



# PRE-DENTAL FACT SHEET

## PREREQUISITE & RECOMMENDED COURSES

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

### BECOMING A COMPETITIVE APPLICANT

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

### SELECTING A MAJOR

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 & GPA

C is an honorable grade. However, grades below B, especially within the two academic years leading up to dental school application, could interfere with admission. Faced with a likely grade below C, some students should withdraw (W) and later try for a higher grade. Students should consult with advisors as they decide. More than two W's could indicate a lack of judgment or an inability to handle challenges in dental school.

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.

### CREIGHTON PRE-HEALTH RESOURCES

Pre-Health Advisors in the Center for Advising Resources & Support are available to meet with students individually about their pre-health goals and path.

The Pre-Professional Communities assist students in exploring the dental profession, gaining experience in healthcare, and preparing for the application process. Students should participate in PHLC 200 in their sophomore year and in PDDS 300 in their junior or senior year (depending on the student's application timeline).

### PREREQUISITES FOR DENTAL SCHOOL

The following courses are commonly required by dental schools:

- General Biology I & II w/ Labs - 8 hours - BIO 201/205 & BIO 202/206
  - Complete before the DAT
- General Chemistry I & II w/ Labs - 8 hours - CHM 203/204 & CHM 205/206
  - Complete before the DAT
- Organic Chemistry I & II w/ Labs - 8 hours - CHM 321/322 & CHM 323/324
  - Complete before the DAT
- 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 is acceptable.

### ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- 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 a course in cell biology or physiology can be helpful for the DAT.
- A course that utilizes visual and spatial perception (drawing, sculpture, ceramics, 3-D art, etc.) can be helpful 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.
- 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.

## CO-CURRICULAR EXPECTATIONS

### 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.

### 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: [blogs.creighton.edu/ccsj](https://blogs.creighton.edu/ccsj)

### LEADERSHIP & 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.

### 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 opportunities 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, especially if research is of particular interest to students. See the Center for Undergraduate Research and Scholarship for opportunities: [www.creighton.edu/curas](http://www.creighton.edu/curas).

## COURSE SCHEDULING CONSIDERATIONS

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

**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 an introductory chemistry course, CHM 105, with a grade of "C" or better to progress to CHM 203.

**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 Chemistry (CHM 105) with a grade of "B" or better is required in order to take General Biology II.

**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 (PHY 202/206). Prospective math, physics, and chemistry majors may take alternate sections of General Physics and additional math.

**Math:** Pre-dental students need pre-calculus algebra and trigonometry knowledge. Students who did not complete those courses in high school should take MTH 139- Precalculus. NOTE: MTH 139 does NOT meet the Magis Core math requirement. The Magis Core math requirement will be met by MTH 231 or MTH 245. Math, physics, and chemistry majors will need more than one semester of calculus, and should take MTH 245.

**Summer:** 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 I 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, SOC or Foreign Language
- RSP Class (.5 hours)

## DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

### NATIONAL ADMISSION TEST

All applicants must take the Dental Admission Test (DAT), a national, standardized, computer-based test. The DAT is typically taken 12-15 months before starting dental school. Some students take the DAT exam after they complete organic chemistry. To do well on this exam, students need to complete general biology, general chemistry and organic chemistry and allow time for significant study and preparation.

### AADSAS & TMDSAS

Students apply to dental school using centralized application systems including AADSAS (most dental schools) and TMDSAS (some Texas programs). These application systems open annually in May for the upcoming application cycle.

### LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Students can submit up to four letters of recommendation with their application. Many dental schools require at least two letters from professors, and ask that at least one of the letters be from a professor who taught the student in a science course. Some schools require a letter from a practicing dentist. Students must research individual schools for letter requirements.

### INTERVIEWS

Many dental schools interview promising applicants. The John P. Fahey Career Center offers interview preparation assistance, including mock interviews.

## PRE-DENTAL GROUPS & 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 dental profession.

Learn more on CU Involved:

<https://cuinvolved.creighton.edu/organization/prehentialsociety>

### 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.

### HELPFUL LINKS

- CU School of Dentistry | [creighton.edu/dentistry](https://creighton.edu/dentistry)
- American Dental Education Association | [adea.org](https://adea.org)
- AADSAS | [aadsas.liaisoncas.com](https://aadsas.liaisoncas.com)
- TMDSAS | [tmdsas.com](https://tmdsas.com)