

## ***PRE-DENTISTRY***

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**PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**

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Dentistry is the branch of the healing arts and sciences devoted to maintaining the health of the teeth, gums, and other hard and soft tissues of the oral cavity. In addition to general dentistry, there are eight recognized specialties. Dentists must have good manual dexterity while working in a very limited space. They also must be very meticulous in their attention to detail.

Students interested in becoming dentists must complete a specific set of prerequisite courses before moving on to complete four years of dental school. Many dental schools require that students complete prerequisite coursework and a minimum of three years of college prior to matriculation. However, 90% of students entering dental school have completed four years of college and many of them have earned baccalaureate degrees. In fact, the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) recommends that dental schools encourage students to earn a baccalaureate degree before beginning dental school.

Students can complete required prerequisite coursework and earn a baccalaureate degree at PSU before beginning their dental education at a professional school such as **Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU)**. The prerequisite coursework requires good science and mathematics skills as well as sensitivity to the needs of others. Prerequisite course requirements for admission vary by dental school. **Portland State offers a strong pre-dental program** whereby students complete their prerequisite coursework, earn a baccalaureate degree, and obtain extensive assistance with the dental school preparation, selection, and application process.

### **Prerequisite Courses Required by Most Dental Schools:**

- One year of General Biology
- One year of General Chemistry
- One year of Organic Chemistry
- One year of General Physics
- English/English Comp

NOTE: Science courses should be those designed for science majors.

### **Additional Prerequisite Courses Required by Some Dental Schools:**

- Psychology (commonly required)
- Biochemistry (commonly required)
- College Math and/or Calculus and/or Statistics
- Microbiology
- Anatomy & Physiology
- Molecular biology
- Genetics
- Speech/Rhetoric

**The above lists are not exhaustive. Check individual schools for requirements.** Also note that most professional schools require that an **A, B, or C** be earned in all required preparatory courses, and that the average overall and prerequisite course GPAs are typically 3.0 – 3.7 or above.

### **Dental Admission Test (DAT):**

Dental schools in the U.S. require applicants to take the Dental Admission Test (DAT). The DAT is a half-day exam with sections covering biology, chemistry, organic chemistry, perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning. DAT scores range from 1 to 30. A separate score is given for each section. An Academic Average Score is also calculated; it represents performance on all of the sections except Perceptual Ability. A score of 17 typically signifies average performance on a national basis. Students should complete general biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry sequences before taking the DAT. The DAT is administered nearly every day of the year at Prometric Testing Centers. It should be taken at least a year before a student plans to enroll in dental school. Canadian dental schools require a similar test called the Dental Aptitude Test (DAT).

## Requirements for Admission to OHSU Dental School

Most PSU pre-dental students apply to the **Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) School of Dentistry**, along with a variety of other dental schools across the nation. The following is an outline of OHSU's prerequisite courses and other admissions requirements (subject to change at any time). Students should research the admissions requirements of additional dental schools in the *ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools*, the most authoritative reference guide to U.S. and Canadian dental schools.

### Prerequisite Coursework

OHSU Prerequisite Courses	Equivalent PSU Courses
<b>Required</b>	
<b>General Chemistry w/ labs:</b> Three quarters or two semesters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CH 221/227, CH 222/228, CH 223/229</b> (15) – General Chemistry (<b>MTH 111</b> is a pre- or co-requisite for this course)</li> </ul>
<b>Organic Chemistry w/ labs:</b> Two quarters or two semesters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CH 334, CH 335/337, CH 336/338</b> (16) – Organic Chemistry I, II, III w/ Lab</li> <li>or</li> <li>• <b>CH 331/327, 332/328</b> (12) – Elements of Organic Chemistry I and II w/ Lab. Only offered summer term (accelerated format).</li> </ul>
<b>Biochemistry w/ lab:</b> One quarter or one semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CH 350</b> (4) – Biochemistry (complete organic chemistry before taking this)</li> </ul>
<b>General Biology w/ labs:</b> Three quarters or two semesters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 251, 252, 253 w/ Lab</b> (15) – Principles of Biology (recommend CH 221 be complete prior to or concurrent w/ BI 251)</li> </ul>
<b>Human Anatomy &amp; Physiology w/ labs:</b> One year sequence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 301, 302, 303 w/ Lab</b> – Anatomy &amp; Physiology (a year of bio &amp; at least a term of chemistry are recommended prerequisites)</li> </ul>
<b>Physics w/ labs:</b> One year (regular or calculus-based)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PH 201/214, 202/215, 203/216</b> (15) – General Physics w/ Lab (<b>MTH 111 &amp; MTH 112</b> are recommended prereqs for Physics)</li> </ul>
<b>English Composition:</b> Three quarters or two semesters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Completion of the University Studies program</b> (see note at bottom of page)</li> <li>and/or</li> <li>• <b>WR 121</b> (4) – College Writing</li> <li>• <b>WR 222</b> (4) – Writing Research Papers</li> <li>• <b>WR 323</b> (4) – Writing as Critical Inquiry</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Additional Preparation (Recommended, Not Required)</b>	
<b>Microbiology (strongly recommended)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 480/488</b> (6) – Microbiology w/ Lab</li> </ul>
<b>Cell Biology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 336</b> (5) – Cell Biology</li> </ul>
<b>Molecular Biology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 338</b> (4) – Introduction to Molecular Biology</li> </ul>
<b>Genetics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 341</b> (4) – Introduction to Genetics</li> </ul>
<b>Histology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 455</b> (4) – Histology</li> </ul>
<b>Neuroscience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>BI 462</b> (4) – Neurophysiology</li> </ul>
<b>Sculpture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ART 291</b> (4) – Sculpture I (instructor permission required for non-art majors)</li> </ul>
<b>3-D Drawing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ART 131</b> (4) – Introduction to Drawing</li> </ul>
<b>Courses in fine arts, humanities, behavioral sciences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose courses from departments such as <b>PSY, SOC, ANTH, PHL, and ENG</b></li> </ul>
<b>Limitations on Community College Work</b>	
OHSU suggests that a student who begins a pre-dental program at the community college should plan to attend no more than one year and then transfer to an accredited four-year institution.	

**NOTE:** Although OHSU School of Dentistry does not require PSU graduates to complete three terms of writing (provided they have completed the University Studies program), other dental schools may require up to a year of writing and/or English coursework. In addition, although OHSU School of Dentistry does not technically require math, some dental schools require math coursework, possibly through calculus. Check the requirements of the dental school in which you are interested to ensure you are aware of what is expected.

### Additional OHSU Admissions Requirements:

- A **minimum of 135 quarter (90 semester) credits** from an accredited institution in the U.S. or Canada. (Note: In recent years, all students accepted to OHSU School of Dentistry have had Bachelor's degrees.)
- Foreign course work will not be accepted.
- **Minimum 3.0** cumulative GPA and science/BCP (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) GPA.
- **Minimum DAT score of 15** in each DAT category. Scores cannot be more than 3 years old.
- A **baccalaureate (BA or BS) degree** is highly recommended.
- **Minimum 50 documented observation hours** – recommend minimum 25 in general dental practice and minimum 25 in another dental setting such as a public health clinic or dental specialty. Most competitive pre-dental students significantly exceed the minimum 50 hour requirement. Visits to the School of Dentistry for shadowing or assisting are coordinated through Sharon Reams, School of Dentistry Clinic Administration, at (503) 494-4712. The Pre-Dental Student Organization (PSO) at PSU also has a database of area dentists who have agreed to allow PSU pre-dental students to shadow them. Contact the PSO at pre-dent@pdx.edu for more information.

### Application Process in Brief:

The application process for dental school begins more than a year before the proposed matriculation (expected entrance into dental school) date. Students apply to dental school by completing and submitting a **primary application** through a central application service (AADSAS). AADSAS standardizes the information from the application and forwards it to the dental schools indicated by the student. AADSAS begins to accept applications in mid-May. It is recommended that students submit their AADSAS application fairly early in the application cycle, although it is important not to rush into the process. Many Portland State students wait until spring term grades have posted to submit their AADSAS application and, therefore, submit their applications in mid to late June (which is still early in the application cycle).

As part of the AADSAS application, applicants must have letters of evaluation sent to AADSAS. Most pre-dental students at Portland State use our composite letter of evaluation service. A composite letter is a compilation of evaluation letters prepared by the chair of the **Health Sciences Advising Committee (HSAC)** and then sent to AADSAS at the student's request. The composite letter may also feature an HSAC rating of the student (this type of composite letter is called a Committee letter). This rating is optional and is based on the HSAC's review of the student's dental school application file, which includes information such as GPA, DAT scores, transcript, and personal statement. Students must meet certain minimum requirements in order to request a composite letter. See the pre-dental adviser for more information on the evaluation letter service, the composite letter, and the application process.

Some dental schools may send students a **secondary application**. The secondary application may include a request for updated personal statements, updated transcripts, and an additional application fee. Interviews normally take place between October and January for acceptance the following fall.

### Central Application Service:

Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS)  
AADSAS Dental School Application  
1400 K Street NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 800-353-2237, 202-289-7201  
Email: csraadsas@adea.org

### Application Deadlines:

- The **AADSAS application** typically becomes **available in April or May** at <https://aadsas.adea.org/>.
- AADSAS begins **accepting applications in mid-May**, and the specific deadline for each dental school varies (deadlines are published in the AADSAS information booklet).
- The deadline for the OHSU School of Dentistry is **November 1**. The priority deadline is **September 1**.
- OHSU **interviews** selected applicants from **October through February**.
- OHSU begins to send out **acceptance letters in December**.

### **Tips & Recommendations:**

- **Ask your instructors early in your college program** to complete student evaluation forms.
- **Ensure that one of your letters of evaluation is from a dental professional.**
- **Personally read the admission brochure and Web site** of each of the dental schools to which you plan to apply to obtain information on requirements, deadlines, and curriculum.
- **Participate in paid, volunteer, and/or shadowing experience** in the health care field and in the community at large early on in your college experience. It is important that you understand the realities of dentistry and illustrate through action your commitment to serving the community.
- **Seek out clinical and/or research opportunities** with PSU and/or OHSU faculty.
- **Get involved with other pre-dental students on campus** – join the Pre-Dental Student Organization – access volunteering activities, a shadowing database, and more. See <http://predental.groups.pdx.edu>.
- **Check periodically with the adviser** for recent changes, remaining requirements to meet, and application procedures.
- **Take the DAT *only* when you are fully prepared to do so.** Ideally, you will have completed general biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and college math prior to taking the DAT. Include DAT study time in your academic planning. Don't wait any later than early to mid summer of the year before you plan to matriculate to dental school to take the test.
- **Begin the application process early** in the spring before your last academic year at PSU. Submit your application as early as possible without compromising the quality of your application. Visit the pre-dental adviser at PSU to discuss the application process.
- **Utilize free university resources** such as the pre-dental adviser, Writing Center, and Career Center for help with your personal statement(s) and interview preparation.
- **Begin completing financial aid forms in January; the priority filing deadline is March 1.**