

DENTIST

Entry Level: Doctoral or Professional Degree

***Please Note:** While BYU does not offer a dental program, it does offer pre-dental advisement: <https://ppa.byu.edu/dental-school>. Speak with an advisor to see if Exercise Science is a good option for you.

Dentists diagnose and treat problems with patients' teeth, gums, and related parts of the mouth.¹

JOB REQUIREMENTS

What is the exact job title?

- Dentist

How do I become one?

- Complete a bachelor's degree. While students may elect to complete an unrelated curriculum, those who choose pre-dentistry or a science-related major will be ahead of the pack when it comes time to meet prerequisite requirements.³
- Take the Dental Acceptance Test. Comprised of 280 questions, this five-hour test is heavily weighted toward questions related to the natural sciences, with reading comprehension and quantitative reasoning also making up a significant portion of the overall score.³
- Complete a doctoral degree. Find a program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation to ensure licensure will be possible after graduation.³
- Complete requirements for licensure within your state.³

What qualities do I need?

- **Communication skills:** Dentists must communicate effectively with patients, dental hygienists, dental assistants, and receptionists.¹
- **Detail oriented:** Dentists must pay attention to the shape and color of teeth and to the space between them. For example, they may need to closely match a false tooth with a patient's other teeth.¹
- **Dexterity:** Dentists must be good with their hands. They must work carefully with tools in small spaces to ensure the safety of their patients.¹
- **Leadership skills:** Dentists, especially those with their own practices, may need to manage staff or mentor other dentists.¹
- **Organizational skills:** Keeping accurate records of patient care is critical in both medical and business settings.¹
- **Patience:** Dentists may work for long periods with patients who need special attention, including children and those with a fear of dental work.¹
- **Problem-solving skills:** Dentists must evaluate patients' symptoms and choose the appropriate treatment.¹

TYPICAL WORK DAY

What do they do?

- Remove decay from teeth and fill cavities.¹
- Repair or remove damaged teeth.¹

1<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>

2<https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Dentist/Salary>

3<https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/dentist/>

- Place sealants or whitening agents on teeth.¹
- Administer anesthetics to keep patients from feeling pain during procedures.¹
- Prescribe antibiotics or other medications.¹
- Examine x rays of teeth, gums, the jaw, and nearby areas in order to diagnose problems.¹
- Make models and measurements for dental appliances, such as dentures.¹
- Teach patients about diets, flossing, the use of fluoride, and other aspects of dental care.¹

Where do they normally work?

- Most work in offices of dentists, while some may be self-employed workers or work in government organizations, offices of physicians, or outpatient care centers.¹

What hours do they work?

- Dentists' work schedules vary. Some work evenings and weekends to meet their patients' needs. Many dentists work less than 40 hours a week, although some work considerably more.¹

BENEFITS

What is a typical salary in this field?

- BLS: In May 2018, median pay was \$75.12/hour or \$156,240/year.¹
- Payscale: \$69.92/hour or \$129,970/year.²

Does this job come with any benefits? (vision, dental, 401k, PTO, etc.)

- Medical: 60%²
- Vision: 48%²
- Dental: 34%²
- None: 34%²

GROWTH

What is the projected job growth?

- Between 2018 - 2028, job growth is projected to be 7%.¹

Last Updated: October 2019

¹<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm>

²<https://www.payscale.com/research/US/Job=Dentist/Salary>

³<https://www.learnhowtobecome.org/dentist/>