



GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER

616.331.8585 | www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising | C-1-120 MAK

## Dental School Fact Sheet

### What degree can I earn?

D.D.S.= Doctor of Dental Surgery OR D.M.D = Doctor of Dental Medicine (degrees are equivalent, degree awarded depends on the dental school attended)

In 2025, there were 13,657 applicants nationally for dental school and 7,073 first time/first year enrollees. There are 76 dental schools in the U.S. and 10 in Canada.

### What is the nature of this profession?

Dentists diagnose, prevent, and treat problems with teeth or mouth tissue. Many dentists own their own practice. Dentists also work in advanced dentistry, federal service and research. While the typical work schedule is 8 a.m.-5 p.m., schedules can vary to fit the desire of the dentist.

### Where can I find additional information about dentistry?

American Dental Association [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org) and [www.GoDental.org](http://www.GoDental.org)

**YOU CAN CHOOSE ANY MAJOR YOU WOULD LIKE AS LONG AS YOU FULFILL THE PREREQUISITES FOR DENTAL SCHOOL.**

**The following courses are strongly recommended as preparation for the DAT and Dental School:**

BIO 120: General Biology I	CHM 125/126: Principles of Chemistry I w/ lab
BIO 121: General Biology II	CHM 127/128: Principles of Chemistry II w/ lab
BIO 355 : Human Genetics OR	CHM 235/236: Organic Chemistry for Life Sciences I w/ lab
BIO 375/376: Genetics w/ lab	CHM 237/238: Organic Chemistry for Life Sciences II w/ lab
BMS 208: Human Anatomy	CHM 461: Biochemistry I
BMS 309: Lab in Human Anatomy (Cadaver)	PSY 101: Introductory Psychology
BMS 212/213: Intro Microbiology w/lab	SOC 101: Intro to Sociology
BMS 290/391: Human Physiology w/lab	or SOC 105: Social Problems
PHY 220: General Physics I	
PHY 221: General Physics II	

**Other suggested courses:** BMS 450, BMS 410, CMB 405, COM 201, ART 246 or 270, STA 215, CIS 150, Business & Psychology courses, additional English/Writing courses.

*Prerequisites vary and schools may or may not accept or have limits on AP/CLEP or community college credit for prerequisites. Research to make sure that you have met the prerequisites for the dental schools to which you intend to apply. See your faculty mentor or an advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center for assistance.*

**Prerequisite courses typically require a C or better grade.**

#### DAT

Applicants take the Dental Admissions Test (DAT) at least one year before starting dental school. The DAT has four different sections:

- Survey of Natural Sciences (BIO, Gen&Orgo CHM)
- Perceptual Ability Test (PAT)
- Reading Comprehension
- Quantitative Reasoning

#### Effective March 2025, new scoring system

**implemented with a 200-600 range. Older Scoring system:** Each section was scored from 1-30, with the overall score being an average of all sections.

**The national DAT average** for applicants accepted to dental school were reported with the old scoring:

**Academic Average: 20.9 PAT: 20.3 Total Science: 20.8**

#### GPA

To be considered for admission to dental school, a minimum cumulative collegiate GPA of 3.0 is typically required. A separate Science GPA is calculated based on Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Math (BCPM); as well as BCP and non-science GPAs. All attempts of each course are counted in GPA calculations if a student has repeated courses. Trends in GPA are also considered. **The national GPA averages for applicants accepted to dental school fluctuate minimally from year to year. Recently reported are: 3.68 Cumulative GPA and 3.60 Science GPA.**

## Besides a strong GPA and DAT score, dental schools look for the following:

- **Dental related Clinical Volunteer/Work Experiences** (i.e. dentist shadowing, volunteering or working in dental offices or community health clinics, etc.)
  - *NOTE: Many schools require a specified number of dental shadowing/volunteering hours. University of Michigan and University of Detroit Mercy require 100. It's best to shadow primarily in general practice offices, but good to see a variety of settings and specialties.*
  - See [www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/preprofessional](http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/preprofessional) for a list of dentists in the area
- **Extracurricular and Leadership Activities:** visit [www.gvsu.edu/studentorg](http://www.gvsu.edu/studentorg) to begin searching for organizations to join at GVSU
  - [Pre-Dental Club](#); other clubs of interest
- **Community service** [www.gvsu.edu/service](http://www.gvsu.edu/service) (subscribe to their newsletter for frequent event updates)
- **Research experience** [www.gvsu.edu/ours](http://www.gvsu.edu/ours); Department websites: Listing of research by faculty member and discipline
- Activities that improve your **Manual Dexterity** (like sculpture, jewelry making, knitting/crocheting, building models, etc. anything to practice and improve your dexterity)
- **Strong letters of recommendation-** typically, students get letters from 3 faculty whom they have had for a class (two science, one non-science) & one practicing dentist (preferably one whom you have observed or has observed you in a clinical setting)
- Your ability to pass a **criminal background check** (CBC). Dental schools will conduct a CBC before allowing admitted students to begin dental school

The Medical and Health Humanities Certificate, Intercultural Communications Certificate, and the Research Scholar Designation are great ways to attain competencies professional schools are looking for in applicants!

**Track your experiences.** Create a copy of our Preprofessional Action Plan document ([www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/actionplan](http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising/actionplan)) to log information you will need for your application process. This document has tabs for many items including your academic plan, experiences and hours, GPA calculators, potential letter writers, important contact info and more!

## Want more information?

- Discuss other options and interests with your faculty mentor and/or CLAS Academic Advisor
- Plan to attend events sponsored by the CLAS Academic Advising Center to assist you through this process while at GVSU.
- Begin research dental schools, and consider attending summer enrichment programs, webinars, and following social media to become more familiar with programs of interest.

Also follow us on social media!  **YouTube** [GVSU Pre-Professional Programs](#)

 | **Instagram** [@gvsupreprofessionaladvising](#)

To schedule an appointment with a Pre-Dental Advisor in the CLAS Academic Advising Center, visit [www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising](http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising) and click on "Schedule Appointment"