skills and/or cultural knowledge, including study abroad or international experience
- Significant time spent job-shadowing dentists



Common Dental School Prerequisite Courses

These courses may be taken concurrently with classes required for your chosen major at WSU.

Biology (12)

BIOL 106 Introductory Biology (organismal)

BIOL 107 Introductory Biology (cell biology and genetics)

BIOL/MBIOS 301 General Genetics

Chemistry* (15)

Non-science majors

CHEM 101 Introduction to Chemistry

CHEM 102 Chemistry Related to Life Sciences
(organic & biochemistry)

Science majors

CHEM 105 Principles of Chemistry I

CHEM 106 Principles of Chemistry II

Both science and non-science majors

CHEM 345 Organic Chemistry I

CHEM 348 Organic Chemistry II and Problem Solving

Molecular Biosciences (10)

MBIOS 303 Introductory Biochemistry

MBIOS 304 Microbiology and Molecular Biology Laboratory

MBIOS 305 General Microbiology

Physics* (4)

PHYSICS 101 & 102 General Physics

or

PHYSICS 201 & 202 Physics for Scientists and Engineers

Recommended

A few dental schools require these courses.

Biology

BIOL 251 Human Physiology

BIOL 315 Gross and Microanatomy

Mathematics* (8)

MATH 140 Calculus for Life Scientists

or

MATH 171 Calculus I

STAT 212 Introduction to Statistical Methods

(alternate option PSYCH 311 Elementary Statistics in Psychology)

Microbiology

MBIOS 306 General Microbiology Laboratory

MBIOS 401 Cell Biology

Philosophy

PHIL 365 Biomedical Ethics

Psychology

PSYCH 105 Introductory Psychology

* Students must meet WSU math standards to enroll.

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