

## Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#).

**Year of admissions cycle:** 2015

### **Courses covered:**

A206 BDS Dentistry

## Admissions process

### **1. Admissions team**

Applications are assessed by a centralised team in close co-operation with admissions tutor/s.

### **2. Application assessment methods**

All applications are considered on an equal basis. Applications are not segregated by the type of educational institution attended.

Applications that are received on time (in line with UCAS deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration. All applications for Dentistry must be submitted to UCAS by 15th October; late applications are not considered. We do not consider any direct applications to the University.

The School of Oral and Dental Sciences is committed to principles of professionalism, patient care and integrity and incorporates these into its admissions processes. For further information, please refer to Guiding Principles for the Admission of Dental Schools: [www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/documents/DSCAdmissionsPrinciplesFeb2012.pdf](http://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/documents/DSCAdmissionsPrinciplesFeb2012.pdf)

All applications are allocated scores based on the academic record and the personal statement and reference. As long as all academic requirements are met, selection for interview is based only on the personal statement and reference.

We welcome applications from those who are seeking a dual qualification with Medicine.

Applicants are not discriminated against on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or age.

### **3. Interview or visit day**

All candidates who are selected for interview must attend in order to be considered.

No offers for Dentistry are made without the applicant first attending an interview. This does not mean that we interview all applicants (see **Criteria for assessing applicants: 6. Interview** below).

## 4. Correspondence with applicants

All correspondence relating to an application's status will be sent by email.

All applications are acknowledged by email on receipt (starting in mid-September), to establish contact and inform the applicant of the process to be followed.

Applicants will be contacted by email to inform them of any of the following changes to their application status:

- Application is unsuccessful before interview stage (via UCAS);
- Application is 'on hold' and may be invited to an interview at a later date;
- Applicant is being invited to attend an interview;
- Applicant has received an offer post-interview (via UCAS);
- Applicant is 'on hold' after interview;
- Applicant has been unsuccessful at interview (via UCAS).

The e-mail inviting applicants to interview will direct applicants to an online booking facility, allowing them to register for one of the available dates.

## 5. Deferred applications

We will consider applications from applicants who wish to take a year out between leaving school or college and entering the dental school. They should have made firm plans for how they intend to spend the year.

Deferred applications must be made at the point of applying in the cycle prior to entry; it will not be possible to defer an application after it has been submitted, either before or after a decision has been made.

## Criteria for assessing applicants

### 1. Academic entry requirements

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Baccalaureate, GCSEs) can be found in the [undergraduate course finder](#). Other qualifications, including international qualifications, will be considered on their individual merits; [further information](#) is available.

### 2. Additional academic criteria

Applicants are expected to complete three A-levels (or equivalent qualifications) within a single two-year exam period. Applicants' qualifications must include chemistry and one other lab-based science to A-level (or equivalent), but the dental school has no preference regarding the third A-level subject. Please note that A-levels in General Studies or Critical Thinking are not counted as part of offers, nor are they considered in the academic assessment of applicants.

We are unable to consider applications from those who are taking foundation courses if they do not meet our GCSE and A-level requirements.

### **3. Personal statement criteria**

The personal statement forms a crucial part of the selection process in assessing each applicant's motivation and suitability for their chosen course of study. When looking at each applicant's personal statement, we look for the following:

- interest, motivation and commitment to dentistry;
- amount and variety of dental work experience (where possible this should be within various fields of dentistry);
- evidence of manual dexterity (eg playing an instrument, car or bike maintenance, art and craft activities);
- communication and problem-solving skills;
- evidence of teamwork and leadership;
- demonstration of voluntary, charitable and/or mentoring activities;
- extracurricular interests including sporting, musical and other personal achievements;
- paid or unpaid work experience.

### **4. Reference criteria**

References should ideally be from a school or college, from a personal tutor confirming the academic potential of the applicant to study at degree level. Where this is not possible, a non-academic reference should confirm the relevant experience of the applicant. It should indicate the potential of the applicant for study at degree level.

Referees should note that the reference will be used as a basis for the assessment of academic performance and as support for the personal statement. Assessors will want to consider the accuracy and consistency of the predicted grades in the light of previous GCSE and AS-level achievement (or reasons why this is not the case), evidence of effort and a positive attitude towards studies, and if there are any educational or special circumstances. It would also be useful to have comments on the suitability of the applicant for a career in dentistry, their ability to communicate and work well with others, timekeeping skills and evidence of manual dexterity.

### **5. Additional tests**

We do not require applicants in the 2015 cycle to take any additional admissions test (eg UKCAT, BMAT, GAMSAT). Any scores from these tests that are declared in an application are not used in our selection processes.

### **6. Interview**

We interview on the basis that we have limited information from the application, and need to establish that the applicant has the necessary qualities required to become a good dentist.

Applicants who are invited to interview will be asked to complete a form detailing their work experience, including details of the practice/lab and dates of attendance, and provide this in advance of, or on the day of, the interview. The University may contact the practices to verify the information provided, and interviewers may use the details given form as discussion matter during the interview.

Applicants will be assessed using the Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) system. This is a robust and evidence-based method which has been proven to be objective and efficient.

Interviewees will be assessed at ten different 'stations' covering different aspects of the skills and knowledge required to be a successful dental student and dentist.

The dental admissions tutor will provide more information about MMIs on the day of the interview, as well as an overview of the admissions procedure and the format of the BDS degree course. Interviewees will also receive a tour of the dental hospital and school.

Interviewees' performance on the MMIs will be scored by assessors and ranked by the admissions tutor. Those with the strongest overall performance will receive offers.

### **Extra time in assessments**

If you are invited to interview and are usually entitled to extra time in assessments due to a disability (such as dyslexia), you can request to be allowed extra time in the MMIs. Please follow the [instructions for requesting extra time](#) on our dentistry interviews web page. It will not be possible to allow extra time if you have not submitted a request and had this granted prior to interview; a specific interview date will be allocated for applicants requesting extra time.

## **7. Mature applicants**

Mature students should show evidence of recent study to a high level of achievement; it is expected that this should be in the last 12-18 months prior to application.

## **8. International applicants**

The academic requirements for international applicants are exactly the same as those for home applicants, and international applicants are subject to the same MMI process as home applicants.

International applicants will be subject to the academic criteria as detailed here:

[www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/international/countries)

Currently, four places are available for applicants liable to pay overseas fees.

We cannot accept applications for applicants who are already qualified dentists or part-way through a dentistry degree from another country. You should contact the GDC regarding registration for overseas-qualified dentists.

Applicants from outside of the EU should be aware that they are required to have work permits if they wish to complete their vocational training in the UK, following graduation. For this they will need a work permit for a specific job. Applications for permits can only be made by British-based employers (in this case, trainers) on behalf of the person they wish to employ (in this case, potential Vocational Dental Practitioner). There is no provision within the current arrangements for individuals to apply on their own behalf.

## **9. English Language requirements for non-native speakers**

All applicants are required to demonstrate that they have sufficient ability to understand and express themselves in both spoken and written English in order to benefit fully from their degree course.

English Language requirements for each course can be found in the [undergraduate course finder](#) and are explained at [www.bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements).

## 10. Contextual information

We take a holistic approach to all applications, ensuring that the educational and social context in which an applicant applies is taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic achievement. This may include time spent in Local Authority care, information about which can be provided in the application.

As part of our commitment to the UK national agenda on widening participation, we consider the educational context in which grades have been achieved, particularly if there is evidence that an applicant's current school or college performs below a defined threshold.

When assessing whether applicants meet our academic requirements, contextual criteria may be applied to those who attend and apply from a school or college which in the previous year ranked in the bottom 40 per cent in any of the following categories:

- average score per A-level entry
- average score per A-level entrant
- percentage of students applying to higher education.

If an applicant meets one of these criteria, we will raise their predicted/achieved grades by one grade in our rankings; ie an AAB applicant will be awarded the same academic score as an AAA applicant. Applicants still need to satisfy specific subject requirements. Contextual offers are usually one grade lower than the standard offer.

The University reviews its definition of educational disadvantage and low-performing schools each year and each case is considered on an individual basis.

We also consider evidence of clear motivation to study. This may include participation in higher education outreach activities, attendance at a University summer school or a targeted Access Scheme (such as Access to Bristol or Realising Opportunities where applicants receive special consideration and in some cases, guaranteed and/or lower offers; please see the [University's admissions principles and procedures](#) for more information). We do not take the following into consideration when making admissions decisions: the school type attended by an applicant (e.g. independent school, state school, academy), or whether an applicant's parent has any experience of higher education.

### Offers

Typical offers for A-levels and other UK qualifications can be found in the entry data in the online [undergraduate course finder](#). Offers to applicants with non-standard qualifications will be made equivalent to the published A-level offer.

We may make lower 'contextual' offers based on whether an applicant is deemed to have experienced educational disadvantage, as defined in section 7.5 of the [University's](#)

[admissions principles and procedures](#) (see also **Criteria for assessing applicants: 10. Contextual information** above).

## Other

### 1. Transfers

It is not possible to transfer into the BDS degree at Bristol. Graduates applying to the dental school are expected to have completed or be in their final year of a degree.

We will not consider applications from students who have failed to complete another degree.

### 2. Additional information

The University can only guarantee places if the exact terms of the offer are met, however offer holders may not automatically be rejected if the terms of the offer are missed narrowly.

If offer holders do not meet the terms of their offer when exam results are released they may be considered as a 'near miss candidate'. All near miss candidates are reviewed mid-August after those who have met the terms of their offer have been confirmed. International offer holders may be reconsidered earlier depending when their exam results are released.

### Criminal records check

All dental students are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, in line with most applicants for health-related courses in the United Kingdom.

### Health

Certain health conditions may be incompatible with some careers in dentistry. Incoming students will be required to complete a health assessment questionnaire and undergo screening for blood borne viruses before starting the course. The health assessment and blood tests are to identify the few whose health status may place them and/or future patients at risk. If you require advice, please write to the University of Bristol's Occupational Health Service.

You should be aware that students are taught in mixed-sex groups and may form clinical partnerships with students of the opposite gender. Students are required to abide by the School's dress code which ensures cross infection control including, for instance, being "bare below the elbow".

### Applicants with a disability

It is the responsibility of the dental school to ensure that students accepted on the course are able to complete the training and achieve the competencies required by the General Dental Council (GDC) for full registration on completion of the degree. The dental school must consult the GDC if there is doubt and if it proposes a modification of experience to achieve the competencies.

A clear plan to enable a disabled student to achieve competency must be agreed before the student enters the course. Not all disabilities limit the experience of dentists in training in this way, but applicants should disclose any disability on their UCAS application forms and be

prepared to release their medical details, in order for us to assess the situation. Failure to disclose a disability which might impinge upon a student's capacity to ultimately carry out their required duties in full will be considered unprofessional. This could put at risk their fitness to practise and might jeopardise their place on the dentistry course.

The procedure for handling health and/ or disability issues are set out below:

- i) Applicants who are selected for interview using the University's admissions criteria for interview (as described above) will be invited, irrespective of health issue/disability they have declared. During the admissions interview, the applicant's disability will not be considered or discussed, except in the case of applicants who have applied for extra time (see above for details).
- ii) If, following the interview, it is agreed that the applicant should be offered a place on the degree, the applicant will be made an offer and sent a pre-course questionnaire to complete and return to the Occupational Health Service. Applicants with a specific learning disability will be advised to contact Disability Services.
- iii) The Occupational Health Service will be responsible for assessing the health questionnaire according to recognised clinical and professional standards. The Occupational Health Adviser or physician will forward their report to the Faculty Disability Officer who will present it, if necessary, to the Disability and Health Panel for the consideration of any health issues which could impact fitness to practice.
- iv) For applicants with a specific learning difficulty, any concerns identified by the Disability Unit in relation to student support and alternative arrangements and/or any fitness to practice concerns for an individual applicant will be referred to the Disability and Health panel via the Faculty Disability Officer.
- v) Once the applicant is at the university his/her case will be considered for regular review by the Disability and Health Panel as necessary. The Occupational Health Service will also have advised regarding regular health reviews if it is deemed necessary to monitor the progress of the student.

For further information on the available support arrangements, please see

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/>

### **Resit applicants**

Applications may be considered, *in truly exceptional circumstances*, from applicants who had firmly accepted a conditional offer from Bristol, narrowly missed achieving the required grades and performed well at interview from the previous admissions cycle, and are now resitting their A-level (or equivalent) qualifications. This will not be allowed in all cases and the applicant must be able to demonstrate that there were genuinely exceptional extenuating circumstances that caused them to narrowly miss their grades. A clear case must be made to the admissions team by any applicant wishing to follow this route. A new application must be made via UCAS and the applicant will be subject to the selection and interview process in the same way as other applicants. Any subsequent offer would be subject to achieving the required grades in the same subjects within one year of the first sitting.

## **Contacts for enquiries**

Any enquiries should be addressed to the Undergraduate Admissions Office: [dent-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:dent-ug-admissions@bristol.ac.uk) or +44 (0)117 92 87677.