

Pre-Dental Fact Sheet

Prerequisite and Recommended Courses

Pre-dental students should complete certain coursework to be prepared for the Dental Admission Test (DAT). In addition, students should research schools carefully to be aware of all prerequisite courses and other admissions policies. Students should meet with a Pre-Health Advisor in their freshman year to develop their timeline for application to dental school.

PREREQUISITES OFTEN REQUIRED FOR DENTAL SCHOOL

The following courses are commonly required by dental schools:

Complete before the DAT

- General Biology I & II w/ Labs - 8 hours - BIO 201/205 & BIO 202/206
- General Chemistry I & II w/ Labs - 8 hours - CHM 203/204 & CHM 205/206
- Organic Chemistry I & II w/ Labs - 8 hours - CHM 321/322 & CHM 323/324
- Biochemistry - CHM 383 or CHM 371
- General Physics I & II w Labs - 8 hours - PHY 201/205 & PHY 202/206
 - Physics is *not* included on the DAT exam. Some students choose to take physics in the senior year. Research schools to ensure this route is acceptable.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- Some dental schools require additional courses, such as English composition, anatomy, physiology, microbiology, and biochemistry. Research programs of interest to verify requirements.
- Some pre-dental students report that courses in cell biology, biochemistry, or physiology can be helpful for the DAT.
- Courses that utilizes visual and spatial perception (drawing, sculpture, ceramics, 3-D art, etc.) can be helpful in preparation for the Perceptual Ability section of the DAT.
- Some dental schools encourage students to take courses in the arts and social sciences. Creighton students take these courses as part of the Magis Core Curriculum.
- Some schools, including Creighton School of Dentistry, may not regard credit earned through examinations (AP/CLEP/IB) as being equivalent to completing required courses, but they may accept higher-level college courses as substitutes. Research individual schools for their policies regarding AP/CLEP/IB credits for prerequisite courses.

PRE-DENTAL GROUPS AND RESOURCES

Pre-Dental Society: All pre-dental students should participate in the Pre-Dental Society. This student organization provides leadership opportunities to further explore and gain experience in the pharmaceutical profession. Learn more on CU Involved: <https://cuiinvolved.creighton.edu/organization/predentalsociety>

CU School of Dentistry: Creighton undergraduate students have the opportunity to shadow current Creighton dental students at the Creighton School of Dentistry Community Clinic. Information will be communicated via PHLC 200 and PDDS 300.

Make an appointment with dental school admissions office personnel in the spring of junior year to personalize the application process.

BECOMING A COMPETITIVE APPLICANT

Applicants to dental programs must complete a minimum of 90 credits (three years) of college coursework. Most students complete a bachelor's degree prior to entering dental school. Competitive applicants for admission have solid academic records, well-rounded co-curricular experiences, strong scores on the Dental Admission Test (DAT), supportive letters of recommendation, and can clearly articulate their reasons for pursuing the dental profession.

Selecting a Major, Grades, and GPA

Students are encouraged to choose a major where they can demonstrate strong overall academic performance, while also focusing on developing a solid foundation in the sciences. Ideally, a major should be based on student interests and should support an alternate career. Dental schools look for students who demonstrate the academic ability to handle rigorous course loads.

Grades play a crucial role in dental school admissions, reflecting a student's ability to handle challenges. Maintaining grades above a "B" is important, especially in the two years prior to applying. Grades below a "B" or having more than two withdrawals (W) may raise concerns about academic readiness or judgment.

GPA's calculated on dental school applications include coursework done at all colleges attended and all attempts at a course.

Aim for GPA's of **3.4 or above**.

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COURSE SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS

Freshmen and sophomores usually take only two natural science or math subjects each semester.

Biology:

General Biology I (BIO 201/205) and General Biology II (BIO 202/206) are typical choices for freshman fall and spring. Completion of either General Chemistry I (CHM 203) with a grade of "C" or better or Introductory General Chemistry 1 (CHM 102) with a grade of "B-" or better is required to take BIO 202.

Chemistry:

General Chemistry I (CHM 203/204) and General Chemistry II (CHM 205/206) are typical choices for freshman fall and spring. To be eligible to take General Chemistry in the freshman year, students must achieve a sufficient score on the Quantitative Assessment for New Students (QANS). Students who do not achieve a sufficient QANS score will need to complete CHM 102, with a grade of "B-" or better to progress to CHM 202/204.

Math:

Pre-dental students need pre-calculus, algebra, and trigonometry knowledge. Students who did not complete those courses in high school should take pre-calculus at a community college. NOTE: The Magis Core math requirement is satisfied by taking MTH 231 or MTH 245. Math, physics, and chemistry majors will need more than one semester of calculus and should take MTH 245.

Physics:

Students who have sufficient math and physics (a year of high school physics or a semester of college introductory physics, math through pre-calculus) are eligible to take General Physics I (PHY 201/205) and General Physics II (202/206). Prospective math, physics, and chemistry majors may take alternate sections of General Physics and additional math.

Summer Classes:

Science courses may be taken in the summer, but only when there are good reasons for doing so (not just a vague desire to "catch up") and not at community colleges. Speak with a Pre-Health Advisor about timelines.

Sample First Semester Schedule

Course sequencing may vary depending on a student's readiness

- General Biology w/ Lab (4 hours)
- General Chemistry I w/ Lab (4 hours)
- Magis Core Class (3 or 4 hours) - ENG or Critical Issues & COM 101
- Magis Core Class (3 hours) - PHL or THL
- Maybe another Magis Core Class (3 hours) - PSY or Foreign Language
- RSP Class (.5 hours)

CO-CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS

Volunteer & Service

It is important to demonstrate sustained commitment over time. Students should have service experiences in healthcare and non-healthcare settings. Check out the Schlegel Center for Service and Justice for opportunities: <https://www.creighton.edu/scsj>.

Shadowing

Students must gain knowledge of the profession by shadowing professionals in their field. It is recommended that students shadow both general dentistry and dental specialties. Creighton students have the opportunity to shadow dental students at the Creighton School of Dentistry Community Clinic.

Research

Research experience is not a requirement for admission to dental programs, but may add an extra layer to an application if the student is particularly interested in research. See the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship for opportunities: www.creighton.edu/curas.

Leadership and Teamwork

Students must demonstrate leadership and interpersonal skills. Consider initiating group projects, serving as an officer in a student organization, or working as a teaching assistant. Students must also demonstrate the ability to work collaboratively.

Manual Dexterity

Dentists do precision work on a small scale, and need excellent hand-eye coordination. Students can fine-tune these motor skills through activities like drawing, painting, sculpting, ceramics, jewelry-making, sewing, nail art, learning musical instruments, and wood carving.

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