General Predental Information:

Preparing to apply to dental school is somewhat similar to preparing for medical school. There are several courses required by most dental schools, which usually include:

- General Biology I and II (BIOL196/196L, BIOL 197/197l)
- General Chemistry I and II (CHEM 121/121L, CHEM 122/122L)
- General Physics I and II (PHYS 151/151L, PHYS 152, 152L)
- Organic Chemistry I and II (CHEM 241/241L, CHEM 242/242L)
- Six Credit Hours of English

As with premedical prerequisites, there is substantial variation in courses required for each individual dental school. For example, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Dental Medicine also requires at least one semester of Biochemistry and the Boston University, Goldman School of Dental Medicine requires 18 credit hours of social science in addition to the general prerequisites listed above. As such, information provided at this web site is intended to provide general guidelines for preparation for dental school. IT IS THE STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITY TO OBTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIFIC DENTAL SCHOOLS. Information concerning specific requirements for many dental schools across the nation can be found at http://www.adea.org/DMS/InstLinks/default.htm.

In addition to completing the required coursework, the student must also take the Dental Admission Test (DAT). The DAT tests the student across four subject areas: a survey of natural sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry), perceptual ability, reading comprehension, and quantitative reasoning. Each section is scored from 1 to 30 points and an average composite score is approximately 17. The DAT can be scheduled virtually at anytime by contacting the local Sylvan Learning Center near your community. Although the DAT may be taken multiple times, there is a mandatory 90-day waiting period that must elapse between exams.

Upon completion of 90 hours of coursework, the student may apply for admission to dental school provided that all of the prerequisite course work is complete and the DAT has been taken. While this is acceptable, most dental schools prefer to consider students who will have earned their baccalaureate degree. Furthermore, although it is possible to gain admission with only the prerequisite coursework, most dental schools also recommend additional course work beyond the prerequisites. Such courses include Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology, Immunology, Genetics, Histology, Microanatomy, Public Speaking, Art, Sculpture, and Business. Computer skills are also highly desirable. Although it is possible to enroll in any major and gain admittance to dental school, many students tend to major in biology due to the extent of science curriculum required for adequate preparation.

Getting Ready to Apply to Dental School:

As with application to medical school, there is more involved in preparing to apply than satisfying course prerequisites and taking the DAT. Many of the requirements are similar
compared to application for medical school. Additional requirements along with time frames for completion are:

- Community service (completed by start of junior year)
- Three letters of recommendation (secured by end of junior year)
- Research experience, beneficial but not required (completed by start of senior year)

The student should take the DAT no later than the end of the spring semester of the junior year to ensure timely completion of the application process. Upon completion of the prerequisite course work and the DAT, the student should begin the application process by registering with Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS). Links to register with this service can be found at [http://www.adea.org/DAS/AADSAS/default.htm](http://www.adea.org/DAS/AADSAS/default.htm). AADSAS opens in mid May and students are strongly encouraged to begin and complete the application process as early as possible.

Once the application with AADSAS is complete, the student needs to submit the appropriate letters of recommendation and/or pre-health committee evaluations. This is an area of extreme variation between dental schools. Some schools require three letters of recommendation, others prefer a single evaluation from the pre-health committee, and others require both. It is the student's responsibility to investigate dental schools of interest to ensure submission of the appropriate letters of recommendations and/or evaluations. Many dental schools require an evaluation from the pre-health committee. If required, the student should schedule an interview with the committee, preferably before the end of the spring semester of the junior year. This should be done as early as possible to ensure timely completion of the application process. The student must submit official transcripts from all universities attended to AADSAS.

Applications are not considered complete until all transcripts from all universities attended are submitted. Students are strongly encouraged to complete this process as early as possible as this maximizes the probability of gaining admission into dental school.

Finally, most students interested in pursuing dental school are not aware of how much it will cost them just to apply. The registration fee for the MCAT alone is currently $200 and preparation courses for the DAT cost approximately $1300. Following completion of the MCAT, you will encounter AADSAS application fees and secondary application fees for many dental schools. The primary AADSAS fee combined with the secondary dental school application fee brings the average cost of application to approximately $150 per school. Considering that most applicants pursue 8-10 dental schools, you should plan on spending at least $1500 if you do not plan on taking a prep course and $2800 if you plan to enroll in the Kaplan Review course. Following the application process, you will encounter travel expenses for interviews. Depending on how many interviews you go on, you should plan on spending anywhere from $1500 to $3500 on airfare and possibly hotels. The bottom line is **YOU WILL LIKELY SPEND AT LEAST $3000 JUST APPLYING TO DENTAL SCHOOL.** If you don’t have the money, you should get a part time job and start saving now!
This is a great deal of information to process. As such, suggestions for completion of responsibilities for each year are provided below. Once again, these are only suggestions and the student is ultimately responsible for completion of all responsibilities in a timely fashion.

**Freshman year:**

As with any pre-professional degree plan, it is prudent for the student to take either the SAT or the ACT. Although it is currently not required for admission, this is important as the scores will be used to place students in the appropriate Math and English courses. In addition to the standardized test, prospective students should take the Chemistry placement test to determine if they are eligible to enroll in CHE121 (General Chemistry I). Information concerning when and where to take the Chemistry placement test is found at [http://sciences.unlv.edu/Chemistry/policy.htm](http://sciences.unlv.edu/Chemistry/policy.htm). Information concerning taking the Biology placement test is obtained by visiting the Biology Department Office located in WHI 101.

Why take the placement test? Without taking these exams, the student cannot enroll in the General Biology, General Chemistry, or English courses required for admission to any professional school. Instead, the student will spend at least the first semester (if not the entire freshman year) simply satisfying prerequisite course work required to take the prerequisite course work that professional schools require. The end result of failing to take the placement tests is usually the delay of acceptance to dental school by at least a year, unless the student compensates by either taking classes during the summer or having multiple semesters with exceptionally heavy course loads (19 credit hours or more).

Following completion of the placement tests, the student should begin course work toward completing the general prerequisites required by the majority of the dental schools. The student should use the General Pre-dental Information link on the left side of this web page to find information concerning general prerequisites for dental school. The student will also benefit from researching the specific prerequisites for specific programs. Information regarding specific prerequisites for many dental schools across the nation is found at [http://www.adea.org/DMS/InstLinks/default.htm](http://www.adea.org/DMS/InstLinks/default.htm).

Following completion of the freshman year, the student should plan to acquire the service experience required by dental schools. It is essential to obtain experience in the clinical environment. Seeking employment at a local dentist office or participation in shadowing programs offered by local dental schools can accomplish this. While clinical service is the most important, other social service is also viewed favorably by dental schools. Such services might include volunteering for your local Audubon Society, Meals on Wheels, or Habitat for Humanity. The goal is to not only show a commitment to medicine, but also to serving your community. Be sure to become acquainted with your supervisor, as you will likely request a letter of reference from him or her.

Finally, it is prudent for the student to begin gathering information on dental school reviews and the latest statistics concerning dental school admissions. This enables the student to make an informed decision concerning which schools to pursue when actually initiating the application process. Unfortunately on-line information concerning such issues does not currently exist. The
The student may purchase any number of books on this topic. Links to obtain such books include http://www.dentalschooladmission.com/.

**Sophomore Year:**

The student should complete the majority of the general prerequisites by the end of the sophomore year. More specifically, the student should complete at least General Biology I and II and General Chemistry I and II. Completion of the general prerequisites is essential for proper preparation for the DAT which is taken at any time during the junior year. General Chemistry I and II are prerequisites for Organic Chemistry I and II. Organic chemistry comprises as significant proportion of the biological component of the DAT. As such, it is imperative to finish Organic Chemistry I and II prior to taking this standardized test. The student cannot expect to accomplish this if General Chemistry I and II are not completed by the end of the sophomore year. Furthermore, while the general prerequisites adequately prepare the student for the physics and organic chemistry material on the examination, the biological component requires several courses beyond the general prerequisites to ensure proper preparation for the DAT. Ideally, General Biology I and II would be completed no later than the fall semester of the sophomore year in order to allow as much time as possible to take additional course work that is germane to the DAT. In the best case scenario, the student should at least enroll in Microbiology (BIO300) by the spring semester of the sophomore year.

Following completion of the sophomore year, the student should acquire additional service experience primarily at local dental clinics but also with local service organizations (Meals on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity, Audubon Society, etc.). During this service, it is essential for the student to familiarize oneself with the intimate details of the clinical service. For example, if the clinical experience entails obtaining and filing insurance information for a local clinic, it is advisable for the student to acquire information on how the insurance industry works as applicable to health care. Questions concerning such knowledge may arise during dental school interviews or interviews with the pre-health committee. Make sure acquaint yourself with supervisor for your summer volunteer work as you will likely request a letter of reference from him or her.

**Junior Year:**

You should complete all general prerequisites during this year. Hopefully, all the biology prerequisites are already satisfied and the student can pursue additional course work that will be beneficial for preparation for the DAT. Such courses include Anatomy, Physiology, Microbiology, Immunology, Genetics, Histology, and Microanatomy. If you lack exposure to computers, now is a good time to enroll in computer science courses to acquire some basic computer skills. If the student feels he/she requires additional information concerning preparation for application and interviewing for dental school, it is advisable to purchase the Ultimate Dental School Admission Guide. The link to the web site that provides this book is located at the bottom of this page.

The student will take the DAT at any time during the junior year. The student may schedule the DAT virtually at any time through a local Sylvan Learning Center. If the student fails to achieve
a desired score on the first attempt, additional attempts are possible following a 90 day waiting period. There is no limit to the number of times the DAT may be taken. Although the student can take this test at any time, it is advisable to take it as early as possible during the junior year (i.e. September). This affords the maximum number of attempts required to achieve the desired score. Many students benefit from one of the preparation courses offered by either Kaplan or the Princeton Review. The student will find links to both services at the bottom of this page. The Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) June 10th and students are strongly encouraged to begin and complete the application process as early as possible. The first step is registering with AADSAS. Links to register for and complete this application are included at the bottom of this page. The student must send transcripts for all universities and colleges attended to AADSAS to complete the primary application. **THE PRIMARY APPLICATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL THE STUDENT SUBMITS TRANSCRIPTS FROM ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED.** In addition to completion of the common application form, most dental schools also require completion of a secondary application. At this point in time, application requirements for different dental schools vary substantially. Some schools require three letters of recommendation, some require a single evaluation from the pre-health committee, some require both submission of letters of recommendation and an evaluation from the pre-health committee. The student must carefully investigate recommendation/evaluation requirements for all dental schools pursued to ensure completion of all applications.

Obtaining the evaluation from the pre-health committee is often the rate-limiting step for completion of the application. The student will minimize any delays by scheduling an interview with the pre-health committee as early as possible. To accomplish this, the student requires four components: three letters of recommendation, a personal statement indicating the students motivation and intent, a list of dental schools the student intends to apply to, and a resume summarizing all relevant work and volunteer experience. Once assembled, the student should submit these items to the pre-health committee and schedule an interview. The pre-health committee will prepare and submit the evaluation based on the packet and the interview. The sooner this interview is scheduled, the sooner the student's application is complete. The ambitious student will schedule an interview as soon as the DAT score is available and the AADSAS application is complete. This requires the student to have the letters of recommendation, personal statement, list of dental schools, and resume by mid-May of the junior year.

Link to AADSAS: [http://www.adea.org/DAS/AADSAS/default.htm](http://www.adea.org/DAS/AADSAS/default.htm)
Link to Kaplan: [http://www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com)
Link to Princeton Review: [http://www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)
Insert Link to : [http://www.dentalschooladmission.com/](http://www.dentalschooladmission.com/)

**Senior Year:**

By now all your responsibilities are coming to an end. Plan on scheduling some interviews, though many dental schools conduct a substantial number of interviews during the summer months. It is advisable to take any non-science courses recommended by dental schools during
this year. Such courses include Public Speaking, Art, Sculpture, and Business. If such course work is complete, take any courses desired for personal enrichment.