

# PRE-DENTISTRY

MINOR

Dentistry is the branch of medicine that consists of the study, diagnosis, prevention and treatment of diseases, disorders, and conditions of the oral cavity and adjacent and related structures and tissues. Although primarily associated with teeth, the field of dentistry addresses many aspects of the craniofacial complex, including the temporomandibular joint.

In addition to strong critical thinking and decision-making skills, dentists must have excellent manual dexterity and the ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine with precision. They must be able to communicate effectively both in writing and orally. Dentists need the ability to identify complex problems and review related information so as to develop and evaluate options and implement solutions.

Approximately 80% of all dentists practice general dentistry, which means they treat all patients, adults and children, in many different treatment facilities and settings. In addition to private practice, today's dental school graduates can choose to work in hospital emergency rooms, conduct laboratory research, teach future dentists or work with international health and relief organizations.

To practice dentistry a student must graduate from an accredited dental school with either the Doctor of Dental Surgery or Doctor of Dental Medicine degree. They must then pass a written licensure exam as well as a state or regional clinical exam. General dentists do not need additional training after dental school but some students do opt for a residency or advanced education program. All dental specialties require additional training – usually a two- to four-year residency.

High  
School



Undergraduate  
Degree  
(four years)



Dental  
School  
(four years)

No specific major is required. The profession will be stronger and more enriched by being made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds. As long as you successfully complete the prerequisite courses you can compete for admission regardless of your major. Allow yourself to explore a wide range of different interests early in your college career. When you find something you enjoy, chances are you will do well in it. Let your curiosity be your guide.

## Perks of the Profession

### EXCELLENT INCOME

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a median annual income of \$156,240 (2018 data).

### GREAT JOB OUTLOOK

Employment of dentists is projected to grow 7% from 2018-2028 which is faster than the average for all occupations.

### SPECIALIZATION

There are nine National Certifying Boards for Dental Specialists covering 10 different specialties including orthodontics, oral and maxillofacial pathology and dental public health.

## Regional Dental Schools

- Howard University
- Medical University of South Carolina
- Rutgers, State University of New Jersey
- Temple University
- University of Louisville
- University of Maryland, Baltimore
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- University of Pittsburgh
- Virginia Commonwealth University
- West Virginia University

# JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®



## Students in the Pre-Dentistry minor must take courses in:

- Biology (6)
- Chemistry (5)
- Physics (2)
- Statistics (1)
- Calculus (1)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (1)
- Writing (1)
- Literature (1)

## Contact Information

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### OTHER LINKS

American Dental Association  
[www.ada.org](http://www.ada.org)

ADEA Dental School Explorer  
[www.dentalschooexplorer.adea.org](http://www.dentalschooexplorer.adea.org)

Explore Health Careers  
<https://explorehealthcareers.org/>

## JMU Pre-Dentistry Minor

JMU students who are interested in becoming a dentist can choose to enroll in the Pre-Dentistry minor. The minor includes courses required for admission to dental schools.

Admission to dental schools is very competitive. In addition to the prerequisite coursework, students will most likely need to

- Shadow (observe) a dentist.
- Pursue clinically related activities including paid or volunteer work.
- Complete the Dental Admission Test (DAT) – a test assessing perceptual ability, reading comprehension, quantitative reasoning based on core content from the natural sciences.
- Participate in research opportunities and/or leadership experiences.
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 grading scale). To be a competitive applicant, students generally need a much higher GPA.
- Demonstrate experience with diverse individuals – from children to elderly, including able-bodied as well as physically or cognitively challenged and those that are disadvantaged.
- Obtain letters of recommendation.

At JMU pre-professional health advisors are available to guide students in course selection and the application process along with the other activities required for a dental school applicant to be competitive.

**For the 2018 entry year, JMU students were accepted to nine different dental schools in nine states.**