



GETTING INTO DENTISTRY

Courses

Dentistry or dental surgery courses: 5 years (4 for those with another related degree, see: medicine). In most courses the first two years are spent in biomedical study, and clinical practice is introduced gradually after that. Dental technology students study the techniques of restorative dentistry, as well as anatomy and physiology.

Alternatives with lower entrance requirements include dental hygiene; dental hygiene and therapy; dental technology; oral health sciences; dental nursing.

Applying for dentistry (see also: medicine)

The Guiding Principles for the Admission of Dental Students have been agreed by all UK undergraduate dental schools, and relate to the selection and admission of students to dental school. Entrance requirements and other details can be found on the website of the British Dental Association: <http://www.bda.org/students/>

Entrance requirements

Chemistry is essential, and a second science subject usual, though some schools look for any two strong science subjects. Increasingly, the third subject can be anything you like. A or A* grades are essential. The UKCAT (Clinical Aptitude Test) is the usual additional requirement.

Non- academic requirements

You must be able to show that you know the demands placed on dentists and are motivated to meet the challenges of the profession. In addition you must be able to work in a team and have good communication skills. Selectors like to see a wide range of interests and skills, especially those indicating a high level of manual dexterity. The latter is essential for a dentist and interests including handicrafts, model making, embroidery, art, musical instrument playing are examples.

a) Understanding the job

Dentistry is a rapidly changing, expanding profession, not just about filling teeth! There are specialisation opportunities (children's dentistry, orthodontics, complex adult restorative dentistry like crowns and bridges, hospital work) as well as research and teaching careers in universities. The main requirement is science but has a strong artistic and aesthetic component. It is allied to medicine but has good opportunities to deliver work/life balance flexibility.

b) Work experience

Shadowing or at least talking to a dentist is essential, and also the hygienist and technician roles. Contact individual practice managers, or the dental hospital in Sheffield for advice.