FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

About Applying to Dental School
Do I need a bachelor’s degree?

The accepted student is expected to arrive on campus with a Bachelor’s (or higher level) degree. Exceptions to this rule are possible but they must be initiated by the candidate. A candidate who is granted a waiver to the Bachelor’s degree requirement will be notified in writing.

Does it matter what size academic load I carried in undergraduate school?

Since the first semester of dental school is 34 credit hours, the Admissions Committee strongly recommends that applicants carry a full academic load (15-16 credit hours) per semester and suggests taking a minimum of 3-4 science courses each term. This gives you a chance to preview what is in store for you in dental school (i.e. a full course load which cannot be taken part time). At the same time, it gives us the opportunity to better evaluate your chances of success in dental school. The Admissions Committee also strongly prefers that all prerequisites be taken under a full course load.

Must I major in Biology or the sciences?

No. The choice of a major is yours. Choose a course of study of interest to you. Keep in mind that our faculty does not assume that you have had courses other than those required. It is true that those students who have an extensive science background have an easier time with the dental school basic sciences than non-science majors.

In addition to the required undergraduate courses (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and English), what other courses are suggested?

Any upper level courses in Biology related to growth and development such as Comparative Anatomy, Physiology, Embryology and Histology are especially helpful. Courses in Psychology/Human Behavior are very helpful when dealing with dental patients. Also, courses in business such as Marketing will help the student prepare for private practice. Some students enjoy courses in sculpture to ensure good hand-eye coordination.
How do I apply to dental school?

The University of Tennessee College of Dentistry participates in the American Dental Education Association’s centralized application service (AADSAS) and all application materials are sent to them.

**Nothing** should be sent to the College of Dentistry unless specifically requested by either the Office of Dental Admissions or the Office of Enrollment Services.

The AADSAS web site is: [https://portal.aadsasweb.org/](https://portal.aadsasweb.org/)

A candidate must have taken the Dental Admissions Test and completed almost all prerequisites before applying.

What is the deadline for applications?

The application period is June 1 to September 30 of the year before you hope to begin the course of study. No additional material (DAT scores, transcripts, etc.) can be submitted to either AADSAS or The College of Dentistry after this date.

How are students selected to fill the class?

Selection is based upon academic performance in undergraduate studies, DAT scores, personal characteristics, leadership experience, community awareness, preprofessional evaluation, and the personal interview. In recent years there have been six or more fully qualified applicants for each position in the class.

When will I be notified of acceptance?

After your application is complete and you have been interviewed, the Admissions Committee makes its decision. By agreement among dental schools, acceptances will not be issued before December 1st of the year preceding the year of anticipated entry. The Admissions Committee usually awards some positions on December first and typically completes the filling of the class by the end of March. All accepted applicants are notified by U. S. Mail. The office of Dental Admissions cannot respond to unsolicited telephone calls requesting admission or application status.
When the class is filled, what happens to the rest of the applicants?

The Admissions Committee works arduously to select the best individuals to be a member of the class and takes this responsibility very seriously. After the class is selected, a short Alternate List is developed to use in case an accepted student chooses not to attend our school. These vacancies are impossible to predict. The Alternate list will remain viable through the first day of class in August. Candidates are never told which position they hold on the Alternate List.

Dental Admission Test

When should I take the DAT?

The DAT can be taken at any time but it is suggested to take it after the completion of Biology, General Chemistry, and Organic Chemistry. Applicants must have taken the DAT before beginning an application.

How should I prepare for the DAT?

There are many ways to prepare and no one way is the “right” way. A set of sample examination questions is included in the registration booklet. To receive a registration booklet, contact Dental Admission Testing Program, 211 East Chicago Avenue, Suite 1846, Chicago, IL 60611-2678. (800-621-8099). Take the sample test with a clock to become familiar with the timed aspect of the examination. Commercial preparatory books are also available through most university bookstores. Commercial preparatory courses exist, but they may be expensive. Consult dental students or applicants about their experiences regarding these courses before registering. Look at books in the library (Psychology section) on Tests and Measurements to get an insight in the construction of standardized tests.
What is the minimum acceptable DAT score?

Applicants should try to achieve scores of 18 or better in each category. Reading and PAT scores of 21 or greater are beneficial to the applicant. Any score of 17 or lower is detrimental to the applicant. Competitive applicants typically have total scores of 150 to 175.

For how long a period of time are my scores good?

DAT scores are valid for a period of five (5) years.

Are Canadian DAT scores acceptable? Can Canadian citizens apply?

No. Applicants must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States at the time of application.

How many times may I take the DAT?

The maximum is three attempts.

Are there courses I should complete before taking the DAT?

Yes. The DAT contains sections on Biology, General Chemistry and Organic Chemistry that require a substantial knowledge base. Physics is not required for the DAT. The Perceptual Ability Test section requires extensive practice, and several companies make workbooks for this purpose.

Letter of Recommendation

No letters of recommendation are required but they are accepted. Pre-professional evaluations from an institution of higher education are welcomed.
Interviews

Is an interview required of all applicants?

Interviews are BY INVITATION to applicants being considered for admission. An interview is required for admission, however, the interview does not guarantee that an applicant will be offered a seat in the class. Applicants are interviewed only once. Applicants, as well as prospective applicants, are welcome to visit the College on an appointment basis.

Who will interview me?

Usually three faculty members and the Chairman of the Admissions Committee. You are encouraged to bring questions for your interview. We want this to be a two way conversation. It is not intended to be a stressful situation.

How should I dress for the interview?

Professional or business attire is appropriate.

How can I learn more and communicate with the Office of Admissions?

Web site: http://www.uthsc.edu/dentistry/admissions/

E-mail: dentaladmissions@uthsc.edu
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Inquiries and charges of violation concerning Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) or any of the other above referenced policies should be directed to the Office of Equity and Diversity, 920 Madison Avenue, Suite 420, Memphis, Tennessee 38163, telephone 901-448-5558 (TTY available).