Overview of Profession: (source: www.bls.gov)

1. Overview:
   - Dentists diagnose and treat problems with teeth and tissues in the mouth, along with giving advice and administering care to help prevent future problems.
   - They provide instruction on diet, brushing, flossing, the use of fluorides, and other aspects of dental care. They remove tooth decay, fill cavities, examine x-rays, place protective plastic sealants on children's teeth, straighten teeth, and repair fractured teeth.
   - They also perform corrective surgery on gums and supporting bones to treat gum diseases. Dentists extract teeth and make models and measurements for dentures to replace missing teeth.
   - They also administer anesthetics and write prescriptions for antibiotics and other medications.
   - Most dentists are general practitioners, handling a variety of dental needs. Other dentists practice in any of nine specialty areas:
     - Orthodontists, the largest group of specialists, straighten teeth by applying pressure to the teeth with braces or other appliances.
     - Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, the next largest group, operate on the mouth, jaws, teeth, gums, neck, and head.
     - Pediatric dentists focus on dentistry for children and special-needs patients.
     - Periodontists treat gums and bone supporting the teeth.
     - Prosthodontists replace missing teeth with permanent fixtures, such as crowns and bridges, or with removable fixtures such as dentures
     - Endodontists perform root-canal therapy
     - Oral pathologists diagnose oral diseases
     - Oral and Maxillofacial Radiologists diagnose diseases in the head and neck through the use of imaging technologies
     - Dental Public Health Specialists promote good dental health and preventing dental diseases within the community.

2. Working Conditions:
   - Most are solo practitioners, meaning that they own their own businesses and work alone or with a small staff. Some have partners, and a few work for other dentists as associate dentists.
Additionally, they can be found not only providing direct patient care but also teaching, conducting research and working in public and international health. Though the vast majority are self-employed in private practice, they can also work as a salaried employee or associate, in academic dentistry and dental education, or in dental research.

Most dentists work 4 or 5 days a week. Some work evenings and weekends to meet their patients' needs. The number of hours worked varies greatly among dentists. Most full-time dentists work between 35 and 40 hours a week. However, others, especially those who are trying to establish a new practice, work more. Also, experienced dentists often work fewer hours. It is common for dentists to continue in part-time practice well beyond the usual retirement age.

3. **Earnings:**
   - Median annual wages of salaried general dentists were $142,870 in May 2008. Earnings vary according to number of years in practice, location, hours worked, and specialty. Self-employed dentists in private practice tend to earn more than salaried dentists.
   - Dentists who are salaried often receive benefits paid by their employer, with health insurance and malpractice insurance being among the most common. However, like other business owners, self-employed dentists must provide their own health insurance, life insurance, retirement plans, and other benefits.

4. **Job Outlook:**
   - Employment of dentists is projected to grow by 16% through 2018.
   - The demand for dental services is expected to continue to increase. The overall U.S. population is growing, and the elderly segment of the population is growing even faster; these phenomena will increase the demand for dental care.

5. **Employment:**
   - Dentists held about 141,900 jobs in 2008.
   - Approximately 15% of all dentists were specialists. About 28% of dentists were self-employed and not incorporated.
   - Very few salaried dentists worked in hospitals and offices of physicians. Almost all work in private practice.
   - According to the American Dental Association, about 3 out of 4 dentists in private practice are solo proprietors, and almost 15% belonged to a partnership.

**Prerequisites:**

To apply to dental school you can be **ANY MAJOR** (Art, Biology, Literature, Math, etc.), however you must complete the pre-requisite coursework in Chemistry, Biology, Math and Physics in order to apply.
The table at the bottom shows the courses that are most commonly completed by UC Santa Cruz Students to fulfill dental school pre-requisites. The Career Center recommends that students complete the courses sequenced listed in this table.

**NOTE:** The dental school pre-requisites can differ slightly from school to school. It is important to look at the coursework required for each school you wish to apply to. A good resource to find the admissions page for each dental School can be found in the ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools. This can be located in the Career Center resource library or for purchase online (www.adea.org).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Subject</th>
<th># Quarters</th>
<th>UCSC course sequences most students use to fulfill requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Chemistry</td>
<td>Nearly all schools require 3 quarters of general (inorganic) chemistry, each with laboratory</td>
<td>Chem 1A, Chem 1B/M and Chem 1C/N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| General Biology | Nearly all schools require 3 quarters of general biology, with laboratory | Biol 20A, Bioe20B, and Bioe20C and three upper-division labs* since UCSC doesn't offer lab with its 20 series.  
*Common labs used to fulfill the 1-year of lab are: Biol 20L, Bio 100K, Biol 130L, etc | |
| Organic Chemistry | Nearly all schools require 3 quarters of organic chemistry, with 2-3 quarters of laboratory | Chem 108A/L, Chem 108B/M, and Chem 109*  
*Chem 109 does not have an associated lab please ask a pre-health adviser for tips on how to fulfill this requirement | |
<p>| Physics         | Nearly all schools require 3 quarters of physics, each with laboratory      | Phys 6A/L, Phys 6B/M, and Phys 6C/N or Phys 5A/L, Phys 5B/M, Phys 5C/N | |
| Biochemistry     | Some schools require 2 quarters of biochemistry, and if not it is usually strongly recommended. | Biol 100/K or Biol 100A/K, Bioc 100B, and Bioc100C | |
| Human Anatomy    | Some schools require 1 quarter of human anatomy, with laboratory.           | Bio 135/L                                                        | |
| Human Physiology | Some schools require 1 quarter of human physiology, with laboratory.       | Bio 130/L                                                        |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Course</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microbiology</td>
<td>Some schools require 1 quarter of microbiology, with laboratory.</td>
<td>Bio 119/119L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Composition</td>
<td>Courses that satisfy the Core Courses and Composition requirements at UCSC will fulfill two quarters of the medical school English coursework requirements for most medical schools. An additional course in Literature will usually satisfy the remaining quarter.*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Save your course syllabi in case any medical schools express concern that you did not complete their English requirement.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>Some schools require and almost all schools recommend that you have a broad, well-rounded education with coursework in the social and behavioral sciences, philosophy, business, economics, history, foreign language, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Some schools require or recommend introductory courses in this subject.</td>
<td>Psych 1, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
<td>Some schools require or recommend courses in ceramics, sculpting, drafting, or other applied or fine arts</td>
<td>Art 40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Application Process Timeline:**
1. **Prior to Applying:**
   - Consider these factors when deciding upon where to apply:
     - Location
     - Cost
     - Size
     - Licensure exam passage rates
     - Faculty interests and reputation
     - Job placement history of program graduates.
   - Talk with recent dental graduates, as well as ask dentist employers about various programs’ strengths and weaknesses. In addition to the California schools, consider applying to some public or private schools outside of California that accept many (20+) non-resident or non-contract state applicants.
   - Research each program you wish to apply to before submitting your application.
     - Admission requirements
     - Pre-requisite coursework
     - Deadlines
     - Amount and preferences for letters of recommendations
   - Register and take Dental Admission Test (DAT)
   - Write your personal statement
   - Develop a resume of activities and accomplishments
     - Scholastic awards and honors earned
     - Job shadowing and volunteer experiences in dentistry
     - Extracurricular activities and leadership positions
     - Volunteer and community service activities
     - Work experience
     - Research experience
     - Activities requiring manual dexterity
   - Request your transcripts
   - Arrange letters of evaluation

2. **June of the application year:**
   - Submit your online ADEA AADSAS application on June 1st
   - Apply early! Although the ADEA AADSAS application cycle is June 1 – February 1, do not wait until deadlines approach to submit your application. Each dental school has its own application deadline. ADEA AADSAS does not send your application to a school if your application is received by ADEA AADSAS after the school’s deadline.
   - Submit an official transcript from ALL colleges and universities attended. Even if coursework from a previous college(s) attended is posted on your most recent transcript, you also must forward the official transcript for the previous school(s) to ADEA AADSAS. ADEA AADSAS must have an official transcript – sent directly from the Registrar’s Office – from each college listed in your application.

3. **July - September of the application year:**
   - Complete supplemental applications as requested by schools.
o Retake DAT if needed
o Continue to gain clinical, research, and community service experience.

4. **September - March of the application year:**
   o Continue submitting secondaries.

5. Interviews are usually conducted at the individual school.

6. **December of the application year:**
   o Schools notify applicants of acceptances beginning Dec. 1st and continue until the class is full.
   o Stay in contact with schools you are waitlisted at.

7. **Fall**
   o Begin Dental School

**Admission Exam:**
1. **Overview of Dental Admission Test (DAT):**
   o All U.S. dental schools require applicants to submit DAT exam scores.
2. Many schools do not accept DAT exam scores that are more than 3 years old.
3. 4 hour and 15 minute standardized multiple-choice computerized-based exam.
4. Unofficial score reports, generated at the test center, are provided for the examinee upon completion of the test.

5. **Sections**
   o Natural Science: biology (40 questions), general chemistry (30 questions), and organic chemistry (30 questions)
   o Quantitative Reasoning: Mathematical problems in algebra, numerical calculations, conversions, etc. There are 40 questions, 10 of which are word problems and 30 are computation problems.
   o Reading Comprehension: Dental and basic sciences. There are 50 questions distributed across three reading passages.
   o Perceptual Ability: 2 and 3 dimensional problem solving. Comprised of 6 subtests: apertures, orthographic projections, angle discriminations, paper folding questions, cube-counting questions, and spatial form development questions. Each subtest has 15 questions.

6. **Scoring**
   o The maximum composite score is 30.
   o Each school will have different average acceptance DAT scores with most admitted applicants scoring 19.5 out of 30. Many applicants struggle with the perception section of the test in particular.

7. **When should students take the DAT?:**
   o You should take the DAT well in advance of applying to dental school but definitely at least one year prior to your intended start date.
   o If students want to go straight into dental school, they will need to take the DAT the summer of their junior year.
   o Students should take the DAT when they can do their best.
     - If they can be preparing for the DAT and be taking courses, and do well in both, then they should do that.
If the student will compromise their grades and/or score by doing both at the same time, the student should prepare for the DAT during the summer or after they have graduated.

8. Dates for exam:
   - The DAT is given on computer in local testing centers across the US almost every day of the year.
   - You can apply to take the DAT at www.ada.org.
   - **Important:** you must wait a minimum of 90 days to retake the DAT. If you wait too long to take the DAT, you may not be able to retake it in time to affect your application.

Additional Requirements:
1. Nearly all schools require a letter of recommendation from a dentist that is not a family or friend.
2. Some schools require a minimum 80 hours as a volunteer in health care setting observing dentist in their job.

Overview of Dental School:
1. **Overview:**
   - Dental school lasts 4 academic years.
   - There are 57 Dental Schools in the United States, and 6 in California.
   - Most dental schools award the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS). Others award an equivalent degree, Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD).
2. **First 2 years of dental school:**
   - Studies begin with classroom instruction and laboratory work in science, including anatomy, microbiology, biochemistry, and physiology. Beginning courses in clinical sciences, including laboratory techniques, are also completed.
3. 3. Last 2 years of dental school: During the last 2 years, students treat patients, usually in dental clinics, under the supervision of licensed dentists.
4. 4. Licensure and certification: Licensing is required to practice as a dentist. In most States, licensure requires passing written and practical examinations in addition to having a degree from an accredited dental school. Candidates may fulfill the written part of the State licensing requirements by passing the National Board Dental Examinations. Individual States or regional testing agencies administer the written or practical examinations.
5. 5. Specialty: Individuals can be licensed to practice any of the 9 recognized specialties in all 50 States and the District of Columbia. Requirements include 2-4 years of postgraduate education and, in some cases, the completion of a special State examination. A postgraduate residency term also may be required, usually lasting up to 2 years. Most State licenses permit dentists to engage in both general and specialized practice.
Reapplying:

1. For re-applicants, some of the key items that a dental program will look for in your application:
   - What type of growth and change has occurred for you since the last application? How different do you look as a re-applicant versus a first time applicant?
   - Have you effectively described your professional goals? Do you reflect an in-depth knowledge of the profession?

2. Simply improving upon your grades or test scores may not be the only areas that will help in making a re-application successful. You will need to demonstrate to a dental program why you are not only a very good fit for the career but also, how have you matured and gained insight about yourself and the career. Most people do this by participating in new activities in a clinical environment or perhaps, community service. Regardless of the experience, it will be important to convey in your new application how you have developed or how you are even more certain that dentistry is the right career path for you.

3. In addition to new insights about yourself and the career, a more tangible and expected addition to the new application is at least one new letter of recommendation. If you did not include a letter from a dentist in your first application, you will definitely want to include a letter from a dentist who can attest to your personal characteristics and aptitude for the career.

4. Though this last bit of advice is not directly related to a re-applicant, it still is an important consideration when applying to dental school. There are many applicants who originally planned to apply to medical school but realized late in their undergraduate career or perhaps even after graduation that they desire to pursue a dental degree. If this is you, then it will be very important to articulate in your personal statement the reasons for this change. Your reason(s) should be well thought out and should not come across as dental school is your second choice because you did not get accepted to medical school.

5. Ultimately, apply to dental school when you feel that you are the strongest possible applicant. Whether this means taking one or more years off, in the end this will save you time, money and additional work.

Important Websites:

- Directory of Dental Schools
- Applying to Dental School
- Dental Admission Test (DAT) Information- www.ada.org/dat.aspx
- American Dental Education Association- www.adea.org
- Explore Health Careers- explorehealthcareers.org- search Dentist
- American Dental Association (Career and School Info)
- Careers in Dentistry- www.dentistry.unc.edu
- Dental School Application Service (AADSAS)- portal.aadsasweb.org
- AADSAS FAQ’s
• American Dental Hygienists Association- www.adha.org
• Dental School Interview Feedback