

CHAPTER 2

APPLYING TO DENTAL SCHOOL

As you prepare to apply to dental school, you will find it helpful to become acquainted with the usual educational curriculum, typical admission requirements, and the application process. This chapter offers essential information about these topics, organized into four sections: **The Dental School Program** provides an overview of the basic educational curriculum at most schools, recognizing that each dental school has its own mission and distinguishing features; **Qualifying for Dental School** reviews the typical numbers of students involved in applying to and attending dental schools and summarizes general admission requirements; **The Application Process** describes the steps in the application process; and **Special Admissions Topics** addresses the special topics of advanced standing and transferring, combined degree programs, and admissions for international students.

THE DENTAL SCHOOL PROGRAM

A common goal of all dental school programs is to produce graduates who are:

- competently educated in the basic biological and clinical sciences;
- capable of providing quality dental care to all segments of the population; and
- committed to high moral and professional standards in their service to the public.

The traditional dental school program requires four academic years of study, often organized as follows. However, since there is wide variation in the focus and organization of the curricula of dental schools, the schools' descriptions in Part II of this guide show the specifics of courses of study that won't be covered here.

■ Years One and Two

Students generally spend the major part of the first two years studying the biological sciences to learn about the structure and function of the human body and its diseases. Students also receive instruction about dentally oriented biological sciences such as oral anatomy, oral pathology, and oral histology and learn about providing health care to diverse populations. At this time, students learn the basic principles of oral diagnosis and treatment and begin mastery of dental treatment procedures through practice on models of the mouth and teeth. In many programs, students begin interacting with patients and provide basic oral health care.

■ Years Three and Four

The focus of the final two years of dental school generally concentrates on clinical study. Clinical training, which is broad in scope, is designed to provide competence in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of oral diseases and disorders. Students apply basic principles and techniques involved in oral diagnosis, treatment planning, restorative dentistry, periodontics, oral surgery, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, prosthodontics, endodontics, and other types of treatment through direct patient care. They learn to attend to chronically ill, disabled, special care, and geriatric patients and children. In addition,

The D.M.D. and the D.D.S. are equivalent degrees that are awarded to dental students upon completion of the same types of programs.

dental schools provide instruction in practice management and in working effectively with allied dental personnel to provide dental care.

During these two years, students may rotate through various clinics of the dental school to treat patients under the supervision of clinical instructors. They often have an opportunity to acquire additional clinical experience in hospitals and other off-campus, community settings. These experiences give students an appreciation for the team approach to health care delivery through their association with other health professionals and health professions students.

As dental school curricula are designed to meet the anticipated needs of the public, every school continues to modify its curriculum to achieve a better correlation between the basic and clinical sciences. There is, in clinical training, increased emphasis on providing comprehensive patient care—a method of training that permits a student to meet all the patient's needs within the student's existing levels of competence. Widespread efforts also are being made to integrate new subject matter into the curriculum and to allow students free time for elective study, participation in research, and community service.

QUALIFYING FOR DENTAL SCHOOL

At least 56 U.S. and ten Canadian dental schools will be accepting applications to the first year of their Doctor of Dental Medicine (D.M.D.) or Doctor of Dental Surgery (D.D.S.) programs in 2008-09. The D.M.D. and the D.D.S. are equivalent degrees that are awarded to dental students upon completion of the same types of programs.

■ Numbers of Applicants and Enrollees

More than 18,300 students participated in D.M.D. and D.D.S. programs in the United States in 2004-05; of those, 4,612 were enrolled as first-year students. About 47 percent of the 9,433 individuals who applied for admission were enrolled. Women comprised 44 percent of the applicants and 42 percent of the enrollees in 2004. Black/African Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, and Native Americans comprised 12.4 percent of the applicants and 11.6 percent of the enrollees in 2004. These underrepresented minority figures are expected to increase in the future. In Canada, in 2003-04, 1,802 students were enrolled in predoctoral dental school programs. Of these 444 were first-year students.

See Table 2-1 for a comparison of the number of dental school applicants to the number accepted and enrolled for the 2004-05 academic year.

■ General Admission Requirements

Dental schools consider many factors when deciding which applicants to accept into their programs. Utilizing "whole" application review, admissions committees assess biographical and academic information provided by the applicant and by the undergraduate and graduate schools the applicant attended. These committees generally also assess the applicant's results from the Dental Admission Test (DAT), grade point average (GPA), letters of recommendation, and interviews.

All U.S. dental schools require students to take the DAT (all Canadian dental schools require students to take the Canadian Dental Aptitude Test), but other admission re-

quirements vary from school to school. Differences may exist, for example, in the areas of undergraduate courses required, interview policies, and state residency requirements. Each school's individual requirements are specified in Part II of this guide.

Most schools require a minimum of two years of undergraduate education (also called "predental education"). However,

TABLE 2-1. TOTAL U.S. DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS AND FIRST-YEAR ENROLLEES, 2005-06

| | Total* | Male/Female | White | African American | Hispanic/Latino | Native American/Alaska Native | Asian/Pacific Islander | Other | Not Reported |
|------------|--------|-------------|-------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|-------|--------------|
| Applicants | 10,731 | 5,977/4,744 | 6,111 | 666 | 629 | 76 | 2,377 | 529 | 343 |
| Enrollees | 4,558 | 2,544/1,997 | 2,768 | 286 | 259 | 28 | 910 | 153 | 254 |

*Sum of applicants and enrollees by gender and by race/ethnicity do not add to total number of applicants and enrollees because a small number did not provide this information.

Source: American Dental Education Association, Applicant Analysis for the 2005 Entering Class.

dental schools generally accept students who have three or four years of predental education, and most dental schools give preference in the admissions process to individuals who will have earned a bachelor's degree prior to the start of dental school. Of all U.S. students entering dental schools, more than 90 percent have completed four or more years of college, less than 1 percent have just the minimum two-year requirement, and about 8 percent have graduate training.

Individuals pursuing dental careers should take certain science courses. However, you do not have to be a science major to gain admission to a dental school and successfully complete the program. As shown in Table 2-2, most dental students are science majors as undergraduates, but many major in fields not related to science.

■ ADEA Admissions Guidelines

As the primary dental education association in North America, the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) has developed guidelines addressing dental school admission. Although adhering to the guidelines is voluntary, member institutions (which include all U.S. and Canadian dental schools) are encouraged to follow these guidelines as they consider and accept applicants to their schools. The guidelines are as follows:

ADEA encourages dental schools to accept students from all walks of life who, on the basis of past and predicted performance, appear qualified to become competent dental professionals.

ADEA further encourages dental schools to use, whenever possible as part of the admission process, a consistently applied assessment of an applicant's nonacademic attributes.

ADEA urges dental schools to grant final acceptance only to students who have completed at least two years of postsecondary education and the Dental Admission Test. ADEA further suggests that dental schools encourage applicants to earn their baccalaureate degrees before entering dental school.

The recommendation for at least two years of postsecondary education may be waived for students accepted at a dental school under an early selection program. Such a program is one where a formal and published agreement exists between a dental school and an undergraduate institution that a student, at some time before the completion of the student's first academic year at the undergraduate institution, is guaranteed admission to the dental school, provided that the student successfully completes the dental school's entrance requirements and normal application procedures.

ADEA recommends that dental schools notify applicants, either orally or in writing, of provisional or final acceptance on or after December 1 of the academic year prior to the academic year of matriculation.

ADEA further recommends that applicants accepted on or after December 1 be given at least 45 days to reply to the offer; for applicants who have been accepted on or after January 1, the minimum response period should be 30 days; for applicants accepted on or after February 1, the minimum waiting period can be reduced to 15 days. ADEA believes that dental schools are justified in asking for an immediate response from applicants accepted after July 15, or two weeks before the beginning of the academic year, whichever comes first.

TABLE 2-2. UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS OF DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS AND ENROLLEES, 2004-05

| Predental Major | Percent of Applicants | Percent of Enrollees | Percent Rate of Enrollment |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Biological Sciences | 50.4% | 54.1% | 49.9% |
| Chemistry/Physics | 14.0% | 14.1% | 49.4% |
| Engineering | 1.7% | 2.3% | 66.3% |
| Math/Computer Science | 0.8% | 0.8% | 52.5% |
| Social Science | 0.7% | 0.8% | 54.1% |
| Business | 3.7% | 4.2% | 55.6% |
| Education | 0.7% | 0.7% | 51.4% |
| Language/Humanities/Arts | 2.7% | 3.0% | 54.1% |
| Predental/Premedical/Health-Related | 14.8% | 13.2% | 43.7% |
| Other Major | 6.5% | 6.3% | 47.6% |
| No Major/Major Not Reported | 4.1% | 3.3% | 39.4% |

Source: American Dental Education Association, Applicant Analysis Report for the 2004 Entering Class.

Finally, ADEA recommends that dental schools encourage a close working relationship between their admissions and financial aid staff in order to counsel dental students early and effectively on their financial obligations.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The dental school application process involves a number of procedures, but is easily followed once you learn what is needed. This section explains how the application process works in general, recognizing that specific details may vary somewhat from school to school. Once you have a basic framework, however, you will find it easier to adapt to these variations.

There are three main steps in the application process:

- take the Dental Admission Test (or, for Canadian schools, the Canadian Dental Aptitude Test);
- in the vast majority of cases, submit a centralized application form to ADEA's Associated American Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS) (as of January 1, 2007, four of the 56 U.S. dental schools do not participate in AADSAS); and
- acquire and submit supplemental materials such as letters of evaluation, academic transcripts, and any required institution-specific applications.

Following is a brief description of each step and whom you should contact for more information. This section concludes with advice on how to effectively manage the timing of the application process. Always remember that the application process for an individual school may vary from this general information; see Part II of this guide for specific application requirements by school.

Not sure what to write about in your essay? Consider these ideas.

The AADSAS application requires a personal essay on why you wish to pursue a dental education. Where do you start?

Put yourself in the shoes of the admissions committees that read application essays. They are looking for individuals who are motivated, academically prepared, articulate, socially conscious, and knowledgeable about the profession. What can you tell admissions committees about yourself that will make you stand out?

Here are some possible topics for your essay:

- How did you become interested in studying dentistry? Be honest! If you knew you wanted to be a dentist from the age of six, that's fine, but if you didn't, that's all right too. Explain how you discovered dentistry as a career possibility and what you have done to research the career. Admissions committees are

looking for how well thought-out your career plans are.

- What have you done to demonstrate your interest in dentistry? Have you observed or worked in dental offices? Have you talked to practicing dentists? How good of an understanding do you have of general dental practice? How do you envision yourself utilizing your dental degree?
- What have you done to demonstrate your commitment to helping others?
- Do you have any special talents or leadership skills that could be transferable to the practice of dentistry?
- Have you benefited from any special experiences such as participating in research, internships, etc.?
- Did you have to work to pay for your education? How has that made you a stronger applicant?
- Have you had to overcome hardships or obstacles to get where you are today? How has this influenced your motivation for advanced education?

These tips are provided by Dr. Anne Wells, ADEA Associate Executive Director for Application Services and former Associate Dean for Admissions, University of Louisville School of Dentistry.

■ Take the DAT

All U.S. dental schools require applicants to take the Dental Admission Test (DAT). The DAT is designed to measure general academic ability, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. This half-day, multiple-choice exam is conducted by the American Dental Association (ADA) and is administered on computer at Prometric Testing Centers in various sites around the country on almost any day of the year.

Successful participation in the Dental Admission Testing Program requires completion of at least one year of collegiate education, which should include courses in biology and general and organic chemistry. Advanced level biology and physics are not required. Most applicants complete two or more years of college before taking the exam. ADEA further suggests that, although there is no formal preparation for the test, students who have not taken a basic science course in over two years should review for the DAT.

The ADA suggests that applicants take the DAT well in advance of their intended dental school enrollment and at least one

Submitting your ADEA AADSAS application: words of advice

Before you begin the application process:

- Meet with your health professions advisor to discuss the application process including the timing of application submission and the DAT, services that may be provided by your advisor such as a Pre-Dental Committee Report or other application assistance, and potential dental schools to which you plan to apply.
- Consider the timing of the Dental Admissions Test (DAT). You may submit an AADSAS application before taking the DAT, but you should know that many schools consider you for admission only after they have received your DAT scores. However, you should also be aware that delaying the submission of an AADSAS application prior to taking the DAT can result in a late application and can reduce your chances of being accepted for admission.
- Collect copies of all transcripts and have them at hand for your reference.
- Begin to line up your evaluations/recommendations early. Be sure to plan around school vacations, when faculty advisors may not be available.

- AADSAS staff strongly recommends that you submit your AADSAS application well in advance of the application deadlines of the schools to which you are applying. AADSAS processing, including transcript verification, can take four to eight weeks.
- Remember that the AADSAS application becomes available in mid May.

While completing the application:

- When you set up your account for processing, you will identify a user name and password. Keep these in a safe yet accessible place.
- Be sure to read all application instructions before starting to fill out the application.
- Any time after you set up your account, you can go back into the application (using your user name and password) to add or change information up until the time you submit it for processing.
- Print the Transcript Matching Form from your application. Request that an official transcript from **each** college/university you have attended (even if coursework transferred and is posted to another later transcript) be sent to AADSAS. The Transcript Matching Form must be attached by each college's registrar to the official transcript and mailed by the registrar to AADSAS. AADSAS applications are not processed until all official transcripts are received.

- Remember that AADSAS accepts only official transcripts sent directly from the registrar. AADSAS does not accept student-issued transcripts.

After submitting the application:

- Be sure to check with the schools to which you are applying (and their individual entries in this guide) to find out what supplemental materials or fees are required. These must be submitted directly to the school, not to AADSAS.
- Log on to your AADSAS application to monitor the status of your application while it is being processed at AADSAS and after it has been sent to the dental schools.
- Update any changes of address or other contact information in your application at any time in the application process, even after your application has been sent to your designated schools.
- Remember that AADSAS does not retain application information from year to year. Individuals re-applying for admission to dental school must complete a new application each year, including providing new transcripts and letters of evaluation.

For further information, visit the ADEA website at www.adea.org, and select the AADSAS link.

These recommendations were provided by Dr. Anne Wells, Ms. Cynthia Gunn, and Ms. Chonté James of ADEA AADSAS.

year prior to when they hope to enter dental school. See Tables 3.2 and 3.3 in this guide for an overview of individual schools' requirements regarding the DAT and the mean score of their first-time enrollees. The individual school listings in this guide also address their requirements regarding timing and scores on the DAT. You should also note that, effective January 2007, examinees who have attended three or more DAT exams must apply for special permission to take the test again. For details, see the DAT section of the ADA website.

The exam consists of multiple-choice test items presented in the English language and requires four hours and 15 minutes for administration. The four separate parts of the exam cover:

- the natural sciences (biology, general chemistry, and organic chemistry);
- perceptual ability (two- and three-dimensional problem-solving);
- reading comprehension (dental and basic sciences); and
- quantitative reasoning (mathematical problems in algebra, numerical calculations, conversions, etc.).

Most dental schools view the DAT as one of many factors in evaluating candidates for admission. As a result, schools vary in their emphasis on the different parts of the test.

A number of procedures are used to ensure that the DAT is fair to all candidates, regardless of racial, ethnic, gender, or regional background. Further, as part of the scoring process, test question data are analyzed for fairness, and any questions that may appear differentially familiar are evaluated and, if appropriate, modified.

The DAT Candidate's Guide, the DAT Online Tutorial, and the DAT Application and Preparation Materials are available in the DAT section of the ADA website. An online tutorial is also available, as well as a link to the DAT Online Application.

The DAT program has no data on the content or efficacy of test preparation courses designed to prepare candidates to take the DAT. The Department of Testing Services urges individuals considering participating in test preparation courses to review carefully the course materials to ensure that they reflect the current content of the DAT.

Candidates applying to take the DAT must submit to the DAT testing program application information from the DAT section of the ADA website. The fee is \$170. After the application and fee payment are processed, the ADA notifies the Prometric Candidate Contact Center that the candidate is eligible for DAT testing. At the same time, the candidate will receive a letter from the ADA including instructions on how to register with the Prometric Candidate Contact Center to arrange the day, time, and place to take the DAT at a Prometric Testing Center. A current listing of testing centers is at www.2test.com. The candidate is eligible to take the test for a 12-month period. If the candidate does not call, register, and take the exam during this period, he or she will have to submit another application and fee in order to take the exam later. Candidates may apply and

TABLE 2-3. DENTAL SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN ADEA AADSAS (as of January 1, 2007)

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Alabama | University of Alabama | Massachusetts | Boston University Harvard School of Dental Medicine Tufts University | Oklahoma | University of Oklahoma |
| Arizona | Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health | | | Oregon | Oregon Health & Science University |
| California | Loma Linda University University of California, Los Angeles University of California, San Francisco University of the Pacific University of Southern California | Michigan | University of Detroit Mercy University of Michigan | Pennsylvania | University of Pennsylvania University of Pittsburgh Temple University |
| Colorado | University of Colorado | Minnesota | University of Minnesota | South Carolina | Medical University of South Carolina |
| Connecticut | University of Connecticut | Missouri | University of Missouri-Kansas City | Tennessee | Meharry Medical College |
| District of Columbia | Howard University | Nebraska | Creighton University University of Nebraska | Texas | Baylor College of Dentistry University of Texas Health Science Center-Houston University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio |
| Florida | University of Florida Nova Southeastern University | Nevada | University of Nevada, Las Vegas | Virginia | Virginia Commonwealth University |
| Illinois | University of Illinois at Chicago Southern Illinois University | New Jersey | University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey | Washington | University of Washington |
| Indiana | Indiana University | New York | Columbia University New York University State University of New York at Buffalo State University of New York at Stony Brook | West Virginia | West Virginia University |
| Iowa | University of Iowa | | | Wisconsin | Marquette University |
| Kentucky | University of Kentucky University of Louisville | North Carolina | University of North Carolina | Puerto Rico | University of Puerto Rico |
| Maryland | University of Maryland, Baltimore | Ohio | Case School of Dental Medicine The Ohio State University | Nova Scotia | Dalhousie University |

STUDENT PROFILE



GINA BETITA

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN FRANCISCO

Why dentistry?

I've wanted to become a health professional as long as I could remember. The turning point toward dentistry came when a dentist spoke to my class in high school. He told an inspirational story about a woman who never smiled before he worked on her teeth. When he finished her treatment, she looked in the mirror and was so overcome with emotion that she cried because she was finally happy with her physical appearance. That really motivated me for a career in dentistry, in which I could improve people's lives by improving their smile. Additionally, I like the fact that dentistry is such a multi-disciplinary health profession in which you can own your own business, be a doctor, a psychologist, a teacher, a problem-solver, a researcher for new products and techniques, an artist, and do all of this between 9 and 5, four days a week if you wish!

Now that I'm in dental school, I've been involved in a number of dental community outreach projects. UCSF has a high school outreach program that I helped establish whereby dental students visit high schools in under-

served counties as far as seven hours away. We teach the students about proper oral hygiene and promote opportunities that exist within the dental field. We also bring these students back to UCSF at the end of the year for an all day hands-on conference with workshops and motivational speakers. Some of the teenagers that we teach have never been to a dentist, so it's very impactful to see the difference we can make in their lives as dental health professionals. I think that dental students have a unique opportunity to reach out and I'm active in ADEA and other organizations so I can help spread this message nationwide.

What are you doing now?

I'm a fourth-year student, and I love being fully involved in clinic. Everything we learned in the first three years is coming together, and we're finally using it all. In your third year, clinic can make you nervous, but by the fourth year you feel comfortable there. My classmates and I really have fun in clinic and enjoy seeing patients.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In fourth year, everything is dynamic! You don't know exactly where you're going to end up. I'm in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, and I have a Health Professions Scholarship. I'd like to do an AEGD residency in the Air Force after graduation, and then I will have four years to serve back. After that I'd like to go back to school to earn an M.P.H. in oral epidemiology. Dental public health is gaining momentum; so many students are becoming interested in the field and I'm really excited about this change.

I'm hoping that my M.P.H degree will help me establish a career in dental public policy. Eventually, I see myself working both in private practice and public health. That's more like a 10-year plan. I'd like to work on a large scale — improving dental health care benefits and reaching the underserved — but also working on an individual basis with patients. I don't think I can get away from either one.

Advice to applicants and first-year students

My biology curriculum at UC Irvine required anatomy and histology, and they were incredibly helpful. Pathology and pharmacology classes would also be useful.

You should also get exposure in dentistry. I had a part-time job working for an orthodontist, but volunteer experience is important too. I was involved in Flying Samaritans in Baja California, Mexico. We spent one

weekend a month helping to provide dental and medical services at a free clinic. I taught kids about oral health and assisted a dentist, mostly with extractions to take patients out of pain.

Research experience is important, too. Schools like to see that you have the skills to comprehend the present literature that exists within the health fields. It broadens your educational experience and exposes you to investigative techniques that you should become familiar with as a health professional.

Be sure to visit the dental school campuses and feel them out, to find out where you feel comfortable. Explore the summer programs they offer and talk to the faculty and students. If you get an opportunity to work with a faculty researcher, he or she can help you form a network of connections to other faculty and could write you a supportive letter of recommendation to apply.

The first set of finals in dental school was the most difficult academic experience I'd ever had. It was really the support from my classmates that got me through it. As undergrads, you don't have all the same classes together, but in dental school you see all of your classmates every day. It helps to know you're all in the same boat. Dental school is challenging at first, but enjoyable after that.

What do you do for balance in your life?

I live in a beautiful city! It's not difficult to take a break here. The 1000+ acre Golden Gate Park is right next door, and on the weekends my friends and I go out and enjoy the culture, museums, restaurants, and clubs of the city. I am definitely taking advantage of living in San Francisco.

What is the last book you read?

I know you're thinking "Get away from dentistry!" but my mom gave me *Chicken Soup for the Dental Soul*. It's full of heartwarming stories.

Are you married/partnered/single? Any children?

I'm single right now. I'd like to have a family by that 10-year mark, and that seems realistic because dentistry is a lot more flexible than many health professions. I don't have to work long shifts or overnight, and when I'm in practice I can choose my own hours or work part time. I like the fact that you can have a family and enjoy such a great career.

retake the test up to three times, but they must submit a new application and fee for each re-examination, and the re-examination must be at least 90 days after the previous exam. Individuals with disabilities or special needs may request special arrangements for taking the DAT. For details, visit the Special Testing Arrangements section of the Dental Admissions Testing page of the ADA website.

The Canadian Dental Association and the Association of Canadian Faculties of Dentistry have developed the Dental Aptitude Test for applicants to Canadian dental schools. All Canadian dental schools require the test. For more information, contact the Canadian Dental Association (L'Association Dentaire Canadienne), 100 Bronson Avenue, Suite 204, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1R 6G8; 613-237-6505; www.acfd.ca.

■ Submitting an AADSAS Application

ADEA's AADSAS (pronounced "add-sass," the acronym for the Associated American Dental Schools Application Service) is a centralized application service sponsored and

administered by the American Dental Education Association (ADEA). At least 52 of the 56 U.S. dental schools including Puerto Rico participate in AADSAS. One Canadian school also participates in AADSAS.

The Application

The ADEA AADSAS application is available online at www.adea.org/aadsas, May 15 – February 1 each year.

The online AADSAS application requires you to submit information, including:

- Biographical information
- Colleges/universities attended
- Coursework completed and planned prior to enrollment in dental school
- DAT scores, if available
- Personal statement (essay)—a one-page essay in which you present yourself and your reasons for wanting to attend dental school.
- Background information—information about your personal background, including experiences related to the dental profession; extracurricular, volunteer, and community service experiences; honors, awards, and scholarships; and work and research experiences.
- Dental school designations—where you select the dental schools that you want to receive your application.

You will also be required to submit an official transcript from each college/university you have attended to the AADSAS Verification Department.

Letters of evaluation/recommendation may also be submitted with your AADSAS application.

Submission Deadlines

Applications may be submitted beginning mid May. Each school has a specific application deadline date, which is noted in the online AADSAS Application and in the individual school entries in Part II of this guide. Your completed application, transcripts, payment, and other required documents must be received by AADSAS no later than the stated deadline of the schools to which you are applying. Since many schools have a rolling admissions process and begin to admit highly qualified applicants as early as December 1, applicants are encouraged to submit their applications early.

Application Fees

Check the AADSAS website for complete information about application fees. Payment may be by check, money order, or credit card (VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express). All fees must be paid in U.S. currency drawn on a U.S. bank or the U.S. Postal Service.

AADSAS has a fee reduction program for applicants with demonstrated financial hardship. Details may be obtained on the AADSAS website.

AADSAS Schools

The schools that use AADSAS are listed by state in Table 2-3. If you are applying only to the schools that do not participate in AADSAS, you should apply directly to those schools. Individuals applying for advanced standing (i.e., graduates of non-ADA accredited dental schools) or seeking to transfer dental schools should contact the schools directly.

Please note that AADSAS serves as an information clearinghouse only. It does not influence any school's evaluation or selection of applicants, nor does ADEA recommend applicants to dental schools or vice versa.

■ Submit Any Required Supplemental Application Materials

Each school has its own policy regarding the payment of a separate application fee and the submission of additional application materials. These materials may include an institution-specific application form, documentation of dentistry job shadowing, and official academic transcripts. Part II of this guide briefly reviews each dental school's application requirements. In addition, the ADEA AADSAS application instructions include a chart that identifies the supplemental requirements for at least 52 U.S. dental schools and one Canadian dental school that are AADSAS participants.

After you have submitted all of your materials, the dental schools that wish to consider you for a place in the entering class will contact you for a visit to the campus. This visit will likely include an interview with the admissions committee, a tour of the campus and facilities, meetings with faculty and students, and other meetings and activities. When you visit a dental school, at the same time the admissions committee is evaluating you as a prospective student, you will have the opportunity to evaluate the dental school program and environment to determine if you think it would be a good fit for you and your goals.

■ Manage the Timing of the Application Process

The trick to managing the timing of the application process is summed up in two words: DON'T PROCRASTINATE! Most dental schools will fill a large percentage of their 2008 entering classes by December 2007. This means that even though schools have deadlines for completing all the application requirements that range from October 2007 to February 2008, it is not a good idea to wait until the last minute to take the DAT, submit the AADSAS application, or complete any supplemental materials requested by the schools to which you are applying.

The individual dental school information in Part II of this guide includes a timetable for each school's entering class. It is essential that you become familiar with the timetables for the schools to which you are applying and that you make plans to complete the admission application requirements on time.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS TOPICS

For those of you interested in advanced standing and transferring, combined degree programs, and admission for international students, this section briefly addresses those areas. Part II of this guide provides some additional information on these topics for each dental school, but you should contact the dental schools you are considering for more details.

■ Advanced Standing and Transferring

Advanced standing means that a student is exempted from certain courses or is accepted as a second- or third-year student. Advanced standing is offered at the time of admission to students who have mastered some aspects of the dental school curriculum because of previous training. An individual who has a Ph.D. in one of the basic sciences, such as physiology, for example, may be exempted from taking the physiology course in dental school. Some schools may also grant advanced standing to students who have transferred from other U.S. or Canadian dental schools or who have graduated from international dental schools. In these cases, applicants may be allowed to enter as second- or third-year students.

Each dental school has its own policy on advanced standing and transferring students; see the individual school entries in Part II of this guide. But it is important to be aware that most students do not obtain advanced standing and that very few students transfer from one school to another.

■ Combined Degree Programs

Many dental schools in the United States and Canada offer combined degree programs that give students the opportunity to obtain other degrees along with their D.D.S. or

D.M.D. Degrees that may be combined with the dental degree include:

- a baccalaureate degree (B.A. or B.S.);
- a master's degree (M.A. or M.S.); or
- a doctorate (Ph.D. or M.D.).

Numerous dental schools have formal combined baccalaureate and dental degree programs. Combined degree programs expand career options especially for those interested in careers in dental education, administration, and research. They may also shorten the length of training where specific agreements have been made between the dental school and its parent institution. The undergraduate and dental school portions of some combined degree programs take place at the same university, while other combined programs are the result of arrangements made between a dental school and other undergraduate colleges. Sometimes colleges independently will grant baccalaureate degrees to students who attended as undergraduates and did not finish their undergraduate education but did successfully complete some portion of their dental training.

Many dental schools also sponsor combined graduate and dental degree programs. These programs, which usually take six to seven years to complete, are offered at the masters or doctoral level in subjects that include the basic sciences (biology, physiology, chemistry), public policy, medicine, and other areas. See Table 3-5 in chapter 3 of this guide for a list of dental schools with combined degree programs. If you are interested in more information about combined degree programs, you should contact the schools directly.

■ Admissions for International Students

The term “international student” refers to an individual who is a native of a foreign country and who plans to study in the United States or Canada on a student visa. Students who have permanent residency status in the United States are not considered international students; they have the same rights, responsibilities, and options as U.S. citizens applying for admission to dental school. Generally, international applicants are considered for admission only to the first-year class regardless of previous dental training, although some schools permit international students to apply for advanced standing. (For more information, visit the American Dental Association’s website at www.ada.org, and select the links from Dental Professionals, then Licensure, then U.S. Licensure for International Dentists.)

Applicants who have completed coursework outside the United States or Canada (except through study abroad) should supply a copy of their transcripts, translated into English, plus a course-by-course evaluation of all transcripts. Application details for international applicants are contained in the ADEA AADSAS application.

Each dental school has its own policies on admission requirements for international students. However, most dental schools require international students to complete all the application materials mandated for U.S. citizens and permanent residents. In addition, international students may be asked to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or demonstrate English language proficiency. They should expect to finance the entire cost of their dental education.