

7 May 2020



Advice on gaining experience to support an application to dental school during the Covid-19 pandemic

Dental schools have recognised for some time that gaining useful work experience in healthcare is becoming increasingly difficult. During the Covid-19 pandemic, applicants to dental school will find it difficult, if not impossible, to gain work experience in dental practices and hospital departments. The Dental Schools Council is working to update our guidance on gaining relevant experience to study dentistry. We would like to reassure applicants that dental schools will take into account the change in circumstances caused by the pandemic when considering applications to study dentistry.

Some aspects of this advice will remain the same. We will continue to look for knowledge of the profession and investigation of the realities of being a dentist or dental care professional (DCP). Dental schools want to ensure that the correct candidates are selected so that they will have long and fulfilling careers within the profession. This is only possible if the applicant possesses the attributes of a healthcare professional. They should exhibit the values, attitudes and behaviours essential to being a dentist or DCP such as conscientiousness, effective communication and the ability to interact with a wide variety of people. For more information on the values healthcare professionals should possess, see the [NHS Constitution](#).

There are a number of ways you can learn about what a career in dentistry will involve and develop the aforementioned values, attitudes and behaviours. In particular, you may wish to:

- Speak to dentists and other members of the dental team about what a career in dentistry involves
- Investigate studying dentistry through e-Learning resources offered by dental schools such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- Engage in paid or voluntary work which involves caring for and interacting with different people, or which develops the skills you will need as a dental professional
- Learn about the key issues in dentistry through the media and by reading more widely around the topic

Remember: it is what you learn about yourself, about other people and about how effective care is delivered and received that counts. What you did is only a small part of the story; it is how you have used the opportunities available to you that matters. Reflecting on the preparation you have done will provide vital insight into your potential future career, which you should draw upon throughout the application process.