

Aspiring Dentists

Reigate College



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www.reigate.ac.uk

The duties of a Dentist*

Most dentists are self-employed and work as general dental practitioners (GDPs) providing dental care to the public. You could do this work privately or for the NHS, or both.

You'll keep records for each patient. You'll tell them how to care for their teeth and provide treatment for any problems that occur. Your services might include:

- dental treatments like fillings, extractions and fitting dentures and bridges
- teeth whitening
- taking X-rays and giving local anaesthetics
- referring patients to a dental hygienist or dental therapist

If you're running your own practice, you'll be responsible for the day-to-day management of the business and dental team.

As well as general dental practice, you could also work in:

- the community dental service (CDS) – providing treatment to people with special needs, young children and the elderly
- hospitals – carrying out specialised dental work, such as restorative dentistry, orthodontics and oral surgery
- dental public health - improving the dental health of your local area, rather than treating individuals
- the armed forces – providing dental treatment for services personnel, including those in combat zones

You'll use a range of dental and surgical techniques and instruments. In a hospital you'll carry out some procedures in an operating theatre.

You'll work with other dentists, NHS professionals, government departments and related agencies.

Is dentistry the right career path for you?

- A**rrange work experience
- S**peak to health care professionals
- P**articipate in open days, workshops, clubs
- I**nternet Research
- R**ead about latest dental advances / news / ethical issues
- E**ducation: GCSE and A Level requirements

Arrange Work Experience

You will be required to have done at least 2-3 weeks relevant work experience before you submit your application in the September of Year 13. This can be at:

General Dental Practice
Private Dentists
Orthodontists
Dental Hospitals
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Additional work experience volunteering with children, the disabled and the elderly, would be beneficial.

Volunteering Opportunities

- Volunteering Website <https://do-it.org/>
- British Red Cross - <http://www.redcross.org.uk/Get-involved/Volunteer>
- St John's Ambulance <http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/volunteer.aspx>
- Royal Voluntary Service <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/>
- Mayday NHS Volunteering http://www.maydayhospital.org.uk/page_pageid_24.html

Keep a diary of ALL experiences that would be relevant to your application to medical school

- A** **Action** (what you did/saw)
- B** **Benefit** (what you gained/learnt from the experience)
- C** **Course Relevance** (relate it back to the course requirements)

Nursing applicants look at the 6Cs (see below) when they are thinking about their experience/skills/future careers and it would be good to consider how your experiences can fit into these when applying to study dentistry:

The 6Cs:

Care

Care defines nurses and their work. People receiving care expect it to be consistently right for them throughout every stage of their life.

Compassion

Compassion is how care is delivered through relationships based on empathy, respect and dignity. It can also be described as intelligent kindness, and is central to how people perceive their care.

Competence

Competence means nurses must be able to understand an individual's health and social needs. Their expertise, clinical and technical knowledge for delivering care and treatment must be based on research and evidence.

Communication

Communication is central to successful caring relationships and team working. Listening is as important as what nurses' say and do and critical to decisions about a patient.

Courage

Courage enables nurses to do the right thing for the people. It means speaking up when there are concerns and having the personal strength and vision to innovate and embrace new ways of working.

Commitment

A commitment to patients and the public is essential to the working life of a nurse.

Speak to Healthcare Professionals

Don't be shy! Contact your Dental surgery and ask if you can speak to the practise Manager, Dentist or Dental Nurse about a career in dentistry.

Ask family, friends and acquaintances if they know anyone who works in the profession in any capacity who would be happy to talk to you. Think about what you would ask them – workload, ethical issues, working environment.

Participate in open days, workshops and clubs

Schools, Colleges and universities will be offering 'information sessions' for aspiring dentists, sign up for all opportunities!

Reigate College has a medical discussion group to enable students to talk about ethical issues and medical advances and news. If your new school/college does not have a similar club ask about setting one up with a member of staff. It strengthens communication skills, provides an insight into the professions and provides lots of useful material to talk about when you are interviewed by a school of dentistry.

Sports Clubs: Evidences teamwork, commitment and communication skills and also ensure that you are looking after your own physical and mental health. Both of which will be of importance throughout your training and career as a medical professional.

Internet Research

Research, research, research!

<https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/job-profiles/dentist#>

<https://bda.org/students/careers-education/becoming-a-dentist>

<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team/dentist/entry-requirements-and-training-dentistry>

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcses/find-career-ideas/explore-jobs/job-profile/dentist>

<https://www.gdc-uk.org/>

Read about the latest dental advances, news and ethical issues

<https://www.dentalhealth.org/news>

<http://www.dentistry.co.uk/>

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/categories/dentistry>

https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/health_medicine/dentistry/

<http://www.dental-tribune.com/articles/news/uk/index.html>

Education:

Entry requirements

You'll need to:

- complete a 5-year degree in dentistry approved by the General Dental Council (GDC)
- register with the [GDC](#)
- complete up to 2 years of postgraduate dental training

If you've a degree in biology, chemistry or a biomedical subject (2:1 or higher), you may be able to apply for a 4-year dental degree course.

There's a lot of competition for places at dental schools.

When you apply you'll take the [UK Clinical Aptitude Test \(UKCAT\)](#) or the [Biomedical Admissions Test \(BMAT\)](#) to test your reasoning and decision-making skills.

You may be able to get [NHS funding](#) to pay for your course fees and help with your living expenses.

The [British Dental Association \(BDA\)](#) and the [General Dental Council](#) have information on dental training.

[Health Careers](#) has information on becoming a dentist.

A-Levels

The minimum expectations for A Levels will be Chemistry and Biology. You will also need Maths or Physics (or both). According to the Which university guide if you have these four A Levels you will be eligible for all university dental courses in the UK.

GCSE's

Dentistry is a hard subject and you will be expected to have high GCSE results ranging from A*-B (or numerical equivalent*). Minimum expectations will be Biology, Chemistry, English and Maths - most typically at A*/A grade. Physics is also well regarded though not essential.

***At the time of going to print it is understood that a grade 8/9 will be required under the new grading system, but this could be subject to change and should be checked for the year of entry.**

How Reigate College Supports Aspiring Dentists

1. Aspire University Pathway

The Aspire University Pathway has been designed to provide high-achieving students with targeted advice, support and guidance to enable them to make successful applications to the most competitive courses at the most prestigious universities. The on-going, focused support the College offers, results in students gaining places at the UK's Russell Group Universities including Oxford and Cambridge and on the most competitive courses, such as Medicine and Law. At the heart of the Aspire Pathway is a weekly seminar. Each small seminar group is led by a dedicated tutor whose role is to guide students through the programme and provide personalised advice to support each student's individual requirements.

2. Additional forms of support

To complement Aspire Seminars a number of additional forms of support are offered to students to enable them, regardless of background, to succeed in the most demanding of environments.


Additional Qualifications. Students will have the opportunity to study extra qualifications, including the EPQ (Extended Project Qualification) which is highly regarded by universities.

Oxbridge Support. The College runs a comprehensive programme of support for those thinking of making an Oxbridge application. Students are given a specialist subject mentor and are encouraged to attend a range of conferences run by Oxbridge academics.

Specific Enrichment Activities. For subjects such as Medicine and Law, the College offers supported discussion groups (e.g. Medicine Society and Law Society) through the College's wider Activities Programme.

General Enrichment Activities. The Activities Programme also incorporates more general activities (such as Debating and Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award) that are designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge to help them stand out from the crowd.

Work Experience. The College has extensive links with employers and organisations offering work experience, for example, hospitals offering placements for selected medical applicants.



National Teaching School
designated by
National College for
Teaching & Leadership

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Castlefield Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0SD
Tel 01737 221118 careers@reigate.ac.uk