

# Getting into Dentistry as a Graduate: Key Points

## Entry requirements

- The usual entry requirements for a 5-year undergraduate degree in dentistry are a minimum of two, preferably three, science A-levels - or equivalent - at top grades (often AAA or AAB) including chemistry and at least one other from Biology, Physics and Maths. Some dental schools offer science foundation courses (a pre-dental year) for suitable candidates with a non-science background. This preliminary course in chemistry, physics and biology precedes the 5 year degree course.
- Graduate entry onto 5-year dentistry courses is possible in most cases, usually with a high 2:1 minimum in a science based degree. Some dental schools may admit graduates from any degree discipline onto the 5-year course, as long as A-levels (or equivalent) in sciences, including chemistry, have been passed with high grades.
- Dental schools including Aberdeen, King's College London, Liverpool and UCLAN now offer a 4-year 'fast track' degree specifically for graduates with a good honours degree (usually high 2.1 minimum) in a biomedically related or health professional subject. Some fast-track courses are only open to UK/EU nationals due to the way in which they are funded so always check with the dental school first.
- A few dental schools might consider a graduate with a 2.2 if they have then successfully achieved a highly graded Masters or PhD, others won't. Always check with individual schools.
- Competition for places at dental schools in the UK is strong and entry requirements vary at each. For more information about individual courses and entry requirements, search UCAS: [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). For other countries, start with [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dental\\_school](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dental_school) – check validity to practice in the UK afterwards with the BDA.

## Application procedure

- Check out entrance requirements at the dental school(s) of your choice to make sure you are eligible before applying for entry. If you don't think you meet the requirements, contact the dental school to see if they will still consider you – or what you would need to do in order to be considered.
- All UK applications must be made online via the UCAS website: [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com). If you have questions about the UCAS process, post a question on Facebook ([ucasonline](https://www.facebook.com/ucasonline)), Twitter ([@ucas\\_online](https://twitter.com/ucas_online)) or call them on 0371 468 0 468. The deadline for applications is 15th October in the year before the intended start date.
- For dentistry, applicants are restricted to 4 choices of institution on the UCAS form. Some candidates are tempted to include a different degree course in their choices as 'insurance' (eg, physiotherapy) but think VERY carefully about this. Although admissions teams cannot see your other choices, your personal statement would have to try to cover both courses – what might this imply about your commitment to dentistry? Seek help from a Careers Adviser to discuss your options.
- When applying, you will need to demonstrate clear evidence of: sound motivation; realism in your idea of what work as a dentist involves and possession of the personal qualities required (e.g. people skills, resourcefulness, dexterity, stamina and perseverance). Selectors will be particularly interested to know about any relevant and recent work experience, including voluntary work, work-shadowing, etc. For more details about writing an effective personal statement, read the Careers Service information sheet

## UCAS Personal Statements for Medicine or Dentistry.

- A good academic reference is expected. Talk to your tutor or someone else who knows you from your academic department, explaining what you think are your key selling points. Do this well in advance of the UCAS deadline - contact potential referees before the summer vacation.

- You may wish selectors to see relevant supporting materials, such as a portfolio of your observational work, your CV, or additional references if these will add strength to your application. These cannot be included with the UCAS form but can be sent separately to admissions staff in individual dental schools once you have your UCAS application number. Don't overwhelm admissions teams with additional materials as there's no guarantee that they will read them.
- Many institutions require you to sit an admissions test (usually UKCAT). This will need to be undertaken before the UCAS application deadline – check the dental school's website for more information. For further information about admissions tests, see the Career Service information sheet **Admissions Tests for Medical and Dental Schools**.
- Dental schools will interview candidates if they are sufficiently impressed by their admissions test results and/or UCAS form. For help with preparing for interviews, see the Careers Service information sheet **Preparing for Interviews at Medical or Dental School**.

### Work experience

Selection criteria vary between institutions so contact admissions teams before you apply to find out their exact selection criteria, including how much emphasis they place on your test results, UCAS form and performance at interview. One thing that will be high on their list is recent and relevant caring experience, (eg dental practice, dental, hospital or other patient-facing role) as well as work shadowing to show you understand the work of a dentist. For more work experience suggestions, read the Careers Service information sheet **Health Related Volunteering in Sheffield**

### Financial support for dental training

You should give careful consideration to how you will fund your studies. To keep abreast of any changes to the funding system, or if you have questions, contact the NHS Student Bursaries team: [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students); Tel: 0300 330 1345; Facebook (NHSstudentbursaries) or Twitter (NHSBSA\_Students).

By way of example, the following information applies to 2016-entry for English domiciled students (2017-entry onwards details yet to be confirmed):

- **4-year graduate-entry courses** - students will have to self-fund the first £3,465 towards their tuition fees in year one but can apply for a tuition fee loan via Student Finance England to cover the balance. For years two to four, the NHS will pay £3,465 each year towards tuition fees. Any fee charge above the £3,465 level must be met by the student, although they can apply for a tuition fee loan from the Student Finance England. Students may also be able to apply for a loan to help meet living costs through Student Finance England for all four years.
- **5 or 6-year undergraduate courses** - students will be responsible for their own tuition fees and living costs until the 5<sup>th</sup> year of study, although loans to cover living costs may be possible via Student Finance England for eligible students (but there's no tuition fee help). From the 5<sup>th</sup> year of study onwards, the NHS will pay your tuition fees. From year five onwards, tuition fees will be paid by the NHS Student Bursary Scheme and you have access to a non-means tested grant of £1,000 as part of their NHS Bursary award as well as apply for a means-tested NHS bursary to cover maintenance costs and a reduced maintenance loan from Student Finance England.

For advice on alternative sources of funding, some good starting points are:

[www.prospects.ac.uk/funding\\_postgraduate\\_study.htm](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/funding_postgraduate_study.htm); [targetpostgrad.com/funding](http://targetpostgrad.com/funding) and [www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/explore/study](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/careers/explore/study). Make enquiries at the dental schools themselves in case they have bursaries or other sponsorship available.

### Further information

- The Careers Service runs a talk on 'Applying for Medicine and Dentistry as a Graduate', which provides a good overview of how to approach applying for dentistry.
- The following websites contain useful information:

#### British Dental Association

[www.bda.org](http://www.bda.org)

#### General Dental Council

[www.gdc-uk.org](http://www.gdc-uk.org)

#### NHS

[www.healthcareers.nhs.uk](http://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk)

#### UCAS

[www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)