Advising for Students Interested in Dental Programs

(Updated July 2019)

**William & Mary Resources**

Pre-dental students can schedule individual advising appointments with Professor Beverly Sher, William & Mary’s Health Professions Advisor, by emailing her at btsher@wm.edu. She also provides advice by email.

To receive announcements of interest to pre-dental students, as well as information about other health professions, subscribe to the Health Careers Advising listserv. Instructions are available on Professor Sher’s website, [http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/btsher/home](http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/btsher/home).

The William & Mary Dental Society is the College’s pre-dental student group. The Society sponsors events of interest to pre-dental students, including visits by dental school representatives. The website is [https://tribelink.wm.edu/organization/dentalsociety](https://tribelink.wm.edu/organization/dentalsociety) and the email address is dentalsociety@email.wm.edu. They also have a Facebook group called "Dental Society of William and Mary."

**Books and Websites**

The ADEA website has excellent information for prospective dental students: see the GoDental section of the website, available at [http://www.adea.org/GoDental/](http://www.adea.org/GoDental/).

To learn more about dentistry, as well as about the admissions policies and requirements of the various U.S. and Canadian dental schools, consult the *ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools*. This exceptionally useful publication can be ordered online from the American Dental Education Association. It includes detailed information about the dental profession and the dental school application process as well as school-specific admissions information.

**Course Selection**

Most of the dental schools in the United States require two semesters each of introductory biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, all with lab. Many dental schools also require a semester of biochemistry. Many dental schools require two semesters of English; COLL 150 seminars and English literature and composition courses can be used to fulfill this requirement. Mathematics requirements vary; some dental schools require or recommend taking calculus or statistics.

At the College, the dental schools’ usual requirements can be met as follows, with lecture/lab combinations designated as **lecture/lab**: BIOL 203 /203L and BIOL
204/204L; CHEM 103/103L, 206/206L, 207/253 (or 209/253), 208/254, and 314; and PHYS 101/101L plus PHYS 102/102L or PHYS 107/107L plus PHYS 108/108L. Students planning to major in Chemistry or Physics should take PHYS 101/101L and PHYS 102/102L. Appropriate calculus courses include MATH 111 and 112 or MATH 131 and 132. Appropriate statistics courses include MATH 106, PSYC 301, and Biostatistics, as well as KINE 394.

Many dental schools require that students earn a C or better in the prerequisite courses.

Because dental schools’ requirements differ, and because many dental schools encourage students to take additional recommended courses in addition to the courses they require, students should consult the current version of the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools, as well as the individual schools’ websites, to learn more about the requirements and recommendations of the schools that interest them.

Important note: Dental schools often expect students to have taken the majority of the required and recommended pre-dental courses by the time they submit their AADSAS applications.

Clinical Experience

Dental school admissions committees expect competitive applicants to have spent a significant amount of time volunteering or working in dental settings. The VCU School of Dentistry’s representatives have suggested that students should acquire about 150 hours of dental experience before applying to dental school; 130 of these hours should be split between two general dentists, 10 should be spent with an orthodontist, and 10 with an oral surgeon.

Additional opportunities to acquire dental experience and learn more about the dental profession include volunteering in a free clinic that offers dental care and participating in enrichment programs such as UMDNJ’s Gateway to Dentistry program (see http://dentalschool.umdnj.edu/gateway.htm) and SHPEP (http://www.shpep.org/about/).

The ADEA has developed ethical guidelines for pre-dental students who participate in clinical activities abroad, and students should familiarize themselves with these guidelines before signing up for any international service opportunity to be sure that the things that they will be doing on the trip will not violate the ADEA guidelines. The guidelines are available in PDF form on the ADEA website, and a copy is posted in the Handouts section of Dr. Sher’s website (http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/btsher/handouts); William & Mary’s Office of Community Engagement can provide further guidance.
AADSAS and the DAT

The AADSAS application is the primary application for students applying to dental school. Dental schools recommend filing the AADSAS application as early as possible, preferable in June- don’t wait until the formal AADSAS deadlines later in the year!

The DAT is the standardized test for dental school applicants. Commercial DAT study materials have worked well for our students in the past; (expensive!) DAT preparation courses are not required for success on the exam. You should plan to take the DAT by early July of the year in which you intend to start applying to dental school.

The ADEA website and the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools have detailed, useful information on the dental school application process.