



# What can I do with a Major in...

## Dentistry

### What is Dentistry at U of L?

Dentistry offers many rewarding career options combining science and technology with helping people enhance and maintain their oral health. Tomorrow's dentists will be on the cutting edge of advanced technology, making the practice of dentistry even more challenging and rewarding. The University of Louisville School of Dentistry enjoys a rich heritage in dental education and a reputation for clinical excellence that reaches back to the 1800s. Since the first class of 10 dentists graduated in 1887, over 7,500 men and women have joined their ranks. With record numbers of outstanding applications—more than 2,400 for 80 positions—the school's tradition of excellence promises to stretch far into the future. More than 100,000 patients are seen each year at the dental school. Under the leadership of the ULSD Community Dental Health program, our faculty, staff and students provide approximately \$1 million worth of dental services to the underserved each year and participate in more than 80 ongoing initiatives to promote oral health.

U of L has emerged as a leader in oral biology research with world class faculty members respected for their discoveries. The University of Louisville School of Dentistry research program is divided into two sections: the Birth Defects Center and the Oral Health and Systemic Disease Group.

### Degrees in Dentistry at U of L:

The University of Louisville School of Dentistry offers a comprehensive, four-year D.M.D. program for those who choose to practice general dentistry. Specialty programs are also available, with a combined D.M.D./M.S. in Oral Biology and D.M.D./Ph.D. program.

#### Residency Programs

The School of Dentistry offers six accredited residency programs:

Endodontics

General Practice

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

Orthodontics

Pediatric Dentistry

[Periodontics](#)

Bachelor of Science Degree in Dental Hygiene  
(see "What can I do with a major in Dental Hygiene")

### Occupational Overview

Dentists help people maintain and improve their oral health, quality of life and appearance. Dentists receive a great deal of personal satisfaction by providing an essential community health service, by educating future dentists and by doing valuable research. Dentists treat everyone—the healthy, the ill, the young, the elderly, the disadvantaged and those with special needs. As artists, dentists combine keen visual memory, excellent judgment of space and shape and a high degree of manual dexterity in the delivery of patient services. Computer applications complement scientific knowledge and technical skills. Dentists are often the first health care providers to recognize and identify a number of illnesses—including cancer and cardiovascular problems. Research suggests an increasing number of links between oral diseases and other health concerns. Dentists are often the first health care providers to recognize and identify a number of illnesses—including cancer and cardiovascular problems. Research suggests an increasing number of links between oral diseases and other health concerns. Dentists diagnose and treat conditions affecting the teeth, tongue, gums, lips and jaws. Exciting technologies, such as digital radiography and laser systems, along with enhanced new materials and techniques, can be used to correct dental problems. Dentists educate patients and the general public on how to maintain oral health and prevent disease. Dentists are involved as scientists to further the knowledge of oral diseases, treatment techniques and materials used to correct dental problems.



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### Employment Requirements

All states require dentists to be licensed to practice. In most states, a candidate must graduate from a U. S. dental school accredited by the ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation and pass written and practical examinations to qualify for licensure.

### Career Opportunities in Dentistry:

Dentistry offers stimulating career options. In addition to private practice, excellent opportunities exist in teaching and research, careers with government agencies or in industry. Many dentists work either in solo private practice or in partnerships with other dentists. The majority of private practice dentists own their own practices. An academic dentistry career combines teaching, research, community service and patient care. Faculty members work in an intellectually stimulating and exciting academic environment. Career opportunities for academic dentists are excellent at this time. Promoting dental health, developing health policy and preventing disease are the major roles of a public health dentist. Numerous opportunities exist in research and teaching within public health dentistry. The U.S. Public Health Service offers dentists an opportunity to provide dental care in unique cultural environments (e.g., an Indian Reservation, Coast Guard base, or Federal Prison). Research careers offer opportunities to generate new knowledge and be on the cutting edge of scientific discoveries that ultimately impact patient care. The majority of the 164,000 practicing dentists today are general practitioners. The remainder (about 20%) are dental specialists who limit their practices to one of the nine ADA recognized dental specialties. The nine dental specialties are: Dental Public Health, Endodontics, Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology, Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Orthodontics and Dentofacial Orthopedics, Pediatric Dentistry, Periodontics and Prosthodontics. In addition to four years of dental school, two or more additional years of dental specialty education are required.

### Related Links in the Dentistry Discipline:

American Dental Association <http://www.ada.org>  
American Dental Education Association (ADEA) <http://www.adea.org/>  
American Student Dental Association (ASDA) [www.asdanet.org](http://www.asdanet.org)  
Hispanic Dental Association (HDA) [www.hdassoc.org](http://www.hdassoc.org)  
National Dental Association (NDA) [www.ndaonline.org](http://www.ndaonline.org)  
Society of American Indian Dentists (SAID) [www.aaip.com/said](http://www.aaip.com/said)

### Salary/Outlook Info

A dentist's average income is in the highest 5% of U.S. family income, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The demand for dental care is projected to grow. As baby boomers age, they will continue to need preventive services and many baby boomers will require maintenance on existing dental work. Large numbers of dentists are expected to retire in the next 20 years, creating a need for new dentists.



<http://online.onetcenter.org>



<http://www.bls.gov/oco/>