

Undergraduate admissions statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the University's admissions principles and procedures.

Year of admissions cycle: 2016

Courses covered:

BDS Dentistry (A206)

1. Admissions process

1.1. Admissions team

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

1.2. Application assessment methods

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

All applications that are received on time (in accordance with UCAS deadlines) are guaranteed equal consideration.

All applications for dentistry must be submitted to UCAS by 15 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 available at www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk.

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.

1.3. 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 **2.5. Interview**).

1.4. Correspondence with applicants

All correspondence relating to an applicant'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.

2. Criteria for assessing applicants

To assess an application we require:

- A full academic history from age 16 onwards, including any retakes or uncompleted qualifications.
- Predicted grades for any qualifications you are currently taking. Predicted grades can only come from your school or referee. These must include an overall grade (if applicable) AND where a particular subject is specified in the entry requirements, the achieved grades or predicted grades for that subject, and any related or major subjects you are studying.
- If predicted grades are not available, then we will accept a transcript showing the results of your previous year's courses or examinations.

2.1. Academic entry requirements

Academic entry requirements for standard qualifications (A-level, SQA, IB, Access, BTEC, Welsh Bac, 14-19 Diploma, 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 through the [International Office](#).

All applications must be submitted through UCAS; we cannot consider any direct applications.

Applications that are received on time are guaranteed equal consideration.

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

2.3. 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, paid or unpaid (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.

2.4. Reference criteria

References will be assessed for information on the applicant's motivation, ability to work independently, powers of analysis and expression. If the referee believes the applicant's performance does not reflect their ability, due to educational context and/or special circumstances, the applicant should complete an extenuating circumstances form at bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/. We are unable to consider extenuating circumstances without this form.

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.

2.5. 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 on the 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.

2.6. Mature applicants

Mature applicants (those over 21 at the start of the course) 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.

2.7. International applicants

International applicants will be subject to the criteria as detailed here: bristol.ac.uk/international/countries

2.8. 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 bristol.ac.uk/ug-language-requirements.

2.9. Contextual information

We take a holistic approach to assessing all applications, ensuring that an applicant's educational and social contexts are taken into consideration, where supported by clear evidence that this may have adversely affected academic performance. 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.

Applicants may be eligible for a contextual offer if they are currently applying from (or in the 15/16 academic year were in full-time education in) a school ranked in the bottom 40 per cent in any of the following categories for the: 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 during the scoring process; 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.

To be eligible for a contextual offer, applicants currently attending school must apply from a school in the list below:

[2016 cycle list here](#)

Applicants not currently attending school must have been in full-time education in one of the following schools in the academic year 15/16:

[2015 cycle list here](#)

Please note that we use the "applying from" school code or the education history listed on the UCAS form to determine an applicant's eligibility for a contextual offer. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure these are correct.

The University reviews its definition of educational disadvantage 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, comprehensive school, academy) or an applicant's parents' experience of higher education.

3. Offers

3.1 Typical Offers

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

We may make lower 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](#).

4. Other

4.1. 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, and therefore wish to apply for 2017 entry. They should have made firm plans for how they intend to spend the year and this should be explained in their personal statement.

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

4.2. Resits

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

4.3. Transfers

We do not permit transfers into the BDS Dentistry course either from other courses at the University of Bristol, or from other institutions.

4.4. Extenuating Circumstances

If your education has been significantly disrupted through health or personal problems, disability or specific difficulties with schooling you will need to submit an extenuating circumstances form (available at bristol.ac.uk/applicants/applied/extenuating-circumstances/) to Undergraduate Admissions.

The information provided on the form will be treated confidentially, and will help us to accurately assess your academic performance in light of your situation.

4.5. Policies

All applications are considered in line with our [Admissions policies and procedures](#).

We are committed to the provision of high quality, fair and transparent admissions procedures for all our applicants. We recognise, however, that there may be occasions when applicants believe that they have cause for complaint. At this point applicants should follow our [Applicant feedback and complaints procedures](#).

Should an applicant believe that University admissions principles and procedures have been inconsistently or incorrectly applied, these complaints procedures provide a mechanism for objective review.

4.6. Additional information

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

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 in August

after publication of A-level results. 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.

Fitness to Practise

When you enter dental school you are taking the first step to becoming a dentist. Dentists hold a trusted position in society and come in contact with a wide range of people in the course of their jobs, some of whom may be vulnerable. Therefore your dental school will expect you to display different standards of behaviour from those expected of students on courses that do not lead to professional regulation. Your behaviour at all times, both in the clinical environment and in your personal life, must justify the trust that the public places in you as a future member of the dental profession.

If your behaviour falls outside the standards expected of you as a dental student your school has an obligation to take action to protect patients and public trust in the profession. They do this through a process which is often called fitness to practise. This is the formal process whereby the dental school investigates lapses in professionalism and applies an appropriate sanction. Depending upon the seriousness of a lapse, sanctions can include; conditions being applied to your continued study on the course, a temporary suspension from the course or exclusion from the dental school.

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 visit bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/.

4.7. Contacts for enquiries

Any enquiries should be addressed to our Enquiries team: choosebristol-ug@bristol.ac.uk or +44 (0)117 39 41643.