

Journey to Dental School

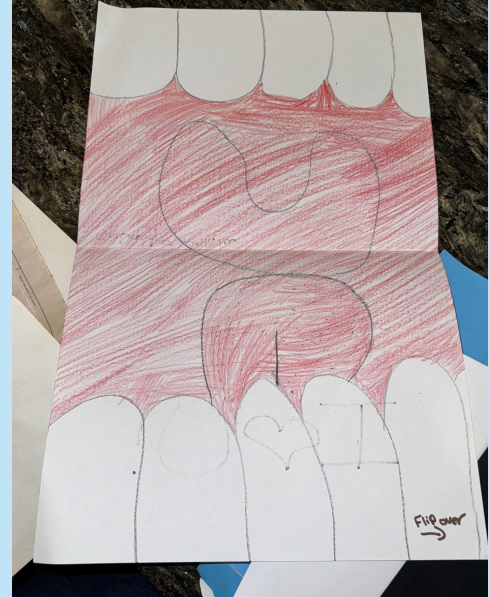


Starting Points

- Was drawn to dentistry fairly early on
- Spoke with dentists and picked their brains throughout high school and college!
 - Do they like what they do? Why or why not?
 - Would they do it again if they had the chance?
 - What are important skills that are required for the career?
 - What are the hardest parts of the job?
 - What are the best parts of the job?
- Began shadowing in high school and college to confirm my interest

Tips:

- ★ You don't have to know early on
- ★ Negative things that you hear from one dentist are not always indicative of if you'll like dentistry -- talk to several dentists and gain greater insight from their experiences!
- ★ Shadow with different specialties
- ★ Find a mentor



Academics/Curriculum

- Research schools early into the process!*
- After developing an unofficial list of programs I was interested in, I met with my advisor and we figured out a curricular path that would be:
 - Beneficial for admission to dental school
 - Most helpful to have foundations of for dental school courses

Required courses:

- Sciences (Bio 1 & 2, Gen Chem 1 & 2, Organic 1 & 2, etc.)
- Sometimes, more specific classes (ie: writing intensive English, extra labs?)

Recommended courses:

- Anatomy, Physiology, Histology, etc.

Tip:

- ★ Make a list of schools you are interested in early on - it doesn't need to be one that is set in stone, but it is helpful to know if you will eventually need to take a specific class for certain schools

Experiences & Achievements

- Volunteering (~120+ hours total)
 - Kids on Campus Leader, clubs, etc.
- Clubs/Leadership
 - FTK, Dead Alchemist Society (Treasurer, President), Pre-Professional Health Club (Activities Coordinator, Leader)
- Work Experience
 - Community Assistant (Campus Life Office), Teaching Assistant for various Chemistry labs, Student Assistant for Chem/Biochem department
 - Summer employment through University, Career exploration camp counselor
 - Dental assisting
- Research
 - Senior seminar, poster presentations, capstone project
- Awards
 - SMG '62 Scholarship, piano awards
- Shadowing (~170 hours)
- Manual Dexterity
 - Piano, crocheting
- Miscellaneous
 - Honors program, GPP, Mass lector, Note sharer for SSC

Tips:

- ★ Be involved, but *be meaningful in your involvement and be yourself!* -- admissions committees will see right through you during interviews if you do something just for your application
- ★ Dental assisting is an extremely great way to be exposed to the dental field while still a student!
- ★ Keep a record of everything you've been involved in (and the hours you spent doing them!), awards you've received, etc.
- ★ Leadership positions are really great for your application, but also for your experience as a professional

Application Prep

End of Junior Year/Senior Year Summer:

- Continued shadowing, working, extracurriculars, etc.
- Asked for letters of recommendation in the spring prior to applying
- Started my personal statement (late)
- Wrote a lot
 - Supplemental questions for specific schools
 - Descriptions (with character counts!) for all awards, experiences, etc.
- Took the DAT (more on that next..)
- Submitted application through AADSAS to 10 schools in early July of my application cycle

Tips:

- ★ Start your personal statement early - it takes more time than you think to write!
- ★ Ask for more letters than you need
- ★ Submit early (by August of the application cycle)
- ★ Send your letter writers your personal statement (rather than your resume)
- ★ Note that it takes a few weeks or longer for your application to even be verified before it is sent to schools
- ★ Use reddit pre dental sub and student doctor network as a resource (to an extent/responsibly)



The DAT

**Required for admission to (almost) all dental schools*

Tests applicants on the sciences (Bio, Gen Chem, and Organic),
Perceptual Ability, Reading Comprehension, and Quantitative Reasoning

- You receive individual section scores, a total science score, and an academic average of all the individual section scores
- Researched what other people did (reddit, student doctor network, youtube) to find what would work best for me
- Studied for ~1.5 months (and during 3 weeks of winter break) and took it once in the summer during my application cycle
- Utilized DAT Booster (and DAT Bootcamp)
 - Booster has great high yield cheat sheets!

Tips:

- ★ Everyone studies differently -- find what will work the best for you and plan around that
- ★ Breadth over depth
- ★ Studying in the summer is tough, but is easier to do without other schoolwork
- ★ Start perceptual ability earlier in your studying



Interviews

Preparation:

- MU's Career center!!!!
 - Interview Prep
 - Mock interview
 - Resume review
- Student Doctor Network ----->

Actual day:

- Depends on the school ..
 - One-on-one
 - Zoom
 - Group interview
 - Separate visit days

Tips:

- ★ Be prepared, but not rehearsed
- ★ Read through every inch of a school's website before the interview
- ★ Have flashcards of questions and answers to practice
- ★ Send thank you emails to interviewers after the interview

The screenshot shows the SDN website for the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. The page includes a header with the SDN logo and navigation links. The main content area features a school profile with a photo, founding year (1896), enrollment (60), and a link to the school website. Below this, there are three circular progress indicators for SDN Ranking (100%), Interview Feedback (3/5), and School Reviews (0). A red arrow points to the 'INTERVIEW FEEDBACK' link in the 'OVERVIEW' section. The 'SCHOOL STATS' table at the bottom shows Resident Tuition at \$41,518, Non-Resident Tuition at \$48,078, and Application Fee at \$50.

RESIDENT TUITION	NON - RESIDENT TUITION	APPLICATION FEE
\$41,518	\$48,078	\$50

The screenshot shows a survey page on SDN for the University of Pittsburgh School of Dental Medicine. It lists several interview questions, such as 'What is one of the specific questions they asked you (question 1)?', 'What is one of the specific questions they asked you (question 2)?', 'What is one of the specific questions they asked you (question 3)?', 'What was the most interesting question?', and 'What was the most difficult question?'. Each question has a 'SHOW MORE RESPONSES' button next to it.

<https://www.studentdoctor.net/schools/school/pitt/survey/28/university-of-pittsburgh-school-of-dental-medicine/0>

After the Interviews

- Completed interviews throughout October and in December
- Was not accepted to my top choice on decision day
- Wrote letter of intent over winter break
- Accepted to my top school in January!

Tips:

- ★ Dental schools have a decision day in December (this is the first day that you can be accepted)
- ★ Be proactive
- ★ This can be an extremely challenging part of the process, mentally:
 - Rely on your support system
 - Don't compare yourself to others
 - Don't get discouraged
 - Remember that all it takes is one and applications/admissions can be a game
 - Use reddit, student doctor network, etc. responsibly
- ★ Letters of interest are a great way to demonstrate your interest in schools (not a commitment)
- ★ A letter of intent is a great way to tell your top choice that they are your top choice and will attend if accepted (is a commitment)

Expenses

- To take the DAT → \$525
- DAT study materials → ~\$399 for 90 day access
- To send applications to programs through AADSAS → \$1529
 - *When sending applications after the fact, it was \$115 a program (there is an additional first time AADSAS fee)
- To send transcripts → \$94.50
 - \$18.90 (per transcript)
- Each supplemental fee → \$970 (Average of \$81 per program!)
 - Actual price ranges from \$50 to \$100 per school
- Non-refundable deposit for seat → \$2000
 - Ranges from \$1000 to \$3000

Plus interview travel (hotels, possible flights), interview attire, DAT extensions/retakes (if needed), etc....

Tip

- ★ See if you are eligible for a fee waiver

Thank you!

