

PRE-DENTAL FACT SHEET

BASIC PRE-DENTAL CURRICULUM

Most dental schools require the following core of courses as part of an undergraduate program of study:

Dental School Requirement		GMU Recommended Courses	
Biology	2 semesters	Biology	213, 303
General Chemistry	2 semesters	Chemistry	211, 212
Organic Chemistry	2 semesters	Chemistry	313/315, 314/318
College Physics	2 semesters	Physics	243/244, 245/246
English	1 semester	English	101
Biochemistry	1 semester	Biology/Chemistry	483/463

Some dental schools may have additional requirements. VCU also recommends microbiology, genetics, and anatomy. Applicants are encouraged to research the specific requirements for the schools they are considering.

APPLYING TO DENTAL SCHOOL

Admission to dental school has become very competitive over the past few years. The percentage of applicants who are accepted varies from year to year but is generally around 34% of the applicant pool. Women and minorities constitute approximately 47 percent and 43 percent of enrollees, respectively.

Most dental schools participate in the American Association of Dental Schools Application Services (AADSAS) which is a centralized application service. AADSAS provides uniform information about applicants in a standardized format. As a rule, students should initiate the application process approximately one year prior to the expected date of entry into dental school.

DENTAL ADMISSIONS TEST

Dental school applicants must take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) which helps evaluate an applicant's aptitude for dentistry. The DAT designed to assess a student's general academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. The DAT is given at Thomson Prometric Test Centers on a computer and is administered almost every day of the year. Students are encouraged to take the test at least one year prior to their anticipated entry into dental school. The DAT is a four hour and fifteen minute test and consists of four parts:

- Survey of the natural sciences (biology, general and organic chemistry);
- Perceptual ability (two- and three-dimensional problem-solving);
- Reading comprehension (dental and basic sciences); and
- Quantitative reasoning (mathematical problems in algebra, numerical calculations, conversions, etc.).

Information about the DAT can be found on the web at <http://www.ada.org/prof/ed/testing/dat/>.

CAREERS IN DENTISTRY

Numerous career options are available to dentists including general dentistry and nine recognized subspecialties. There are opportunities for private practice or employment through public and private agencies or institutions. Administrative, research, military, and educational careers are also possible. The majority of dentists (about 80%) are in general practice. Specialties are:

- * Dental Public Health
- * Endodontics
- * Pediatric Dentistry
- * Periodontics
- * Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology
- * Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
- * Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery
- * Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics
- * Prosthodontics

For more information about dental careers, contact:

Council on Dental Education
American Dental Association (ADA)
211 East Chicago Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
Phone: 312-440-2500
www.ada.org

American Dental Education Association (ADEA)
1400 F Street NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202-289-7201
www.adea.org

HEALTH PROFESSION ADVISING

Students pursuing a pre-dental program may be advised by the Academic Advising Center located in SUB I, room 304, 703-993-2470 where there are designated pre-health advisors. This service is offered in addition to departmental academic advising and focuses on the students' interest in health professions. Students in their year of application will work with Dr. Chuck. Advisors explain the basic pre-dental curriculum, inform students of other resources, and the timetable for applying and taking the DAT. See the <http://prehealth.gmu.edu> website for more information.

MEDICAL SCIENCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

George Mason University has a Medical Sciences Advisory Committee (MSAC) which interviews qualified students who are applying to dental school and writes a composite letter of evaluation for them. The Committee is composed of faculty members and other professional staff. MSAC collects information about the students including standardized application forms, letters of recommendation, and transcripts. Using this information in conjunction with personal interviews, Dr. Emil Chuck writes a composite letter of evaluation and sends it to the schools to which the student has applied.

PRE-MEDICAL HONOR SOCIETY AND THE PRE-DENTAL SOCIETY

George Mason University is the home of the Virginia Zeta chapter of Alpha Epsilon Delta--National Premedical Honor Society. The chapter sponsors events relating to the medical/dental school application process and a career in the health sciences. Activities include:

- * CPR Classes
- * Sponsoring Blood Drives
- * Observing Surgical Procedures
- * An externship program with area physicians
- * Trips to area health profession schools
- * Faculty-Student Receptions

Students are eligible for national membership after three semesters or 36 hours at GMU and associate membership at any time.

There is also a Pre-Dental Society on campus for students interested in a career in dentistry.

“Official Guide to Dental Schools 2009,” was the primary source of information for this fact sheet.