

SIXTH FORM @ UPTON



Upton Hall School FCJ



'UPTODENT' Dentistry Programme

A programme for Year 12 and 13 students considering studying Dentistry



What is UPTODENT?

Applying to study dentistry at university is a very competitive process. The UPTODENT programme aims to give you the best possible chance of securing a place at your chosen medical school. This tailored programme gives students in the Sixth form the support and experiences necessary to make a competitive application.



Who are dental schools looking for?

Dental schools want students who have commitment, perseverance, initiative, concern for others and the ability to communicate. Every dental school will highlight the particular qualities they are looking for on their websites.

- Motivation to study dentistry and genuine interest in the dental profession
- Insight into your own strengths and weaknesses
- The ability to reflect on your own work
- Personal organisation
- Manual dexterity (you could include examples of hobbies that require steady hands or good coordination)
- Academic ability
- Manage risk and deal effectively with problems
- Problem solving
- Ability to take responsibility for your own actions
- Conscientiousness
- Insight into your own health
- Effective communication, including reading, writing, listening and speaking
- Teamwork
- Ability to treat people with respect
- Honesty
- Empathy and the ability to care for others

More information about each of these attributes available below:

<https://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/making-an-application/personal-statements/>

How many dental schools can I apply to?

A maximum of four choices on the UCAS form may be made for courses which lead to a professional qualification in dentistry. You also have a fifth slot to apply for something different.

Some universities allow you to write a different personal statement for the fifth choice. But many won't. So it's normal to use it for something science-related, for example Biomedical sciences, Biochemistry, Genetics, Pharmacology, Physiology, Neuroscience, or Human Sciences

Did you know?

Lilian Lindsay (1871 – 1960) was the first British woman to qualify as a dentist and the first female president of the British Dental Association. Lilian lived at a time when dentistry was an overwhelmingly male profession. Lilian's teacher encouraged her to become a school teacher, which was regarded as a more conventional career for a woman. When Lilian insisted on the career path of dentistry, the school teacher revoked Lilian's scholarship. Scotland was more advanced than England in allowing women entry to university, so she applied to the Edinburgh Dental School. Lilian was the only female student at the time but this did not hinder her success. She was awarded the Wilson medal for dental surgery and pathology and the medal for materia medica and therapeutics in 1894.



Dental Insights and Opportunities

UPTODENT Programme Structure 2021/22

YEAR 12

	Events	In school activities
Autumn Term		Deciding on Dentistry—careers talk (by current dental student) Work experience/volunteering support
Spring Term		Making a Competitive Application UCAT & BMAT practice (school subsidised subscription for online practice materials)
Summer Term	University Open Days UCAT registration and testing BMAT registration opens (September tests)	Yr12 UCAS Preparation Work experience/volunteering support Application support

YEAR 13

Autumn Term	BMAT November Registration opens Early Entry Deadline 15 th October BMAT Testing (Early November) Dental interviews begin	Mock Interviews— all applicants will have two mock interviews with detailed feedback Interview question preparation (group work)
Spring Term	Dental Interviews continue University offers made	Ongoing support



The Medic Portal (www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/dentistry/)

The Medic Portal is an online resource for all aspiring medics & dentists. It offers free information and advice, and the 'Application Guide' covers each stage of the dental school application process, including:

- Dental Work Experience
- Choosing a Dental School
- Dental Personal Statements
- UCAT and BMAT

Work Experience

Dental schools require applicants to have an understanding of what a career in dentistry involves. It is therefore essential that applicants gain people-focused experience of providing care or service before submitting their application.

What do dental schools look for?

Some dental schools may specifically ask for a minimum number of weeks of work experience and specify the type of experience they desire, for example shadowing a dentist. Many do ask for experience to be based in a dental or healthcare setting, however they also consider the opportunities available to the applicant and recognise that other activities, such as paid or voluntary work, also allow applicants to develop the skills they need to become a dentist.

Dental schools are keen to see that you understand what it is like to work in a caring profession, and how concerns about various types of patients' needs to be appreciated. Volunteering in a hospice or charity can be used to show these attributes. Other useful activities might include reading dental journals or following news about the National Health Service. These activities will emphasise a candidate's interest in a dental career and their willingness to research aspects of dental and oral health.

Reflect on your experience

The important thing to remember is that work experience is only as valuable as the way you talk about it in your personal statement and interview. While you will be expected to show some understanding of what it is like to be a dentist, part of this will be showing that you know what it is like to work, particularly with the public. Just like in a normal job interview you may be asked things like, 'Can you provide an example of how you have worked as part of a team?'. If you have had a job in a restaurant, for instance, then you will be able to use this experience to answer the question.



Admissions Tests - UCAT & BMAT

All UK Dental schools require you to take either the UCAT or BMAT test. Both tests help dental schools assess a student's aptitude for dentistry and a future career as a dentist. The results can be used to:

- Decide whether to invite a student to interview
- Inform whether an offer should be made
- Decide between two equally ranked applicants

The UCAT test is taken at an external testing centre at the end of Yr12

The BMAT test is taken in school in the November of Yr13 (unless you are taking the September test, which is taken in a testing centre)

UCAT

The University Clinical Aptitude Test is designed to select people to be medical or dental students. It is a two-hour computer-based test that can be taken at centres across the UK and worldwide. It includes subtests involving verbal reasoning, decision-making, quantitative reasoning, abstract reasoning and situational judgement.

Dental schools use the UCAT in different ways. Some dental schools use thresholds and require that a candidate's score be over a particular threshold. These thresholds can change year on year. Every dental school will detail on their website how the tests will be used within their admissions process. Details of how universities use the test can be found here:

<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/ucat/>

Students will take the test at the end of Year 12 at a test centre.

Registration opens in May and closes by mid-September. Students can take the test from July until the beginning of October.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.ucat.ac.uk/>

BMAT (Used by University of Leeds)

The Biomedical Admissions Test is a paper-based two-hour test. The BMAT assesses mathematical and scientific knowledge alongside thinking skills and written communication. It has separate papers that test:

- Generic skills in problem solving and critical thinking
- The ability to apply the scientific knowledge typically covered in school science and mathematics by the age of 16
- The ability to select, develop and organise ideas, and to communicate them in writing, concisely and effectively.

Tests are undertaken in school in November of Yr13. Leeds Dental School is the only dental school that asks you to sit the BMAT

<https://www.admissionstesting.org/for-test-takers/bmat/>

<https://www.themedicportal.com/application-guide/bmat/>



Personal Statement

Dental schools want to see your experience, skills and attributes relevant to medicine:

- Think about what Dentistry means to you and express it in your own words
- Focus on what you have learned about being a Dentist and working in the healthcare profession from your work or voluntary experience
- Write about the knowledge you have gained about life as a dentist rather than the activity itself
- When talking about skills, explain why these skills are important for a dentistry
- Write about any volunteering that has supported your understanding of what it will be like to study dentistry, or be a dentist
- Include some information about what you like to do in your spare time and how it has developed you or helps you manage stress.

Finally, double-check your punctuation, spelling and grammar.

<https://studyinghealthcare.ac.uk/applications/dentistry/personal-statement-dentistry/>

Interviews

What do dental schools want to see?

Dental schools will have information available regarding what they are looking for at interview.

Ability to communicate

Applicants should be able to express their ideas clearly and coherently and to be able to follow a reasoned argument. Applicants who give spontaneous yet well thought-out answers to questions are more likely to impress the interviewers than those who give obviously rehearsed and 'coached' responses.

Attitude

Dental schools look to see if applicants have the right attitudes to study dentistry and be a dentist. This includes flexibility, integrity and conscientiousness.

Motivation to become a dentist

Dental schools will want to see evidence of the experiences that have influenced a decision to study dentistry. They will want to know that an applicant has an understanding of what a career in dentistry entails.

Knowledge of what is happening within dentistry

Applicants will not be expected to have a detailed knowledge but have an intelligent layperson's view on areas of dentistry that are currently within the media or in the spotlight. It is important that applicants demonstrate an awareness of scientific issues. Dental schools will want to see the applicant's intellectual potential..

Types of Interview

There are several types of interview so it is recommended that applicants learn about the different types used.

Panel interviews

Panel interviews are conducted by a group of two or more interviewers. These interviewers could be a mixture of clinical and admissions staff, a senior student or a member of the public. Usually they are around 20 to 30 minutes long, though some universities may offer longer interviews, or two interviews over two days.

Panel interviews can follow a structured or semi-structured format. In structured interviews, a specific set of questions are followed, whereas in semi-structured interviews, questions can be influenced by the interviewee's answers so the process is more conversational.

Multiple mini interviews (MMIs)

Multiple mini interviews are often referred to as MMIs and consist of a variety of different 'stations', or small interview scenarios. Each station will assess candidates for specific attributes and will only last for a short period of time. Stations can range from discussing personal statements and experience (like in a regular panel interview) to more practical scenarios that involve candidates interacting with an actor who will be playing a role. MMIs often include more creative stations, such as team work and communication stations.

Choosing a Dental School: What are the different course types?

Teaching styles

Dental schools choose the way they teach their students to meet the General Dental Council's requirements and prepare students to treat patients. Most dental schools use some small group, self directed learning alongside more traditional approaches such as lectures and seminars.

In **traditional courses**, you will learn the scientific theory first and then apply it in clinical settings later on in the course.

A course with an **integrated style** will teach scientific knowledge alongside clinical training. In integrated courses, theory is often taught to you via 'systems', where you focus on the physiology, anatomy and pathology of different human bodily systems.

Many dental schools use self-directed approaches, such as **problem-based learning**. Problem-based learning focuses on learning from clinical cases and is often associated with more frequent patient contact in the early years.

Case based learning uses dental or oral health cases to stimulate interest in a particular area of the curriculum. Working in small groups over a short period, a case is used to think about the knowledge and skills needed to address the patient case.

Enquiry-based learning starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios. Students will identify and re-search issues and questions to develop their knowledge. This style is generally used in small-scale investigations and projects, as well as research.

<https://studyinghealthcare.ac.uk/applications/dentistry/differences-between-dental-schools/>

Recommended Reading & Useful Websites



Academic/professional publications

- British Dental Journal available at: <https://www.nature.com/bdj/>
- Biological Sciences Review available in the school library and at <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/magazines/magazines-extras/biological-sciences-review-extras>
- British Dental Association (research and news) available at: <https://bda.org/>
- Dental Schools Council <https://studyinghealthcare.ac.uk/applications/dentistry/why-dentistry/>

Non-Fiction books

- *The Dental Maverick* by Tuan Pham
- *Chicken Soup for the Dental Soul* by Jack Canfield
- *Trust Me, I'm a Junior Doctor* by Max Pemberton
- *Where Does It Hurt?* by Max Pemberton
- *Blood, Sweat and Tea* by Tom Reynolds
- *In Stitches* by Nick Edwards
- *Complications and Better* by Atul Gawande
- *The House of God* by Samuel Shem
- *The Other Side* by Kate Granger
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks
- *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* by Rebecca Skloot

Fiction books

- *The Loose Ends List* by Carrie Firestone. This covers what it means to have a 'good death', surrounded by family and at a time of your choosing.
- *Eat, Sweat, Play* by Anna Kessel. This describes what it is like to be a woman in sport and how sport changes the lives of those involved- not just in terms of their physical health, but in terms of what sport can do to help your mental health and just how closely fitness is to having a lifestyle that makes you happy.
- *Bad Pharma* by Ben Goldacre. This frequently comes up on dental reading lists, but it's actually more helpful in teaching you just how closely research, medicine and money are linked.
- *Everything Everything* by Nicola Yoon. Without spoiling the plot, this covers the life of a girl kept inside by her medical conditions and just how closely health is tied to our relationships and family dynamics.
- *Unbecoming* by Jenny Downham. Covering three generations of women, this covers the whole spectrum of what it means to see a person as a whole person, and not just as a condition.
- *It Ends With Us* by Colleen Hoover. Describing the thought processes behind domestic violence, this book shows us that seemingly simple decisions are always altered by the emotions we don't always see, something that commonly translates to medicine.

Useful Websites

Ted Talks Dentistry - [Think Dental Health Doesn't Matter– Think Again.](#)

Studying Dentistry - <https://www.medify.co.uk/blog/studying-dentistry-uk>

Inside Health Podcast - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b019dl1b/episodes/downloads>