

WEST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY



PRE-DENTAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES



*Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences
Canyon, TX 79016-0808*

2020

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WTAMU PRE-DENTAL PROGRAM

The Pre-dental program at West Texas A&M University was established in 1949 and takes pride in being a forerunner program for preparing students to enter the dental profession. Since its inception the program has remained a dynamic one, continually adapting its content to meet any changes in the requirements for entrance to dental schools. During the program's history the success rate for WT students entering dental school has been comparable to the national 41.2% acceptance rate. Many WT graduates, after successfully completing their doctoral degrees, return to this area to practice and are available to work with current pre-dental students. Typically there are 15-20 declared pre-dental students enrolled in the program at WTAMU.

The size of WTAMU contributes to the success of the pre-professional program. Smaller classes coupled with a concerned and accessible faculty enables our students to be recognized and engaged as individuals rather than just a number, as can be the case in larger institutions.

Students in the Pre-dentistry program complete a B.S. in Biology within the Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences. The curriculum is a mixture of Biology, Chemistry, Math, Physics, and Non-science courses which fulfills the academic requirements of dental schools in Texas and prepares students to be competitive candidates when taking the DAT and applying to dental school. Students completing the program are also provided a liberal education that provides a maximum of alternatives.

A cooperative agreement with UT Health Sciences at San Antonio Dental School allows the student to opt for a four-year degree program at WTAMU culminating with the B.S. OR a three-year program in which the B.S. degree is awarded upon completion of the first year of dental school courses. (See a more complete description later in this document.)

WTAMU Pre-Dental Advisor:

Donna M. Byers, Ph.D.
Department of Life, Earth and Environmental Sciences
Office: NSB 344
Phone: (806) 651-2574
Email: dbyers@wtamu.edu

WTAMU HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Health Professions Advisory Committee is appointed by Dr. Kevin Pond, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences. This committee will be your guide, helper, ombudsman, and evaluator during your preparation for entrance into Dental School. The current members of the committee include:

Dr. Carolyn Bouma, Chairman (Advisor for Pre-Med. & Pre- PA.)
Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences
Office: ANS 341
Phone: 651-2569

Dr. Donna Byers (Advisor for Pre-Dentistry and Pre-Med.)
Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences
Office: ANS 344
Phone: 651-2574

Dr. Nabarun Ghosh (Advisor for Medical Technology)
Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences
Office: ANS 340
Phone: 651-2571

Dr. Stephen Karaganis (Advisor for Pre-Physical Therapy and Pre-Occupational Therapy)
Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences
Office: ANS 339
Phone: 651-3870

Dr. Rex Lee (Advisor for Pre-Pharmacy)
Department of Life, Earth, and Environmental Sciences
Office: ANS 337
Phone: 651-2577

PROCEDURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Register as a Pre-dental Major during your first semester on campus by completing a Change of Major Form and designating the major code #146.
- Introduce yourself to the Pre-dental advisor and the members of the Health Professions Advisory Committee. A listing of these members is provided in this document.
- Get to know your Pre-dental advisor who can provide you with the prerequisites for the professional school of your choice. They will also greenlight you and help you select courses each semester that are on par with your degree plan.
- Remember that beginning with your freshman year it's important to maintain your over-all grade point average (GPA). It is imperative that you do well in all of your courses, particularly the sciences and pre-requisite pre-dental courses.
- Your freshman year is very important, as you have only three years in which to prove your qualifications for dental school. The four-year dental student will apply to dental school after the third year; the early admission (DEAP) student will also have but three years to prepare. Therefore, when tempted to procrastinate or lose focus rather than study, it's wise to remember that the admissions process is highly competitive. Successful candidates will be those who develop the best study skills and discipline, and this MUST begin in the freshman year.
- Dental schools are looking for individuals with high grades, high scores on the admission test (DAT) and a desire to help their fellow man. Furthermore, they also consider an individual's ability to communicate, to accept responsibility and characteristics such as maturity, organization, leadership, etc.
- None of the dental schools require a specific major. However, all of them require a minimum number of science and non-science courses. These requirements can be found in the table on page 8, or in the catalog of the dental school of your choice, which should be readily accessible online. Web addresses for Texas dental schools are listed in this document. Since there are approximately 48 to 50 semester hours of course work in biology, chemistry, math, and physics required by the dental schools, most students interested in dentistry major in either biology or chemistry.
- Be certain to check with your advisor at least once a semester, especially during your junior and senior years to keep abreast of any new developments that might arise.
- The admission committees of professional schools usually prefer that students participate in non-academic activities which demonstrate your leadership qualities and the ability to get

along well with people. They also look highly upon students who know something about the field of dentistry, particularly those who have taken the time to work with (shadow) a practicing dentist. Shadowing in more than one area of specialty is also highly favored.

- It is recommended that you join organizations on campus that are in line with your interests. Suggested organizations are Beta Beta Beta (a National Honorary Biology organization), American Student Dental Association (ASDA), Pre-Health Professions Club, Association of Math and Pure Science (AMPS) and the Student Affiliate of the American Chemical Society. In addition, you should plan to attend any departmental seminars and related programs whenever available. Not doing so can potentially detract from your education, competitiveness, and potential opportunities to gain current information in your field.

DENTAL EARLY ADMISSION PROGRAM (DEAP) - THE 3+4 PROGRAM

West Texas A&M University is part of an early admissions program with UT Health Science Center at San Antonio Dental School. This program allows students to complete the undergraduate requirements for dental school at WTAMU in three years, enter UTHSCSA dental school and complete the doctoral degree in four additional years. The student is then awarded both the B.S. and D.D.S. degrees. The program, referred to as the 3+4 Program, is designed for highly motivated students to enter in their freshman year, allowing them to complete their studies in seven rather than eight years. To be eligible a student must comply with the following:

- Admission is during the spring semester of a student's freshman year.
- An acceptable pre-entry interview by the faculty of the dental school. This interview is to determine the student's motivation for the dental profession, and his/her qualities of character and personality as they relate to the dental profession. A student may apply after 12 hrs. of college credit, but not more than 30 hrs. (including AP and transfer credit).
- The student must be a U.S. citizen and Texas resident or have a waiver for entry from the Associate Dean of the Dental School.
- The accelerated program for early acceptance requires a minimum of 90 credit hours which must include: English (one full year), Biology (two years as required for college science, including one of formal laboratory work), Physics (one year plus laboratories), Chemistry (one year of general and one year of organic chemistry with corresponding laboratories).
- The student must earn a grade of "C" or above in all required pre-dental courses, and maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) AND science GPA of 3.4.
- All three years must be attended at WTAMU. The student will attend a one week seminar at the Dental School during the summer breaks between years one and two and between years two and three. These seminars will be scheduled during the week preceding the start of fall classes at WTAMU. Summer research opportunities are available to interested students.
- The student must take the DAT before October 1 of year three and have a cumulative score of at least 19.
- The student must obtain a positive recommendation from the Health Professions Advisory Committee at WTAMU indicating the level of student's performance and an indication of good ethical behavior while at WTAMU.
- Upon successful completion of the freshman academic year at Dental School, the student will be granted a B.S. degree by WTAMU. After successful completion of the four year curriculum of the Dental School, the student will be granted the D.D.S. degree by the Dental School. Students interested in this program should contact:

**Associate Dean for Student Affairs
UT Health Science Center at San Antonio
Dental School, MSC #7906
7703 Floyd Curl Drive
San Antonio, Texas 78229-3900
dsadmissions@uthscsa.edu**

<https://www.utsa.edu/healthprofessions/deap.html>

Dental Schools of Texas

There are four dental schools in Texas all of which have a four-year accredited professional curriculum.

University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston School of Dentistry

Office of Student Affairs
7500 Cambridge St. Suite 4120
Houston, Texas 77054
Phone: 713-486-4151
Fax: 713-486-4425
Email: sod.questions@uth.tmc.edu
<https://dentistry.uth.edu/>

University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio

Dental Admissions, Office of the Registrar UTHSCSA
7703 Floyd Curl Drive
San Antonio, Texas 78229-7702
Phone: 210-567-7000
Email: dsadmissions@uthscsa.edu
<http://dental.uthscsa.edu>

Texas A & M University Baylor College of Dentistry

Office of Recruitment and Admissions
3302 Gaston Ave. Room 525
Dallas, Texas 75246-2013
Phone: 214-828-8100
Email: admissions-bcd@bcd.tamhsc.edu
<http://www.tambcd.edu>

Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine

Cyd Goldfarb, M.Ed., Director of Admissions & Recruitment
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso
5001 El Paso Drive
El Paso, TX 79905
Phone: 915-215-8000
<https://el Paso.ttuhsc.edu/sdm/>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR DENTAL SCHOOLS IN TEXAS

<u>c</u>	TAMUBCD	UTHSCH	UTSHCSA	WLHSDM
Class Size Admitted	104	100	100	
Minimum Total Credit Hours Prerequisite	90 (B.S. recommended)	90	90	90+ Baccalaureate
Junior College Credit Hour Limit		60		
General Chemistry (hr.)	8	8	8	8
Organic Chemistry (hr.)	8	8	8	8
Biochemistry (hr.)	3	3	3	3
Physics (hr.)	8	8	8	8
Biology (hr.)**†	*15 lecture+3 lab	12 lecture+2 lab 3 Micro. req.	12 lecture+2 lab	12 lecture+2 lab 3 Micro. req.
English (hr.)	6	6	6	6
Statistics (hr.)‡	3	3	3	3
Application Dates/Deadline	Sept. 30	May 1 – Oct. 1	May 1 - Oct. 1 DEAP – Mar. 1	May 1 - Oct. 30

Courses above must be completed with a grade of C or better.

*Must include Microbiology, Anatomy w/lab (4 hr) and Physiology (3 hr) (satisfied by A&P1 and A&P2)

**Must all be Biology courses for science majors (not Nursing or Public Health)

‡Must be taught in a math or statistics department

†Recommended Courses: Molecular Cell Biology, Histology, Immunology, Neuroscience, Biochemistry II

HELPFUL SITES FOR DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS

Texas Residents:

Texas residents must apply through the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS):

P.O. Box 2175, Austin, TX 78768

Phone: 512-499-4785

[Online application and application information](#)

Non-Texas Residents:

Non-residents may apply through either the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS) or the American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS):

1400 K Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005

Phone: 800-353-2237

[Online application and application information](#)

Submit applications to one only. Do not apply through both TMDSAS and AADSAS

Additional Helpful Sites When Preparing Applications:

American Dental Association (ADA)

211 East Chicago Ave.

Chicago, IL 60611-2678

(312) 440-2500

<http://www.ada.org/en/>

American Student Dental Association (ADSA)

211 E. Chicago Avenue, Suite 700

Chicago, IL 60611

(312) 440-2795

<https://www.asdanet.org/>

American Dental Education Association (ADEA)

655 K Street, NW, Suite 800

Washington, DC 20001

(202) 289-7201

<http://www.adea.org/>

Texas Dental Association

1946 S. IH 35, Suite 400

Austin, TX 78704

Phone: (512) 443-3675

<http://www.tda.org/>

GUIDELINES FOR DENTAL SCHOOL APPLICATION

Admission to dental school is highly competitive and applicants are assessed by a number of factors to judge college performance and qualifications for admission. These factors include: 1) state and national residency status, 2) cumulative college grade-point average (GPA), 3) DAT scores, 4) extramural achievements, 5) the evaluation submitted by the health professions advisor or advisory committee, and 6) a personal interview by the admissions committee.

Academic Performance

GPA and DAT score are major factors in evaluating academic performance. Also considered are:

- Consistency of grades
- Performance in required courses
- Course load per semester
- Number of colleges attended
- Discrepancies between GPA and DAT scores
- Socioeconomic and/or educational handicaps

The dental schools will require official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended. The GPA will be a composite of all college work at all colleges attended and will be calculated by year, overall and science area courses. All grades will be used in the calculations, regardless of whether courses were repeated. The average GPA for acceptance in Texas is roughly 3.57, which doesn't mean that 3.3 will eliminate someone, but the higher the GPA the better.

Competitive DAT score is also important. The graphics below show the distribution of combined DAT scores in the U.S. The average DAT score for acceptance in Texas is 20-21. (See Table 1.)

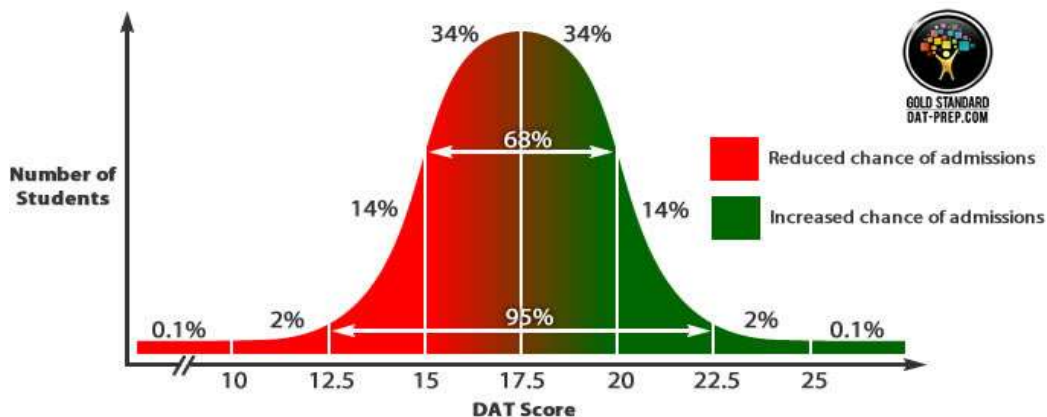


Figure 1: Typical Overall DAT Score Distribution (Approx.); No. of Test Administrations Annually = 13 000 (Approx.)

Table 1. DAT Scores by Category and Ranking (2016)

	TOP 10%	TOP 25%	TOP 50%	BELOW AVG.
ACADEMIC AVERAGE	21+	19-20	18	17
TOTAL NATURAL SCIENCES	21+	19-20	17-18	16
BIOLOGY	21+	19-20	17-18	16
GENERAL CHEMISTRY	22+	19-21	17-18	16
ORGANIC CHEMISTRY	22+	19-21	17-18	16
QUANTITATIVE REASONING	19+	17-18	15-16	14
READING COMPREHENSION	23+	21-22	19-20	18
PERCEPTUAL ABILITY	22+	20-21	18-19	17

	Science GPA	Total GPA	DAT Academic Average
Avg. of Applicants	3.26	3.39	19.2
Avg. of Matriculants	3.46	3.55	20.3

The Application

Application to dental school is made in the summer or fall of the year preceding entry. The application itself should be neat and legible. Misspellings, incorrect grammar, improper use of punctuation and hand written applications should be avoided. It may be a good idea to photocopy or download blank forms and adjust the length of your text to the space provided before completing the original application forms. By all means, keep full electronic and hard copied of the completed applications to use for review before the interview or in case an application is lost. Be certain to follow instructions carefully and completely!!

Most applications require a high quality photograph. Make arrangements to have a passport style photograph taken in plenty of time to apply. Dress professionally for the photo.

Application periods vary from school to school but generally extend from May 1 to October 1. Check the application dates carefully as applications received before the filing period may not be

processed. Dates pertaining to application procedures for schools in the U.S. and Canada can be found in the current edition of Admission Requirements of U.S. and Canadian Dental Schools. This information is revised annually and contains up-to-date information about the nature of dental education, pre-dental planning, dentistry as a career, the DAT, AADSAS (American Association of Dental Schools Application Service), ways of financing a dental education, and other aspects of the dental school application and admission process. Complete descriptive entries are presented for each of the dental schools. This information can be obtained online from the American Association of Dental Schools (AADS - see "Suggested Reading" following this section).

Timeline for Application (a minimum of 90 credits hrs pre-requisite for applying)

A. Junior Year

1. Take the DAT.
2. Complete information sheet, if required, for health professions advisory committee.
3. Obtain dental school application packets.

B. Summer between Junior and Senior Years

1. Complete and mail applications to dental schools.
2. Request your health professions advisor to mail evaluations to dental schools.

C. Fall of Senior Year

1. Retake the DAT, if necessary (90-day minimum wait to re-test).
2. Interview at dental schools.

****You should consider filing your applications early in the summer as this shows motivation on your part and increases your chances for an early interview.****

TMDSAS Timeline for application/admission process

May 1 - October 1 - Application period in year prior to desired admission. (TMDSAS Deadline)

August - School begins interviewing applicants.

October 1 - Deadline for submitting applications (TMDSAS Deadline)

December 1 - First offers of admission and deadline for receipt of DAT scores. If necessary, additional acceptances will be made again on a rolling basis.

January - School concludes interviewing applicants.

Schools participating in American Association of Dental Schools Application Service (AADSAS), a national application service, require a supplemental application to be completed after the first application is received. AADSAS applications can be accessed through AADSAS application service. Complete and submit these applications as early as possible. Note: Texas dental schools accept applications from non-Texas residents through AADSAS, however Texas residents are

required to apply directly to Texas schools through Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service (TMDSAS).

The narrative section of the application is EXTREMELY important. It should contain a logical, coherent statement that demonstrates maturity, good judgment, sincerity and a realistic view of a dental career. This is also a good place to indicate motivation about a long-standing commitment, career goals, etc. Any previous shadowing experience in a dental office, hospital, clinic or research laboratory demonstrates an interest in and knowledge of dentistry as a career and should be included. Do NOT leave this section blank!

Extracurricular activities are usually judged by the type of activity and the amount of time involved. Effective time management skills, as well as involvement in activities which demonstrate leadership and communications skills, is important to reviewers. Employment is also to be included under this category on some application forms.

SUGGESTED READING

The following is a brief list of reading materials that may be useful in preparing for dental school. Realize that this is a selected list and that new books and other materials are constantly being published. Ask your advisor about any recent resources which he or she thinks are worthwhile.

Dental School Catalogs: These are usually available online at individual dental school websites, or through your health professions advisor. If you are currently applying to dental school, make certain that you have the most recent information.

Admission Requirements of U.S. and Canadian Dental Schools (revised annually):
http://www.adea.org/GoDental/Application_Prep/The_Application_to_Dental_School_ADEA_AADSAS.aspx

Dental Admission Test Preparation Materials (revised periodically): These can be found free of charge through the ADA to students registered to take the DAT. There are also numerous DAT prep materials and courses that can be found online and purchased or taken for a fee.
<http://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/dental-admission-test/>

ADA Education and Careers: Provides information on DAT prep and other resources.
<http://www.ada.org/en/education-careers/>

ASDA Handbook (revised annually):
<https://www.asdanet.org/predental/getting-into-dental-school-handbook.aspx>

Publications of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP):
<http://www.naahp.org/Publications/TheAdvisorOnline.aspx>

INTERVIEWING AT PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS

Professional school interviews serve two major functions: 1) they improve the professional schools' understanding of the applicant as an individual, adding an additional dimension to the applicant who, up to that point, existed only on paper, and 2) it gives the applicant the opportunity to learn about the philosophy and personality of the professional school from its faculty, staff and students. The importance of the interview should never be underestimated; an interviewer's comments can greatly influence the deliberations of the admission committee.

Professional school interviews can have various formats. Some schools may have two or more interviews in which an applicant meets with a single faculty member, an upper-class student or other selected interviewers. At other institutions an interview may take place between several interviewers and several applicants at the same time. Still other institutions may use a combination of the two formats. The interview process itself may last one or two days, depending on the institution.

An applicant should remain aware at all times that they are being observed and evaluated during the entire interview period. Therefore care should be taken to monitor one's behavior toward all staff members, interact appropriately with others during meals, and avoid inappropriate displays or becoming intoxicated at a social gathering.

Awareness of the importance of the interview process understandably leads to anxiety in most students. A certain amount of anxiety is expected and understood by most interviewers. Indeed, the student who appears overconfident to the point of boredom and disinterest is suspect to some interviewers. Excessive anxiety can be reduced by planning for the interview in advance.

Preparing for the Interview

Good planning for an admissions interview is largely a matter of common sense. The following suggestions are taken primarily from professional school websites and literature to guide students as they prepare for their interviews.

Know yourself: Interviewers will likely ask questions based on the information provided in the application, so it is important to review and remember what you wrote. Be prepared to talk about the qualities you believe make you an excellent candidate for the dental profession. Include shadowing and volunteer experience, community service, and valuable lessons from mentors who helped or inspired you. Be able to articulate precisely why you want to go to dental school with sincerity and enthusiasm. Qualities that interviewers are looking for include honesty, confidence balanced with humility, and leadership skills.

Know the Host Institution: Candidates interviewing at a particular dental school should do some research and be able to defend why it is the best place for them to be. One should be able to explain with confidence whether it is because of their innovative curriculum, highly regarded faculty, national reputation, etc. The candidate should also be prepared to ask thoughtful questions to both show genuine interest and gain additional information.

Know the Profession: A candidate should research their field of interest and be familiar with current developments, research studies, innovative methodologies, etc. and be able to speak intelligently about them during the interview.

Professional Etiquette: Interviews are initiated and arranged by the professional schools. It is the candidate's responsibility to respond to the interview invitation promptly and in writing. In the case of an irresolvable conflict, for example two interview invitations for the same day, you should contact the professional school by phone or email to discuss rescheduling and confirm in writing any agreements made in that communication.

Dress to Impress: Men typically wear coats and ties; women wear dresses or well-tailored suits with either pants or skirts. It's also important to avoid dressing uncomfortably. It is never appropriate to under-dress (jeans, tennis shoes, athletic wear) or to dress or act seductively. In fact this could sabotage an otherwise qualified candidate.

Punctuality: Arriving for interviews on time is important and taken seriously. Candidates should allow ample time for the unexpected, for example, inclement weather, heavy traffic or finding available parking. In the event of an unavoidable delay, you should telephone the admissions office at the first opportunity.

Honesty and Candidness: Candidates should not try to "second guess" or patronize the interviewer by responding with answers they think the interviewer wants to hear. Some interviewers may play the "devil's advocate." Therefore, when "I don't know" is the honest response, it should be used.

Responsiveness: Many questions are chosen intentionally to initiate dialogue so an interviewer can get to know a candidate better. Conversation is difficult if the candidate's responses are limited to "yes" and "no." It's therefore wise to take advantage of opportunities for mock interviews if they're available.

Standard Questions: Candidates can expect to be asked, directly or indirectly, "Why do you want to become a dentist (physician, physical therapist, etc.)?" or "What will you do if you are not accepted to professional school?" However, candidates should also expect questions about current health-care issues such as socialized medicine, distribution of health-care specialists, critical needs or disparities in the field, etc.

Sensitive Questions: Questions that are clearly intended to discriminate because of race, religion, sex, age, etc., are not typical but sometimes posed. Also, questions may be asked which are perceived by a candidate to be prying or highly personal. If faced with such questions, candidates should feel free to respond in a way which neither antagonizes the interviewer nor compromises their own feelings or rights.

Candidate Questions: Come prepared with a list of any questions you may have about their program which will help you decide if it is the best one for you. These can include specifics about the program, their clinics, teaching style, the faculty, etc.

Stress-inducing Interviews: When students encounter interviews that they perceive to be stressful, they should demonstrate maturity and make the best of the situation by remaining calm. For example, an interviewer may say to the applicant, "I've had a bad day, you interview me." However, if you feel that an interview was unfair, you should inform the director or dean of admissions of the circumstances that same day and request another interview.

Student Interviewers: Student interviewers fill their position because they are qualified to do so. Candidates should treat student interviewers as they would faculty interviewers.

Additional Preparation: More detailed information about 1) items to pack for the interview and 2) additional interview questions to anticipate, can be found on the dental school websites and many of the additional sites listed in this document.

Follow-up: Always be gracious (not insincere) and let your interviewers know you appreciate their time and consideration for the interview. Ask for their business cards to contact and thank them for the opportunity, and ask any additional questions you may have.

YOUR SUCCESS AT WTAMU

Your academic advisor and the Health Professions Advisory Committee are ready to offer advice and guidance for you as you navigate the Pre-dental program. There are also a number of things you can do during your time at WT to ensure your own success. Your advisors must get to know you well enough to give you the best evaluation possible, and you can help them in the following ways:

1. Work with your academic advisor each semester to make sure you're staying on track.
2. Introduce yourself to each of the members of the Health Professions Advisory Committee. You should get to know them well.
3. Provide the Committee Chairman with the following information:
 - A recent photograph in color
 - A short personal statement (one or two page) on why you want to become a dentist
 - Transcripts of all College and/or University work
 - List of awards, honors, teaching assignments, organization memberships, leadership activities and such information that would help the Committee evaluate your potential as a dentist
 - DAT scores as soon as they become available
 - Evaluation forms from all the dental schools you are applying to
 - A signed waiver of access to your evaluation files
4. Whenever you feel the need to talk with someone about any phase of your work or about almost anything else, please feel free to visit with any one or all of us.
5. Keep the Committee posted on how things are going after your applications are submitted. Let us know if anything is lacking from the Committee and how your interviews turn out.
6. Please advise us when your acceptance to dental school is received. Then keep us informed during and after completion as to how you like what you are doing and any suggestions you have for advising students.

WE WISH YOU SUCCESS IN ACHIEVING YOUR GOAL!