A BRIGHT SMILE CAN LEAD TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

Consider a career in dentistry! Dentists help individuals in many ways by diagnosing and treating diseases, repairing smiles, relieving pain, and giving teeth to those without. Dentists earn either a Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS) or a Doctor of Dental Medicine (DDM). Most dentists are self-employed general practitioners. Like the pathway to becoming a medical doctor, a career in dentistry is no easy task, but the results are very rewarding.

THINGS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR DECISION TO PURSUE A CAREER AS A DENTIST:

• Education and training requirements are extremely demanding
  • Must have a strong foundation of biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics
  • 4 years of college
  • 4 years of dental school
• Acceptance into dental school is very competitive
• Must pass multiple examinations and specialty examinations if appropriate.

ALTHOUGH MOST DENTISTS ARE GENERAL PRACTITIONERS, MANY WORK IN SPECIALTY AREAS:

• Orthodontics and dentofacial orthopedics
• Pediatric dentistry
• Endodontics
• Prosthodontics
• Oral and maxillofacial surgery
• Periodontics

*Includes the following counties: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Walker, Waller, and Wharton.
FOCUS ON DENTISTS

PATHWAY TO BECOMING A DENTIST

1. Dental School Preparation

Becoming a dentist begins with a college program that emphasizes science, and courses such as biology or chemistry. Although many dental schools only require 2 years of college, most dental students earn a bachelor's degree. A few applicants do, however, get accepted to dental school after several years of college. They complete their bachelor's degree while attending dental school. Individual dental schools require different courses, so it is important to check with prospective schools in order to select the best courses. All dental students are also required to complete the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). In addition to a high score on the DAT, students must have a high grade point average. Dental schools are very competitive and require exceptional academic performance.

2. Dental School

Dental school involves four years of classroom instruction and lab work in the sciences, including courses in anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and physiology. During the last two years, students treat patients under the supervision of licensed dentists. If seeking to practice in a specialty area, a student must complete two to four years of postgraduate work and complete a special exam. Exams for board certification are usually taken during dental school.
LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION

A student must pass four different examinations prior to applying for a professional dental license in Texas.

- The National Board Dental Examination (NBDE), Part One, is taken during the second year of dental school. It consists of 400 multiple choice questions and assesses a student’s knowledge of
  - Human anatomy and histology
  - Biochemistry and physiology
  - Microbiology and pathology
  - Dental anatomy and occlusion

- NBDE, Part Two, is taken during the fourth year of dental school and assesses a student’s knowledge of clinical dental topics, such as
  - Endodontics
  - Oral and maxillofacial surgery/pain control
  - Oral diagnosis
  - Orthodontics and pediatric dentistry
  - Patient management
  - Periodontics
  - Pharmacology
  - Prosthodontics

- Upon completion of dental school, a dentist candidate must successfully complete an exam from one of the following
  - Western Regional Examining Board
  - Central Regional Dental Testing Service
  - North East Regional Board
  - Southern Regional Testing Agency

- To become licensed to practice dentistry, a candidate must successfully complete the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners Jurisprudence Assessment
### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
American Dental Association: [www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)
American Dental Education Association: [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org)
American Student Dental Association: [www.asdanet.org](http://www.asdanet.org)
Texas Dental Association: [www.tda.org](http://www.tda.org)
Texas State Board of Dental Examiners: [www.tsbde.state.tx.us](http://www.tsbde.state.tx.us)

### START EARLY AND BE PREPARED!
Gaining admission into dental school is very competitive. Students should strive for the highest GPA possible to give themselves the edge needed for acceptance into a dentistry program.

The successful completion of a dentistry program requires a strong grasp of chemistry, biology, physics, and mathematics.

### PREPARING FOR A CAREER AS DENTIST*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Suggested Coursework</th>
<th>Career-Related Electives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9th Grade</td>
<td>English I</td>
<td>World Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algebra I</td>
<td>Languages other than English I</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Health/PE or Equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>10th Grade</td>
<td>English II</td>
<td>World History</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Geometry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Technology Applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>11th Grade</td>
<td>English III</td>
<td>United States History</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Algebra II</td>
<td>Communications Applications</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>PE or Equivalent</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th Grade</td>
<td>English IV</td>
<td>Government/Economics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>AP Calculus</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scientific Research and Design</td>
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</tbody>
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*Source: AchieveTexas.org
DENTAL SCHOOLS IN TEXAS

Universities

• Baylor College of Dentistry (Texas A&M University System Health Science Center)
• University of Texas Health Science Center – Dental Branch at Houston
• University of Texas Health Science Center – San Antonio Dental School

EMPLOYMENT

Most dental school graduates purchase an established practice or open a new one immediately after graduation. Others work for established dentists as associates for 1 to 2 years to gain experience and save money to equip an office of their own.