



# Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School



## A Journey into **Dentistry**

Name:.....

Keep this booklet in a safe place



## **Introduction**

Dentistry and Dental Surgery cover the basic medical sciences, human disease, clinical studies and clinical dentistry. Courses involve the treatment and prevention of a wide range of mouth diseases, from tooth decay and gum disease to mouth cancer.

Dentistry is a highly competitive degree choice and students need commitment in preparing their application. The journey starts in Year 12 with a genuine interest in the profession and each student must have two weeks' work experience for their UCAS applications to be considered.

This small booklet will help you make the best application, demonstrating your understanding of the required core values and attributes needed to be a dentist. University Admission Officers are seeking to find applicants who have identified their strengths and experiences which match these values.

## Work Experience

Two weeks of work experience is obligatory for dentistry applicants. Further placements in a care setting would also give you the insight to reflect on your ability to interact with health care professionals.

- Dedicated two weeks at a dental practice and gaining an appreciation of the specialist roles that Dental Hygienists and Dental Technicians make in supporting the Dental Team
- Volunteer at a local hospital
- Volunteer at a care home, gaining an understanding of the needs of the aging population
- Reading for the blind service
- Volunteering at a specialist school for students with a broad spectrum of needs including physical disabilities, medical conditions and learning needs. For example, Sherbourne Fields School
- Volunteer work at a hospice
- Any experience in caring for a relative or being part of a network that supports a care plan for the individual
- Community work at a day centre.

It is important that you have an understanding of the role of health professionals in society and the social factors that influence health and disease.

**Remember:** It is important that you have an understanding of dental health professionals, dental hygienist, dental nurse and dental technician.



## Prior to applying

Dental schools select students with values and behaviours that align with the NHS Constitution.

- Motivation to study dentistry and genuine interest in the profession
- The ability to reflect on your work
- Personal organisation
- Academic ability
- Problem solving
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Manage risk and deal effectively with problems
- Ability to take responsibility for your own actions
- Conscientiousness
- Insight into your own health
- Effective communication
- Team work
- Ability to treat people with respect
- Resilience and the ability to deal with difficult situations
- Empathy and the ability to care for others
- Honesty.

## The Core Values

There are **six values** that all NHS staff – everyone from porters, physiotherapists, nurses, paramedics and gardeners to secretaries, consultants, healthcare scientists and phlebotomists – are expected to demonstrate:

- **working together for patients.** Patients come first in everything we do
- **respect and dignity.** We value every person – whether patient, their families or carers, or staff – as an individual, respect their aspirations and commitments in life, and seek to understand their priorities, needs, abilities and limits
- **commitment to quality of care.** We earn the trust placed in use by insisting on quality and striving to get the basics of quality of care – safety, effectiveness and patient experience right everytime
- **compassion.** We ensure that compassion is central to the care we provide and respond with humanity and kindness to each person's pain, distress, anxiety or need
- **improving lives.** We strive to improve health and wellbeing and peoples experiences of the NHS

- **everyone counts.** We maximise our resources for the benefit of the whole community and make sure nobody is excluded, discriminated against or left behind

Reflect on the statement and ask yourself questions of how you have acquired these attributes?

Think of the examples which would illustrate a real understanding of the core values.

## Action

Choosing a dental school, things to consider:

- Type of course
- Curriculum/ethos
- Size and location
- Clinical Placements
- Research opportunities
- Extra support system

Investigate

- How do dental schools assess academic potential: GCSE points / predicted A Level grades / Admission Test score? Have you the subject requirements? For GCSE, certain grades are often stipulated in English, Maths and Science (9/8).
- What are they looking for in the personal statement? Non-academic attributes (do they reflect the NHS core values and attributes). Do you have the expected work experience?
- How do they structure their interview? Offers are usually made based on the ranking of the students at interview.

Keep a diary:

- Work experience reflection on skills observed and what you gained from being in the dental practice environment
- Record of your manual dexterity skills; knitting, painting drawing etc
- Voluntary work undertaken and what did you learn about yourself?
- Articles about dentistry, and difficulties the NHS are facing
- Articles from medical / science journals about dental health care issues / biological or chemical breakthroughs / developments which will impact on dentistry
- Record of your practical laboratory work / investigations
- Record of visits to laboratories, hospitals or workshops attended
- Record of discussions with dental practitioners
- Ted Talks / FutureLearn course
- Ethical debates
- Books you have read.

Research some websites that could support your application



## Reading

- “Oxford Handbook of Clinical Dentistry” by Laura Mitchell and David A Mitchell: Outlines the essential aspects of Dentistry that is needed for clinical practice. It gives an insight into the profession, covering key skills of communication, law and ethics.
- The British Dental Journal is a peer review journal relating to all aspects of Dentistry, including current issues.
- “Delivering Better Oral Health: An Evidence Based Toolkit for Prevention,” by Public Health England – This has been put together from a variety of research relating to aspects that impact oral health in patients.
- The Medic Portal Weekly News Summary: At the start of every week the Medic Portal uploads a summary of the main news stories relating to health and medicine. To access these pieces, visit the blogs page of the website and filter by ‘medical news.’





## Admission Tests

Find out how different dental schools use the test.

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

Most of the dental schools require the UKCAT admission test and Leeds will ask for the BMAT test.

<b>BMAT</b>	<b>UCAT</b>
Leeds Dntl surgery	London (Kings) Dnstry
	Birmingham Dntl surgery
	Bristol Dnstry
	Cardiff Dnstry
	Dundee Dnstry
	Liverpool Dntl surgery
	London (QM) Dnstry
	Manchester Dnstry
	Newcastle Dntl surgery
	Queens Belfast Dntl surgery

<b>BMAT</b>	<b>UCAT</b>
Paper based	Computer based
2 hours	2 hours
Mathematics / Scientific knowledge / aptitude	Mental abilities, professional behaviour
3 separate papers	Sub-tests - VR, DM, QR, AR and SJT*
Tests taken in school	Test Centre
Registration October deadline	Registration May to mid-September
One day in November	July to beginning of October
Results to Medical Schools <a href="#">Look up BMAT online</a> Cambridge, Oxford, B&S, ICL, Keele, Lancaster, Leeds	<a href="#">Look up UCAT online</a> 24 medical schools in UK, offering standard courses

\*Each UCAT subject includes one minute of instruction time.

VR: Verbal Reasoning (22 minutes)  
 DM: Decision Making (32 minutes)  
 QR: Quantitative Reasoning (25 minutes)  
 AR: Abstract Reasoning (14 minutes)  
 SJ: Situational Judgement (27 minutes)  
 Total time of 120 minutes

# Making the Application

## Choices

- **Four** choices for dental courses
- **Fifth** non-dental choice without prejudice
- Closing date for application is **14 October** for dentistry
- **NOTE:** Students should aim to submit their application to Mrs Casey by **1 October**

## Completing the UCAS form

- Fill in the form carefully and completely
  - Declare accurately all certified and pending results
  - Explain gaps in education
- Personal statement structure
  - Address the criteria of the dental school (see appendix 1)
  - Reflective
  - Spelling
  - Confidentiality and ethics
- Advice from admissions offices
  - Do not plagiarise
  - Resit applicant?
  - Honesty
- Non-academic criteria
  - Evidence of the core values and skills required to be a dental student
  - Dental profession career awareness/insight
  - A caring contribution to the community
  - A critical coherent and informative approach to verbal and written communication
  - The value that embody and underpin good healthcare practice
- Academic reference is a personalised reference which will highlight general and specific ability.
  - Personal qualities and contribution to the school and community
  - Mitigating circumstances
  - Students preparation for the application (anything that address the specific criteria of the dental school)
  - Credibility in predicted grades

# Interviews

How to prepare:

- Know about the dental school, its course and location
- Re-read your personal statement
- Re-read any reflection diaries
- Keep up to date with news and medical developments that affect dentistry
- Think about the possible questions you might be asked and prepare a few of your own questions

Read the invite carefully, locate any documents that you might need

- Contact the dental school immediately if there are any issues
- Check the location and travel directions
- Travelling on the day? Have you allowed for travel delays?
- Create a file to take to interview:
  - Copy of original (emergency contacts etc)
  - Original certificates and/or copies
  - Photo ID
  - DBS declarations/ work experience declarations

## Key Advice

Start Early

- Interview preparation starts with your work experience. Identify what you want to achieve from it and reflect on what you did achieve (record in diary).
- Talk to dental students, open days, taster days, summer schools, online forums
- Developing confidence
  - Being well prepared
  - Activities to develop depth of thinking and response

**Example:** consider the following questions. Can your response demonstrate an understanding of dentistry as a career as well as your skills and aptitude for the subject and profession?

- During work experience what was the most important thing you learned about yourself?
- Why did you choose the dental school and university?
- What element of dentistry particularly interests you?

A skill that is required for a successful interview is ACTIVE LISTENING

- Hearing what is said
- Interpreting the message
- Evaluating the message
- Responding to the message
- Whole body listening
- Controlling emotional triggers

### **The Interview**

Interviews can be a structured panel interview or for many schools a multiple mini interview is preferred (MMI).

#### **The MMI Format**

- Several short interviews on a specific topic
- Different interviewers on each station
- Awareness of issues relevant to profession
- Communication
- Team work
- Ethics
- Short numeracy test
- Work experience

The philosophy behind the process of selecting students is seen as Values-based recruitment ( You can look these up on the NHS website).

**“Values-based recruitment is an approach which attracts and recruit’s students, trainees and employers on the basis that their values and behaviours align with the values of the NHS constitution.”** (see page 5)

#### **Interview day**

- Make sure you know the venue
- Arrive early
- Smart but comfortable clothes; if dress code follow it
- Listen carefully/ follow instruction
- Try to relax and be yourself
- Demonstrate appropriate body language
- Be calm, appropriate preparation means you have a good chance
- Be respectful
- Reflect
- ‘Competition’
- Awaiting results

## Post Interview

Students often have to wait until March before receiving the outcome of their interview. This is due to the dental schools' policy to interview all their selected students before making a decision.

The Sixth Form team will support you throughout the process.



## Personal Statement by dentistry applicant

Dentistry has been an integral part of my life; being raised by a family of dental nurses I have been exposed to the rewarding elements of the profession. Witnessing the gratitude and relief of patients, I realised how significant the role of a dentist is, both medically and psychologically. Speaking to dentists, I have learnt that it is the combination of methodical theory and clinical practice that leads to effective care for patients. Dentists, being the first line of defence for oral health hold the responsibility for identifying major ailments such as oral cancer. To provide this care is an aspiration of mine; possessing this responsibility will allow me to ensure that patients can have a healthy future. For my GCSEs, I was presented the 2016 Cardinal Newman Award for the highest achiever. Despite my dyslexia, I have continued to excel in A level study; I achieved silver in the Biology Olympiad which placed me in the top 9.7% of students across the UK. Assignments in Biology advanced my research skills; these are essential in implementing evidence-based dentistry and were refined further in the academic assignment aspect of the Realising Opportunities Programme. The ROP included a student conference where I talked to new people, engaged in team building exercises, and built confidence in establishing a rapport with others. Furthermore, Biology taught me about anatomy whilst dissections developed my hand-eye coordination. Studying Physics requires me to work systematically with others, forming presentations of our experimental results. My communication skills developed as a result which was recognised by the University of Warwick who awarded me Physicist of the Year. Alongside education, I have undertaken work experience at a general dental practice, shadowing dentists and working with nurses and receptionist. Gaining an understanding of various specialties of dentistry such as endodontics taught me the importance of sheer focus and concentration alongside the delicate intricacies of procedures like root canal treatments. It was evident that effective communication is vital between both the team and the patient, particularly during Urgent Treatment. It showed that in an unpredictable and fast-paced environment it is pivotal to sustain a calm composure whilst also reassuring the patient. My experience grew during a placement at Birmingham Children's Hospital in the intensive care unit; interacting with families and staff contributed towards my confidence in upholding a professional manner in challenging circumstances. Volunteering at the British Heart Foundation store, I have connected with people from varying social backgrounds and have learnt the value of team-work. Working with the National Citizenship Service (NCS) has contributed to my ability to communicate effectively with new people and made me realise how much I enjoy supporting others. Leading a campaign with NCS on sensory disability awareness improved my leadership ability. Also, my role as Head Boy has honed these skills as I regularly deliver my own speeches at events, and mentor young students in a science club I help run. Leading experiments and dissections has enhanced my manual dexterity whilst also giving students the confidence they lacked.

Outside of school, my determination, control and focus have also grown from my ongoing Muay Thai training. Guitar practice has improved my dexterity and timing vastly, and allows me to express myself creatively. Playing football, pool, and going to the gym regularly allows me to relieve stress and keeps me fit which is imperative, allowing me to achieve the perfect balance of work and play.

I am dedicated to studying Dentistry at University; committing to Birmingham Link and Experience Cambridge, I have gained an insight into university life. With still much to learn on my journey, I am confident I possess the transferable skills, ambition, and academic strength to flourish on such a prestigious course.

**Personal Statement by dental hygiene applicant**

Oral Hygiene has always been paramount to me; I know that poor oral hygiene can have a lasting effect on the body potentially leading to strokes, diabetes or respiratory diseases, and making more people aware of this is vital. Attending a 3-day conference at UHCW made me appreciate the work of health professionals. It gave me the opportunity to talk to undergraduates about the key qualities required to work within the NHS, as well as listening to lectures from professionals about their specialty. A lecture given by a maxillofacial surgeon motivated my aspiration to work within the dental team.

Following the seminar, I arranged work experience at a dental practice, which served the local community. It was very evident that all the members of the team were equally and highly valued. Witnessing an extraction, filling and noticing the use of instruments on fragile surfaces led me to reflect on one of the skills mentioned in the medical seminar; manual dexterity, where intricate hand movements are crucial in performing such procedures. Other key qualities I observed were trust and honesty; not only between the dentist and the dental nurse, but also between the patients and the dental team. Discussing the work with other dentists after the observation, I realised the importance of being empathetic toward patients. This allowed me to see that success in this career is highly dependent on mutual understanding between both patients and the dentist, skills I believe I have.

My Asian heritage has highlighted the importance of having a second language which led me to study A level Panjabi which would be invaluable in the work place. Having studied Psychology at AS level helped me to understand how different individuals may react to stressful situations. In Maths I have developed powers of deduction when following logical procedures. Studying Biology and Chemistry requires sound analytical skills, accuracy and critical thinking. Carrying out titrations has improved my precision skills while working in the laboratory has made me aware of the health and safety procedures necessary when carrying out such practicals. My awareness of chemical reactions and how different substances react will be very beneficial in a medical environment.

Being a co-founder of The Medical Society in my school, has enable me to research into wider medical ethics and current affairs. Discussing issues related to various aspects of the medical field has given me an in depth knowledge of different health sectors. I recently gave a presentation on how oral hygiene could be used to identify early stages of dementia, which is something I have found incredibly interesting. As a dental hygienist, being able to recognise symptoms that could lead to a development in dementia via oral health, would be a rewarding accomplishment.

Besides my academic studies, I am in the process of achieving the silver Duke of Edinburgh award pursuing the skill of henna patterns and knitting. They required great levels of hand eye coordination and fine motor control, which are essential as a Dental Hygienist. Participating in the NCS has helped me to overcome hesitation in meeting new people. This changed how I approached people and boosted my self-confidence. Currently working towards my first Dan in Mixed Martial Arts, I enrolled in golf lessons to broaden my sporting abilities.

I believe I have the motivation, enthusiasm and personal qualities to enter the challenging work of a dental hygienist. I hope to use my friendly empathetic nature in working in the dental profession providing a valuable service to all.



**Personal Statement by dental technology and oral sciences applicant**

My ambition to study hygiene therapy, has developed from my personal experience of going to the dentist throughout my childhood and the care I received. Having fillings and a brace fitted helped me understand the skills necessary for advising patients on dental hygiene. Through my work experience I have gained an understanding of the dentistry environment and the personal qualities required by the staff. Team work was vital for patients to be treated efficiently. Shadowing the main practitioner, hygienist, gum specialist and a trainee at Face Dental Practice I was able to see the range of treatment undertaken each day. As an A Level Biologist I could see how important it was to administer the correct pain relief and record the anesthetic used. I learnt about gum disease and its severity if not treated correctly, as well as the factors which contribute to it. Poor oral health such as smoking, Diabetes, stress and not brushing teeth properly or regularly, can cause plaque to build up. The hygienist was able to explain to patients how to reduce the risk of the disease. I was able to see how some patients had the opportunity to have veneers or dentures fitted. The skill to make sure they fit is reliant on the dental technician accuracy in making them, as well as the dentist expertise. Patients put a lot of trust in their dentist and I could see that everyone in the surgery needed to show empathy as well as confidence to reassure with them. In Biology I enjoy working on practical's in the laboratory. I am aware of the need to plan details of the experiment and accurately measuring and record observation. I feel confident when faced with tasks that involve manual dexterity which has developed from my creative artistic skills. Studying Sociology has given me an understanding of the sociological perspectives and how they relate to different topics. I have found the module on Family and Households interesting as changes in the dynamics of households have impacted on relationships in today's society. Something that I was very aware of whilst on work placement. Class debate gives me the opportunity to present ideas and listen to others. Religious Education gives me an understanding of philosophical and ethical arguments. I can research and plan essays to illustrate objectively the thoughts to be considered.

As part of my Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award, I volunteered at Castlewood, a large broad spectrum special primary school. The children had various needs however I spent time with a group who suffered from autism. Their difficulty in communicating was a challenge but with the different resources I could see how their sensory awareness could be developed. Using empathy and observing the skilled staff, I was able to support the team. In the sixth form I helped organise the Annual Fashion Show, raising money for a children hospice, Zoe's place. I took responsibility for leading on the set design, choreography and the models hair and makeup on the evening. It required me to ensure the evening ran smoothly and to time. As an active member of the school community I have taken part guiding primary school children with their transition to secondary school, from this experience I have gained interpersonal skills and leadership skills. This is further developed in helping GCSE Art students with their practical work. I am looking forward to studying dental hygiene therapy at university and have the determination to meet the challenge ahead.

### Personal Statement by dentistry applicant

Driven, dedicated and determined: these 3 characteristics are at the heart of every successful dental student as they will soon be responsible for restoring not only oral health, but confidence to smile too. Although I take inspiration from dentists' immense levels of skill and expertise, it was my work experience that confirmed my decision of career path. Overcoming a country-wide phobia of sitting in the dental chair takes much more than just classroom theory; dentists' devotion to both the patient's mental and oral well-being is admirable. Being a dentist is not just a job; it is a morally fulfilling lifestyle that I am focused to achieve.

My eyes were opened to many specialties of the career while shadowing a highly credited dentist. I witnessed the precision and intricacy of orthodontics; the ability to adapt when unexpected scenarios arose during upper and lower jaw molar extractions; and the importance of remaining focused for long periods of time through observing a full arc implant surgery. I noticed the immense pressure put on dentists in such an unpredictable environment and learnt, despite this, it's paramount to keep a calm composure to ensure the patient is relaxed. Observing paediatric treatment, denture fitting and care given to non-English speakers taught me how communication and support between the patients and the dental team is vital. I also spent a day in a technician's lab: it amazed me how quickly dentistry is evolving. Newly developed equipment was in use in the practice too, such as CEREC technology to create digital impressions of teeth. However, as I had imagined, behind all this, a dentist's priority is patient care. I shared the dentist's desire to turn a worried patient's fear into a smile; seeing their face light up after their treatment is enough to satisfy anyone.

The practical skills I saw on my placement closely link to my studies and love of science. Chemistry has developed my precision and ability to systematically complete tasks in teams to achieve reliable results, whereas dissections performed in Biology have enhanced my manual dexterity. Completing the 'Discover Dentistry' Future Learn course with the University of Sheffield taught me about intriguing topics such as special care dentistry and oral medicine. This gave me a deep appreciation for the work of dental students and fuelled my ambition to become one.

I am proud of my excellent organisation and time management skills that have enabled me to excel in all areas of my life. As well as being a motivated student, I balance a semi-professional sporting career: I am a GB Judo athlete and 6-time British champion. I have represented GB at multiple European and World Championships, won 12 European medals and have ranked 4th in the world at U18. My achievements put me amongst the most consistent and successful U21 British Judo players. Regularly facing such intense situations has matured my ability to stay concentrated, calm and confident under great amounts of pressure. Travelling the world with the GB Judo team provides me with so many opportunities: I gain independence, experience both highs and lows, taste diverse cultures and make life-long friends from all 5 continents.

My voluntary work has enabled me to build professional relationships with people of all ages and cultures. I have coached Judo at my local club and at the U14 England sessions. Teaching children is rewarding; when a youngster with learning or physical disabilities is able to develop their confidence through Judo it is truly magical. Being treated with respect and dignity can make a significant difference to anyone's life, especially to the elderly in care; I often visit a care home and provide company for the residents. Here I learnt that small gestures of kindness can go a long way. I am fully prepared to face the challenges that the years of undergraduate study will entice in order to achieve my goal of becoming a dentist. I am driven, dedicated and determined.

## Notes

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