



Dentists diagnose and treat problems with a patient’s teeth, gums, and related parts of the mouth. They provide advice and instruction on taking care of teeth and gums and on diet choices that affect oral health. Dentists typically do the following:

- Remove decay from teeth and fill cavities
- Repair cracked or fractured teeth and remove teeth
- Straighten teeth to correct bite issues
- Place sealants or whitening agents on teeth
- Give anesthetics to keep patients from feeling pain during procedures
- Write prescriptions for antibiotics or other medications
- Examine x-rays of teeth, gums, the jaw, and nearby areas for problems
- Make models and measurements for dental appliances, such as dentures, to fit patients
- Teach patients about diet, flossing, use of fluoride, and other aspects of dental care

Dentists use a variety of equipment, including x-ray machines, drills, mouth mirrors, probes, forceps, brushes, and scalpels. They also use lasers, digital scanners, and other computer technologies. Dentists in private practice also oversee a variety of administrative tasks, including bookkeeping and buying equipment and supplies. They employ and supervise dental hygienists, dental assistants, dental laboratory technicians, and receptionists. (*Occupational Outlook Handbook*)

A minimum of 90 semester hours are required for admission at most dental schools. However, the majority of students entering dental school have a baccalaureate degree. Therefore, students pursuing a pre-dental curriculum are expected to choose a major so that they can be working towards a baccalaureate degree concurrently with the pre-dental program. This requires a major/minor combination or a comprehensive major as well as completion of the UNK general studies requirements and other degree requirements as set forth in the college catalog. Dental schools do not specify which major a student should pursue in conjunction with his/her pre-dental studies. **Gaining acceptance into a dental school is a very competitive process. Completion of the pre-requisite courses does not automatically guarantee admission.**

The following requirements are based on the admission requirements of the College of Dentistry at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Students wanting to apply to other dental schools should check with those specific schools for additional requirements.

Take all of the following:

CHEM 160	General Chemistry	4
CHEM 161	General Chemistry	4
CHEM 360	Organic Chemistry	5
CHEM 361	Organic Chemistry	5
ENG 101	Introduction to Academic Writing	3
ENG 102	Academic Writing and Research	3
PHYS 205	General Physics	5
PHYS 206	General Physics	5

Take two of the following biology courses (8 hours):

BIOL 103	General Biology	4	
BIOL 105	Biology I	4	
BIOL 106	Biology II	4	
BIOL 215	Human Physiology	4	(Students should not take both
BIOL 225 and 226	Anatomy and Physiology	8	BIOL 215 and BIOL 225/226)
BIOL 211	Human Microbiology	4	

Academic Guidelines

An overall GPA of 3.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale) is preferred; however, a higher GPA is preferred and will result in the student being a more competitive applicant. Each required course must be passed with a grade of “C” or better. A grade of “C-” will not be accepted. Students searching for electives outside their major requirements should consider courses from the following areas: biology, chemistry, mathematics, sociology, psychology, business administration, healthcare management, and healthcare economics. See advisor for suggestions. Students should be aware of prerequisites on all courses and plan their coursework accordingly.

Non-Academic Guidelines

There is no magic formula for acceptance in to professional school. Admission is based on GPA, test scores, shadowing and medical experiences, community involvement and volunteerism, leadership qualities, the interview, the essay, and letters of recommendation. Shadowing and medical experiences are of utmost importance. Students should plan to shadow a minimum of 40 hours in their selected profession. Health Sciences offers opportunities to meet these non-academic guidelines through the Shadowing Program, the Health Science Club, and volunteer experiences. Research experience is not required, but will be looked upon favorably. Students should plan to be involved in these types of activities and experiences throughout their undergraduate career.

The Application Process

Students will make application to dental schools through the American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS): [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org). The centralized application service allows students to fill out one application to apply to multiple schools. Early application is strongly encouraged. Students should make application in the summer or early fall of the calendar year proceeding the year in which they hope to enroll in professional school. The deadline for the regular admission cycle at the UNMC College of Dentistry is December 15; applying prior to October 1 is strongly encouraged. Applicants should not wait for DAT scores, transcripts, or other application materials before applying through AADSAS. Check with the schools to which you are applying to verify their policies and procedures regarding supplemental applications.

Entrance Examination Requirement (DAT)

All U.S. dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). It is preferred that the DAT is taken no later than August of the calendar year preceding the year in which the applicant wishes to enroll in a dental program. Students register online at [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org). The test consists of four sections: a Survey of Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry), Reading Comprehension, Quantitative Reasoning, and Perceptual Ability. Two summary scores are reported, one on academic subjects and one for perceptual ability, as well as scores on individual sections. The scoring range is 200-600.

To aid in DAT preparation, Health Sciences offers a Test Prep Review Program every spring semester. For more information, please contact Health Sciences.

Letters of Evaluation/Recommendation

Letters of evaluation will be required of applicants. Letters from a faculty member, dentist, academic advisor, or employer would be appropriate. Information about the non-academic character of a student would be most useful as academic information is already in the application. Students should have their evaluation letters submitted directly through AADSAS.

Interviews

Most schools screen applicants with some form of personal interview. The format of the interview may vary depending on the schools to which students are applying.

Criminal Background Checks

Prerequisite for enrollment into any health science professional program is consent for an external background check. This check includes, but is not limited to, past criminal offenses and registry information. If there is evidence of arrest for a crime(s), conviction for a crime(s), presence on an abuse registry, or other information which reasonably suggests that patient safety might be compromised, the student will be asked to provide additional information

**Citizenship/International Students**

Professional schools in the health sciences vary as to whether they accept non-U.S. citizens. Some schools that do accept non-citizens require a substantial financial commitment up front. Since not all schools accept non-citizens and since the financial commitment of those that do may be substantial, students should thoroughly research and carefully consider such a decision and discuss it with their pre-health advisors early in their undergraduate years.

**Websites**

American Dental Education Association  
American Dental Association  
UNK Health Sciences

www.adea.org  
www.ada.org  
www.unk.edu/healthsciences

**Suggested Sequence of Key Courses**

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	CHEM 160 Biology Course: See your advisor for suggestions.	CHEM 161 Biology Course: See your advisor for suggestions.
Year 2	CHEM 360 BIOL 225 (recommended)	CHEM 361 BIOL 226 (recommended)
Year 3	CHEM 351 (recommended)	Register to take the DAT in late spring or summer. Complete dental school application in the summer.
Year 4	PHYS 205 Complete final major courses.	PHYS 206 Complete final major courses.

- A minimum of 8 hours of biology is required, but additional advanced biology is highly recommended, especially a course dealing with cell structure and function. UNMC highly recommends a course in microbiology. Courses in anatomy and physiology are also recommended.
- A minimum MATH ACT score of 22 or prior completion of College Algebra (MATH 102) or higher is a pre-requisite for CHEM 160.
- A minimum MATH ACT score of 20 or prior completion of College Algebra (MATH 102) (Grade of B+ or better) or higher is required for entry into PHYS 205.
- Sophomore standing is a pre-requisite for BIOL 225.
- The courses suggested above should be completed prior to taking the DAT.
- It is not recommended to take any of the above science courses during a summer session, especially if the material will be covered on the DAT.

Students who are accepted into dental school prior to completing a baccalaureate degree at UNK may be eligible to receive a Bachelor of Science degree in Applied Health Sciences if they have completed all general studies requirements and other graduation requirements as set forth in the UNK catalog and have at least 85 semester hours completed in pre-dental studies.