

Undergraduate Dental School Preparation Timeline

UConn-Storrs Pre-Dental Society

The University of Connecticut - Storrs, CT

Please remember that this timeline is only an example; not all successful applicants to dental school follow this timeline, so do not stress out if your pathway to dentistry does not follow this timeline.

Freshman Year:

- General Biology – BIOL 1107-1108
- General Chemistry – CHEM 1127-1128 (or 1137-1138, or 1147-1148, or 1124-1126)
- English (2 semesters) [ENGL 1010 or 1011 is required]
- 1-credit First Year Experience course (INTD-interdepartmental)
- Join clubs (such as the Pre-Dental Society)
- Start volunteering and shadowing

Freshman year is a time to explore the University. Do not be overly concerned with your post-graduate training yet; there is still a lot of time. However, it is important to do well academically from the start, so you should make academic success a high priority. In general, to be admitted to a dental school at the start of your senior academic year, you should have an overall grade point average of at least a 3.2, preferably a 3.5 or higher; but there are exceptions. It is not too early to explore volunteering or shadowing at a dentist's office as a way of learning about different dental fields of interest to you. The best way to make sure that dental medicine is the field you want to enter is to start shadowing.

In addition, if you feel it is necessary, you may want to take non-credit courses in improving your study skills, reading capacity, and time management.

Your freshman year is also an excellent time to get involved in extracurricular activities. Definitely join the UConn-Storrs Pre-Dental Society; visit <http://predental.uconn.edu/>. The Enrichment Programs Pre-Professional Faculty Advising Office (<http://premed.uconn.edu>) offers timely workshops which you do not want to miss. By doing this, you will have the opportunity to feel more a part of the community, meet the pre-dental society faculty advisor, learn on-going society volunteering opportunities, and make a contribution to your community and yourself. There are many other organizations which are academically-based, leisure-based, community service-based, and activist-based where you can explore your other interests; visit <http://studentactivities.uconn.edu/> to learn more about the many extracurricular organizations offered at the University of Connecticut, Storrs.

The most important policy during your first year of college is not to over-commit yourself. It cannot be stressed enough that your priority is your schoolwork. Do not allow yourself to be spread so thin among your activities and responsibilities that you do not have the needed time to devote to your classes.

Sophomore Year:

- Organic Chemistry – CHEM 2443-2445
- Finish taking any other needed basic science courses and those required for your academic major.
- Continue volunteering and shadowing.
- Research (optional)
- Visit both your academic advisor and the faculty advisor to the Pre-Dental Society.
(Learn where their offices are and their email addresses and trade cell phone numbers).

By your sophomore year, you should be narrowing down some fields of interest. You should choose a major this year. Make it an area that you enjoy learning about. Dental schools do not require undergraduate degrees in science. However, students should seek degrees in fields which will afford them academic rigor, sharpen their skills in reading, writing, analytical thinking, research, and public speaking. However, you need to have taken to required courses on which the different sections of the DAT are based. Note that actual course load and performance throughout are significant to the admissions boards no matter your major.

Talk to faculty and professionals in different fields to help you evaluate possible career paths for you. Continue taking the requisite science classes and make an appointment during the spring semester to plan your course of study with an academic advisor. Start making contacts with professors (such as going to speak with them after class or in office hours so they know you beyond the fact that you are a student in their class and your grade), thereby setting the stage for asking them for letters of recommendation if you have made a good impression. Keep your G.P.A. high; this is an important piece of your application which can be forgotten.

Junior Year:

- Biochemistry – MCB 2000 or 3010
- Physics – PHYS 1201-1202 or 1401-1402
- Other courses needed for completion of your academic major – and other specific courses usually recommended include:
 - MCB 2210 Cell Biology, MCB 2410 Genetics, MCB 2610 Microbiology,
 - PNB 3279 Insights into Dental Science and Clinical Medicine,
 - PNB 3278 Patient and the Healer,
 - MATH 1125-1126 or 1131-1132, and perhaps a basic statistics course such as STAT 1000 or 1100
- Register in advance for the “Passport to Dentistry” Program at the University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine. This worthwhile two-day workshop, limited to only twenty students, is offered in January and May. For more information and to apply, visit <http://sdm.uconn.edu/prospective/passport/index.html>.
- Study for and take the DATs between April to July in the summer between your junior and senior year. Learn more about the DATs from the ADA at <http://ada.org/dat.aspx>.
- Continue volunteering and shadowing
- Research (optional)
- Start or narrow down your list of dental schools to which you want to apply.
- Get letters of recommendation from the dentist(s) that you have shadowed, your professors, and those that you have reported to in your work, volunteering, or research experiences.

The summer between your junior and senior year is also the busiest and most stressful, so prepare yourself. If you haven't already, you should make an appointment to speak with Pre-Dental Faculty Adviser and your academic advisor about your courses, identifying the dental schools to which you will apply, your extracurricular activities, and your letters of recommendation. Make sure you have filled out the "Credential Review" form if you are asking for a composite recommendation letter to be sent out by the Joint Pre-Med/Pre-Dent Advising Office. As a junior, you should also be finalizing your decisions about where to apply and finishing your applications (more below).

You will probably take the DAT between April and August, so you need to plan ahead and budget your time to prepare. Visit <http://ada.org/dat.aspx>. Keep current with your coursework (do not get behind). Apply early for the DAT, and begin studying four to six months in advance. If you desire, take a prep-course, but no matter how you prepare, be ready. It is best to make a study schedule and stick to it! Also you should take several practice tests before taking the actual DAT to gauge where your weaknesses are and where you need to spend your time studying. It is not advisable in most cases to retake the DAT.

This year is the time to start getting your whole application package in order, and submitted to the on-line ADDSAS web site, <http://adea.org/> and <https://portal.aadsasweb.org/>. The time following your spring semester of your junior year you should begin working on your personal statement. Once you have carefully created it, and feel it is strong, you should have it checked by someone who's writing style you respect for comments and suggestions. Of course, doing well in your courses and gaining work experience continue to be priorities during your junior year.

Senior Year:

- Other courses need to complete major
- Apply to dental schools
- Interviews
- Graduate

Note the actual review of your on-line AADSAS application and invited student interviews start in your senior year from about September and continue until the dental schools fill their incoming class. It is only after December 1 of each year that dental schools are allowed to mail out final dental school acceptances. If you are invited to interviews, spend time preparing for them. Most interviews occur between October and January of your senior year. The Enrichment Programs Pre-Professional Faculty Advising Office (<http://premed.uconn.edu>) offers timely workshops that lead to a final student mock-interview to better prepare you for the all-important interview during your official visit to the dental schools.

In the beginning of the year you should double check that you will meet your graduate requirements.

After you have completed your interview, the application process is complete. However, do not forget to consider your alternatives in case your dental school plans do not work out this year.

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Helpful Links:

Use these helpful web links to find additional information.

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| ➤ ADA | http://ada.org/ | American Dental Association |
| ➤ ADEA | http://adea.org/ | American Dental Education Association |
| ➤ ASDA | http://asdanet.org/ | American Student Dental Association |
| ➤ DAT | http://ada.org/dat.aspx | ADA Dental Admission Test |
| ➤ AADSAS | http://tiny.cc/ADEAAADSAS | ADEA AADSAS |
| ➤ GoDental | http://godental.org/ | ADEA GoDental |

Consider purchasing an ASDA pre dental membership: <http://www.asdanet.org/pre dental membership.aspx>

Check out ASDA's pre dental timeline: <http://www.asdanet.org/pre dental timeline.aspx>

Check out ADEA's GoDental website for helpful resources and student forums: <http://godental.org/>

Purchase the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools:
<http://www.adea.org/publications/Pages/OfficialGuide.aspx>