The Pre-Dentistry program of study at East Tennessee State University prepares students for application to a 4-year Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD) degree program. Students may apply after the completion of at least 90 hours of undergraduate coursework, but completion of a bachelor’s degree is strongly recommended.

Careers in Dentistry
Dentists diagnose and treat problems with a patient’s teeth, gums, and other parts of the mouth. They provide advice and instruction on taking care of teeth and gums and on diet choices that affect oral health.

The number of hours worked varies greatly among dentists. Most dentists work full time, and some also work evenings and weekends to meet their patients’ needs. It is common for dentists to continue in part-time practice well beyond the usual retirement age.

Some dentists own their own businesses and work alone or with a small staff. Other dentists have partners in their practices and a few work for more established dentists as associate dentists.

Pre-dentistry is not a major. Therefore, you must choose a major (and minor, if appropriate) by the time you earn 60 credit hours. You do not have to major in a science field. Choose a course of study that interests you. It is true that students who have an extensive science background have an easier time with the dental school basic sciences than non-science majors. Dental schools do not assume, however, that you have had any courses other than those required.

You must meet with your advisor each semester. You are required to meet with your pre-professional and major advisors each term before registering for the next. Students who receive scholarships, participate in specialized ETSU programs (such as athletics or Honors College programs) must also seek advisement from those departments. Serious consequences can occur if students fail to meet with advisors (e.g., failure to graduate on time, missing appropriate courses to prepare for the DAT, etc.).
What does it take to get into dental school?

GPA
3.54
Average GPA among admitted students in 2013 as reported by the American Dental Education Association (ADEA)

Science GPA
3.46
Average science / math GPA as reported by the ADEA for 2013

DAT Score
19.9
Average score on the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) for 2013. Scores range from 1 to 30

Core Preparation Courses *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Chemistry</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics**</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biochemistry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Microbiology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional Recommended Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Anatomy#</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>HSCI 3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Physiology#</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>HSCI 3020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Nutrition#</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>NTFD 2420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calculus#</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>MATH 1910 and 1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Genetics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>BIOL 3100/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molecular Biology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>BIOL 4647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative Anatomy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>BIOL 3220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immunology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>HSCI 3540</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degree Requirement

A bachelor’s degree is not required, yet earning a degree is strongly recommended because it affords the individual a broad, liberal education.

The vast majority of students do earn a degree prior to enrollment in dental school. The degree is evidence of a well-rounded education with a focus in a particular area, which makes an applicant much more competitive. A degree also provides one with a major field of study on which to build if not accepted into dental school.

Application Process

Students are encouraged to begin the application process at the end of their junior year. Students must register through the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) at https://portal.aadsasweb.org. Your completed application will then be administered to the dental schools of your choice. Most schools also require a supplemental application that they will provide to you. The application deadline is different for each school. It is important to be aware of the deadlines and submit your applications as soon as possible.

Many dental schools require students to submit a composite letter of evaluation during the application process. The Medical Professions Advisement staff is available to assist students through this process.

The Dental Admissions Test (DAT) is the entrance exam for dental schools. It is a multiple choice exam that is administered by computer at Prometric Testing Centers in various locations across the country. It is not recommended to take the exam before completing the prerequisite courses.

Suggested 2-year schedule for pre-dental students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>CHEM 1110/11, BIOL 1110/11, MATH 1720/1910, ENGL 1010, PREH 1350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>CHEM 1120/21, BIOL 1120/21, ENGL 1020, ELECTIVE, ELECTIVE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students should maintain a minimum of 17-19 credit hours per semester.

* Consult your advisor before choosing a speech course

**Calculus-based physics (PHYS 2110 and 2120) may be substituted for general physics.

# These classes may be required by some dental schools.

Students are encouraged to take classes in ceramics, sculpture, and art.
What can I do now to strengthen my application to dental school?

**RELATED EXPERIENCE**

Students are encouraged to explore the field of dentistry either through employment or as a volunteer. Dental schools want to know that a student has worked in the field, observed what is involved, and still has the desire to continue in that profession. Students should gain as much experience as possible without sacrificing grades. The majority of your shadowing experience should be in the field of general dentistry.

In addition to shadowing a local practitioner, you may also consider applying to the [Summer Medical and Dental Education Program (SMDEP)](http://www.smdep.org), a six-week academically oriented program for freshman and sophomore college students. The SMDEP hosts students at 12 program sites across the county. Learn more and apply at [www.smdep.org](http://www.smdep.org).

**EXTRACURRICULARS**

- The admissions committees of dental schools are interested in seeing a range of extracurricular activities, especially those demanding a significant leadership role. Students should demonstrate their ability to balance full academic schedules with extracurricular involvement on and off campus and/or through employment opportunities. ETSU has many and varied student organizations. Students should visit the SORC located on the first floor of the Culp center or [www.etsu.edu/sorc](http://www.etsu.edu/sorc) for more information regarding extracurricular activities. It is not beneficial to simply join an organization; you must demonstrate leadership qualities!

**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

Dental schools are looking for candidates who express a commitment to community service. Students should seek volunteer projects that focus on giving back to their community, especially those in the dental field.

**ONLINE ETIQUETTE**

Please consider personal email addresses when corresponding with professional schools. First impressions are often based on correspondence and email addresses should be appropriate for professional communication. Messages and images sent electronically are reflections of judgment and potential suitability for professional careers. Inappropriate behaviors shared on an accessible venue can be viewed and shared by anyone, possibly compromising your admission to dental school.

**WATCH WHAT YOU POST!**

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**STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**

**Alpha Epsilon Delta – National Pre-Health Honor Society (AED)**

AED functions as a health pre-professional honor society encouraging excellence in scholarship. It emphasizes the importance of health education and promotes cooperation and contact among professionals.

**Oral Health Student Association (OHSA)**

The Oral Health Student Association is ETSU’s pre-dentistry organization. This group is committed to the advancement of students interested in pursuing a career in the field of dentistry. This organization holds various events from speaker series to volunteer opportunities, as well as helps to cultivate relationships with professionals in the field for shadowing opportunities.

**Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)**

HOSA provides students with knowledge and understanding of various health care careers. It also provides opportunities for students to compete against each other in various state and regional events to learn about current health issues.

**Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS)**

This organization is open to all ETSU students. MAPS aims to provide students with valuable opportunities in the community to enhance their knowledge of the health care field they are planning to enter. Opportunities include job shadowing, volunteering, and research. MAPS is also geared toward forming friendships among members.

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Visit the American Dental Education Association at [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org) for more information about the profession and about dental schools.

Find the link for AADSAS (the dental school application portal) on the ADEA site or visit the link directly if you are viewing an electronic version of this guide.

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