DENTIST

Entry Level: Doctoral or Professional Degree

*Please Note: While BYU does not offer a dental program, it does offer predental 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. 3
● 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