

**Essential Requirements of Dental Education  
at the University of Washington School of Dentistry:  
Admission, Retention, and Graduation Standards**

## INTRODUCTION

The DDS degree is recognized as a broad undifferentiated degree designed to prepare competent oral health care professionals. The fundamental mission of the predoctoral dental education program is to prepare competent general practitioners that are eligible for licensure to practice dentistry. The core curriculum is designed to support the student attainment of the necessary clinical competencies for graduation. Students seeking diversification of their educational experience may do so through elective courses. The education of a dentist requires assimilation of knowledge, acquisition of skills, and development of judgment through patient care experience in preparation for independent and appropriate decisions required in practice. The current practice of dentistry emphasizes collaboration among dentists, health care professionals, and the patient.

## POLICY

The University of Washington School of Dentistry endeavors to select applicants who have the ability to become highly competent general dentists. As an accredited dental school, the University of Washington School of Dentistry adheres to the standards promulgated by the American Dental Association, Commission on Dental Accreditation. Within these standards, the University of Washington School of Dentistry has the freedom and ultimate responsibility for the selection of students; the design, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum; the evaluation of student progress; and the determination of who should be awarded a degree. Admission and retention decisions are based not only on prior satisfactory academic achievement but also on non-academic factors that serve to insure that the candidate can complete the essential functions of the academic program required for graduation.

The School has the responsibility to the public to assure that its graduates can become fully competent dentists, capable of delivering quality care in a timely manner and preserving the health and well-being of the patients they serve. Thus, it is important that persons admitted, retained, and graduated possess the intelligence; integrity; respect for the rights, privileges, and property of others; compassion; humanitarian concern; and physical and emotional capacity necessary to practice dentistry.

The School of Dentistry, as part of the University of Washington, is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or Vietnam era veteran. When requested, the University will provide reasonable accommodation to otherwise qualified students with properly certified disabilities.

## PROGRAM

Technical standards, as distinguished from academic standards, refer to those physical, cognitive, and behavioral abilities required for satisfactory completion of all aspects of the curriculum, and the development of professional attributes required of all students at graduation. The essential abilities required by the curriculum are in the following areas: intellectual (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis), motor, sensory, communication, and behavioral and social aspects of the performance of a dentist. These are attributes that each student must possess and the use of a third party for the fulfillment of these attributes is not adequate.

The University of Washington School of Dentistry curriculum requires essential abilities in information acquisition. The student must have the ability to master information presented in course work in the form of lectures, demonstrations, independent study, clinical experiences, written material, and projected images. The student must have the ability to complete reading assignments and to search and evaluate scientific literature. Further, the student must be able to complete computer-based assignments and use the computer for searching, recording, storing, and retrieving information.

The student must have the cognitive abilities necessary to master relevant content in the basic, behavioral, dental, and clinical sciences at a level deemed appropriate by the faculty. These skills may be described as the ability to recall, comprehend, integrate, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate material. He/she must be able to report and read information accurately. He/she must be able to discern and comprehend dimensional and spatial relationships of structures, and be able to develop critical thinking, problem solving, and decision making skills appropriate to the practice of dentistry. The student must have the ability to acquire the skills necessary for the independent delivery of acceptable patient care.

The student must have the ability to take a medical history, measure vital signs, expose and interpret radiographs, and perform a clinical examination. Such tasks require the ability to communicate with the patient. The student must also be capable of perceiving the signs of disease as manifested through the clinical examination. Such information is derived from direct visual examination; images of the head, neck, and oral cavity; palpable changes in the head and neck region; and auditory information.

The student must have the manual dexterity to deliver patient care services. This includes grasping, fingering, pinching, pushing, pulling, holding, extending, twisting, rotating, and cutting skills. The size of and limited access to the oral cavity requires that students have the visual ability necessary for the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of the full spectrum of oral conditions.

For the safety and protection of the patients, the student must be able to perform basic life support and first aid including CPR and function in an emergency situation. The protection of the patients and students also necessitates the ability to use sterile techniques and universal precautions and to maintain personal hygiene. The student must present with the physical, medical, and emotional fitness required to protect the health and safety of the patients, faculty, staff, and students.

The student must be able to communicate effectively with patients and family, dentists, physicians, and other members of the health care team. The communication skills require the ability to assess all information including the recognition of the significance of non-verbal responses and immediate assessment of information provided to allow for appropriate, well-focused follow-up inquiry. The student must be capable of responsive, empathetic listening to establish rapport in a way that promotes openness on issues of concern and sensitivity to potential cultural differences.

The student must be able to process and communicate information on the patient's status with accuracy in a timely manner. This information then needs to be communicated in a succinct yet comprehensive manner to all parties of concern. Written or dictated patient assessments, prescriptions, and patient records must be complete and accurate. The appropriate communication may also rely on the student's ability to make a correct judgment in seeking supervision and consultation in a timely manner.

The student must be able to understand the basis and content of dental ethics. He/she must possess attributes that include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, responsibility, and tolerance. The student must possess the emotional health required for full utilization of his/her intellectual abilities, the exercise of good judgment, the prompt completion of all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and the development of mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. The student must be able to manage patients with a range of moods and behaviors in a tactful, compassionate, congenial, and personal manner. The student must be able to tolerate physically demanding workloads, to function effectively under stress, and to accept criticism. He/she must be able to adapt to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of patients.

The student must be able to interact productively, cooperatively, and in a collegial manner with individuals of differing personalities and backgrounds, and be an active contributor to the process of providing health care by demonstrating the ability to engage in teamwork and team building. The student must demonstrate the ability to identify and set priorities in patient management and in all aspects of his/her professional work. The student must be punctual and perform work in a timely manner. The student must exhibit the maturity, commitment, and dedication expected of a health care professional to whom patients entrust their health, safety, and well being.

The student must be able to deliver services to all patient populations including children, adolescents, adults, developmentally disabled persons, medically compromised persons, and vulnerable adults.

These essential functions of dental education identify the requirements for admission, retention, and graduation of applicants and students, respectively, at the University of Washington School of Dentistry. Graduates are expected to be qualified to enter the practice of dentistry. It is the responsibility of the student with disabilities to request those accommodations that he/she feels are reasonable and are needed to execute the essential requirements described.