

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, DENTISTRY AND BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

ADMISSION POLICY STATEMENT FOR DENTISTRY FOR 2021 ENTRY

Introduction

It is the policy of the University that all candidates for admission are treated on a fair and equitable basis irrespective of religious belief, political opinion, race, sex, age, marital status, colour, ethnic origin or sexual orientation.

Administration of Undergraduate Admissions

All applications should be submitted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) by the normal closing date of 15 October at 6.00 pm (GMT), prior to the year of entry. Applications are handled by the academic selector for Dentistry in the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences in conjunction with the Admissions and Access Service and the School Office. The academic selector has final responsibility for decisions on Dental applications. These can only be made on the basis of the information given and applicants must show due care and diligence when completing their applications. In particular, full details must be included about qualifications completed or still to be completed.

Applications are received from UCAS by the Admissions and Access Service and assessed for the selector. Any additional information required is obtained and recommendations are made regarding decisions (reject or interview), where possible. After the interviews are completed and with the approval of the academic selector, all decisions are transmitted to UCAS by the Admissions and Access Service. Requests for feedback are handled by the Service.

In August, the processing of results and the final decisions to UCAS is also undertaken by the Admissions and Access Service. Welcome Packs are distributed to successful applicants in September. The Admissions and Access Service along with the University's Recruitment Officers are largely responsible for liaising with applicants and should be the first point of contact.

Admission Criteria

The University complies with the Dental Schools Council document "Guiding Principles for the Admission of Dental Students" which can be viewed at:

<http://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/DSCAdmissionsPrinciplesFeb2012.pdf>

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Selection Process

The selection process for Dentistry involves two stages:

Stage 1: Cognitive Ability:

- Consideration of previous academic performance, including school, college and university grades as appropriate
- For UK and EU applicants only, aptitude testing using the University's Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)

Stage 2: Non-Cognitive Ability

This will comprise interviews carefully designed to objectively evaluate non-cognitive skills. The purpose of the interview is to confirm whether the candidate has the aptitude, motivation and personal qualities to succeed as a dental student at Queen's University and as a dental professional in the future.

All applicants will be scored at Stage 1 of the selection process and ranked. From this, candidates will be selected for interview (Stage 2) and a final decision about whether or not to make a conditional or unconditional offer will be based solely on interview performance.

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Interviews

Interviews are designed to test the following:

- Resilience
- Maturity and Responsibility
- Interpersonal and communication skills
- Confidence
- Self Awareness
- Empathy
- Ethical and moral values
- Awareness of the demands of training as a dental surgeon

Entry to dentistry is highly competitive and the scores at interview are used to create a rank order. Offers are made to the applicants who rank highest after interview. Should places be available in August, this rank order will also be the primary factor in considering candidates who have satisfied the academic criteria and are not holding an offer with any other Dental School through UCAS.

Please note that if an applicant presents for interview, they will be deemed fit to participate in the interview process. If you are unwell and unable to participate in a scheduled interview, please contact the Centre for Dentistry School Office immediately (email: dentistry@qub.ac.uk or telephone: 028 9097 6268). In addition, you must submit evidence from an appropriate medical adviser if you wish consideration to be given to reasonable adjustments.

For 2021 entry it is anticipated all interviews will take place on-line.

3 **UCAT (UK and EU candidates only)**

The University's Clinical Aptitude Test is required for admission to Dentistry and must be taken during the summer prior to completion of the UCAS application. Full details of how to apply are provided on their website: www.UCAT.ac.uk and please note that a bursary scheme is available. The website includes information on arrangements for those with disabilities or medical conditions and guidance for applicants on what to do if they are ill on the day of their scheduled test. For UK and EU candidates UCAT will be scored using the overall results from four papers. Candidates can obtain up to a maximum of 6 additional points.

Banding of UCAT Scores	Points Awarded
1200 – 1899	0
1900 – 2099	1
2100 – 2299	2
2300 – 2499	3
2500 – 2699	4
2700 – 2899	5
2900 – 3600	6

For UK and EU candidates UCAT is therefore taken into account at stage 1 of the selection process.

UCAT has introduced an additional paper called a Situational Judgement Test, but it has been agreed that the results of this will not be used for 2021 entry except, if necessary, to inform decisions on borderline applicants who have achieved a similar score at interview.

UCAT is compulsory for all UK and EU applicants to Dentistry at QUB. The University will only grant exemptions in very exceptional circumstances and where appropriate supporting evidence is provided. Applicants who believe they qualify for an exemption should contact: ukcat-exemption@qub.ac.uk

Guidance on exemptions and reasonable adjustments:

Illness or Personal Circumstances	Candidates are advised to seek an early test date which can then be rescheduled if they are unable to attend because of illness or personal emergency. Candidates who are unable to sit UCAT throughout the test cycle are required to provide supporting medical evidence in requesting an exemption.
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Geographical Circumstances	<p>No exemptions will normally be granted because of geographical circumstances. It is accepted that some candidates may have to travel in order to take UCAT.</p> <p>Candidates unable to take UCAT because of civil war/unrest or natural disaster where travel would be unsafe will be asked to provide supporting evidence in requesting an exemption.</p>
Candidates Requiring Adjustments to the Test	<p>UCAT will consider requests for reasonable adjustments. If UCAT have confirmed that they cannot make a reasonable adjustment candidates are advised to provide supporting evidence in requesting an exemption.</p> <p>Applicants who are entitled to additional time for public examinations based on a medical diagnosis or report from a specialist teacher may book a Special Educational Needs Version of the test which provides extra time. The University may ask applicants who have taken UCATSEN to provide evidence of this entitlement when considering their UCAS application.</p>

4 **Personal Statement and References**

Personal statements are not scored as part of the selection process and the following general factors are taken into account when considering applications:-

- (i) Candidates are expected to state explicitly that Dentistry is their career choice. (Please note that an applicant cannot normally be considered for both Medicine and Dentistry).
- (ii) There should be evidence of commitment and motivation to follow a career in Dentistry.
- (iii) Work experience in a dental clinical setting is not a requirement for admission however, applicants should state what they have done to find out about a career in Dentistry.
- (iv) Satisfactory support from the academic referee, particularly relating to the applicant's character, resilience, suitability for the course, communication skills and initiative.

5 **Subject Requirements**

A-Level requirements

AAA at A-level to include GCE Chemistry + Biology/Human Biology.
 Vocational/Applied A levels are not acceptable. A-level Critical Thinking and General Studies are not acceptable.

GCSE Subject Requirements

Mathematics and English are required if not offered at AS or A-level.

Alternative qualifications, deemed equivalent by the Dental School may be acceptable in fulfillment of the subject requirements.

6 School-leavers Completing A-Levels for the first time in 2019

The scoring system used at Stage 1 will be based on GCSE performance and UCAT results. GCSEs will be scored using a points system as shown below. The total points score will be based on the best 9 subjects at the first attempt unless the GCSE was taken a year early and then repeated at the normal stage.

Scoring of GCSEs

Alphabetic Grading	Numeric Grading	Points
A*	9	4
A	7 and 8	3

GCSE Short Courses attract 2 points for an A* (Grade 9) and 1.5 for an A grade (Grades 7 and 8). Two Short Courses will count as one GCSE in calculation of the best nine subjects. Care is taken to ensure that applicants are awarded the maximum points possible.

BTEC/OCR Level 2 qualifications, considered equivalent to GCSE, are taken into account and a decision as to how many points to award will be dependent on performance in individual units, as well as the overall result(s).

The UCAT score will then be added to this total (see paragraph 3 above). Candidates are then ranked on the combined GCSE/UCAT scores and the threshold required to qualify for an interview varies from year to year depending on competition for places and cannot be predicted in advance. The following table indicates where the threshold has been over the last five years:

2017	28 points and above
2018	30 points and above
2019	32 points and above
2020	32 points and above

Additional grade As at GCSE may also be used to distinguish between applicants on the same points score, if necessary. Module repeats within the normal two-year period between GCSE and A-level do not place applicants at any disadvantage. An A-level taken a year early would also be counted.

7 **Widening Participation**

The School is participating in the University's Pathway Opportunity Programme. Throughout Years 13 and 14, students accepted onto the pathway will benefit from a structured series of events designed to prepare them for the transition to undergraduate study at Queen's, including insight into academic and extracurricular aspects of student life, admissions guidance and support and a one-week residential summer school. Students will complete assessed work and those who are

successful will receive a guaranteed interview and a possible offer of one A Level grade below the normal target. Full details are on the website:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/wpu/PathwayOpportunityProgramme/>

8. **Repeat Candidates**

Due to the competition for places the number of offers made to students resitting A-levels has to be restricted. Only those who had applied to study Dentistry at Queen's at the first attempt and held an offer (if made) as their Conditional firm (CF) choice are considered. In addition they must have achieved AAB at first attempt or a maximum of one A-level grade below the standard accepted in the previous year, if lower. The offer for repeat candidates is AAA at A-level provided both A-level Biology and Chemistry are offered (see paragraph 5 above). Only two attempts at A-levels will be permitted.

For repeat candidates at Stage One, 36 points will be allocated for meeting the A-level grades required to qualify for consideration and points then awarded according to performance in UCAT (as indicated above) to give an overall score for short listing purposes. UCAT must be retaken as it is only valid for one application cycle.

Please note that this policy will be reviewed and may be amended for 2022 entry.

8 **Applicants who have Already Satisfied Academic Requirements**

Those who have already achieved AAA at A-level including Chemistry and Biology and have satisfied the other subject requirements will be awarded 36 points at Stage One. Points will then be awarded according to performance in UCAT to give an overall score for shortlisting purposes. UCAT must be retaken as it is only valid for one application cycle.

9 **Mature Non-Graduate Entry**

Applications from candidates who have had a significant break in study and who are returning to undertake further qualifications are considered individually on their merits taking into account academic background and UCAT scores in short listing for interview. Where offers are made, the normal A-level requirements apply and applicants must also have the appropriate background in the relevant subjects at GCSE to fulfil the course requirements. Access Course qualifications are not acceptable. The UCAT and the dental interview must be taken during the year of application.

10 **Graduate Applicants**

Graduate applicants are considered for the normal five-year programme. In making decisions on graduate applications, the full academic background is taken into account. Applicants must have achieved, or have the potential to achieve, at least an Upper Second Class Honours classification in their primary degree and an average of BBB at A-level/B2 B2 B2 B2 B2 B2 at Higher Level in the Leaving Certificate/BBBBB in Scottish Highers at the first attempt. In the case of candidates with a First Class Honours degree or a PhD (plus an upper second class honours degree), a minimum of BBC at A-level or equivalent in other qualifications at the first attempt will be acceptable.

Candidates must have a relevant science background. This must include Chemistry and Biology at A-level or acceptable alternative. A grade C is the lowest grade that will be considered in either Chemistry or Biology at A-level.

For graduates (and those applying in the final year of their degree), at Stage One, 36 points are currently allocated for meeting the academic criteria required to qualify for consideration and points then awarded according to performance in UCAT (as indicated above) to give an overall score for short listing purposes.

Applicants from a non-science background but who fulfil the conditions in terms of grades at A-level at the first attempt and degree performance will be considered if they undertake the appropriate science qualifications on completion of their degree. Such candidates are advised to contact the Admissions and Access Service for guidance.

11 **Irish Leaving Certificate Applicants**

When shortlisting applicants for interview Junior Certificate and UCAT performance (see paragraph 3 above) are important and these are scored. Junior Certificate is scored with 4 points for an A grade and 3 points for a B over the best nine subjects.

Where offers are made these are conditional on obtaining H1H1 (Biology and Chemistry) H1 H1 H2 H2 at Higher Level in the Leaving Certificate. Grade 03 in English and Mathematics at Ordinary Level are required if not offered at Higher Level.

12 **Scottish Applicants**

When short listing applicants for interview, previous academic performance and UCAT are important and will be scored. Applicants with a minimum of AAABB in Scottish Highers are given serious consideration. 32 points are awarded for AAABB; 34 points for AAAAB and 36 points for AAAAA – at the first attempt.

Where conditional offers are made, the standard specified in Advanced Highers is also dependent on performance in Scottish Highers and are AA (for those with AAAAA in Highers); AAB (for those with AAAAB in Highers) and AAA (for those with AAABB in Highers). In all cases, Chemistry (Grade A) and Biology (Grade A) are required. Three Advanced Highers are necessary unless applicants achieved five A grades in their Highers.

If not taken as an Advanced Higher, Standard Grade or Intermediate 2 or National 5 English and Mathematics are also necessary.

13 **International and Non-EU Applicants**

Dentistry has 15 places for International (non-EU) students. The Admissions Process will, in the main, take the same factors as above into account plus evidence of English Language proficiency and examination predictions. International applicants do not need to take UCAT.

Where applicants have not previously taken any formal examinations (eg either GCSEs or O-levels) they will be considered on the basis of High School reports and

this information will also be used to assess whether or not they are able to fulfil subject requirements eg GCSE Mathematics or equivalent.

Online interviews are used and international applicants are not required to travel to Belfast. Candidates should contact the Admissions and Access Service for advice on entry requirements.

All applicants are required to provide the required evidence of proficiency in English Language.

14 **Applicants who have previously withdrawn from Dentistry**

Applicants who previously commenced a Dental Degree at any University and have failed exams or been asked to withdraw from the course for any reason will not be considered.

In the interests of patient and public safety, and to prevent fraudulent applications to courses which lead to entry to a registered profession in the UK, we wish to share some of the information provided in your application form with the Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, Veterinary Schools Councils. If a fitness to practise outcome is made against you in the future, this information and a copy of the decision against you will also be stored on a central database which is accessible only to other schools with courses leading to entry to a registered profession in the UK. It is used only for proper fitness to practise purposes to protect patients and the public, and to prevent fraudulent applications. Where an offer is made, this is conditional on you having disclosed any previous fitness to practise outcomes against you, and your consent being given to this use of information. You have a right of access to any information held about you on the database and to correct any errors.

The University may check information provided in your application form with the database maintained by the Dental Schools Council in relation to students who have been excluded through Fitness to Practise procedures.

The outcome of fitness to practise (FtP) proceedings may be shared with the General Dental Council, Dental Schools Council, Postgraduate Deaneries and the host trust(s) who provide clinical training placements.

15 **Transfer from other Dental Schools**

Because of the intense competition for places to study Dentistry and the integrated nature of the course structure, applications for transfer with credit from candidates who have commenced a dental course at another University are not considered.

16 **Number of Attempts (Applications Permitted)**

In view of the competition for places, it is the policy of the Dental School to allow a maximum of three attempts (ie applications in three different UCAS admissions cycles) overall (including applications made to other Dental Schools) to gain admission and not more than two at either A-level or graduate level.

Age at Graduation

It is a requirement within the Dentists Act 1984 6 (2): “Notwithstanding anything in any enactment, charter or other document, a dental authority (*University*) shall not grant a degree or licence in dentistry to a person who has not attained the age of 21 years.”

Professional Nature of the Course

Dental students must demonstrate during their undergraduate course that they have the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of a registered dentist. Students must be aware that unprofessional behaviour or serious health problems during their dental training can affect their ability to be registered with the General Dental Council (GDC) and to start practising. The GDC is responsible for decisions regarding registration and may consider any issue that could call the fitness to practise of a student into question. This includes anything that happened before or during their education and training, and any decisions made under the University’s Fitness to Practise procedures. Candidates are therefore required to declare any criminal offences and other related matters including cautions (where these are not deemed “protected” see guidance on Access NI website:
<http://www.dojni.gov.uk/index/accessni/disclosures/filtering.htm>)

Entry to the undergraduate dental course will be conditional on a satisfactory criminal records check. International applicants are also required to produce appropriate evidence eg a Certificate of Good Conduct, before admission to the degree and to declare any criminal offences and other related matters including cautions.

Students entering the dental course will also be expected to sign a Student Agreement every year which places an emphasis on the continuing need for professional behaviour and a requirement to declare any convictions or cautions.

All potential applicants should ensure they are familiar with the following two documents which are available on the General Dental Council website: “Student Fitness to Practise” and “Standards for Dental Professionals” (available at www.gdc-uk.org).

Health Issues

Disability

A disability need not bar a candidate from becoming a dentist provided that they have the potential to fulfill the demands of practising as a dental surgeon. Due to the professional nature of the dental undergraduate programme candidates with a known disability must indicate this in their UCAS application and may be asked to provide additional information..

Applicants are required to declare a history of any physical or mental disorder. All such applications will be considered on a case by case basis. If the candidate meets the normal academic criteria for admission to the course but there are concerns over issues relating to health, a special advisory committee separate from the normal admission procedures will be convened. This Committee will take advice from the Occupational Health Service before reaching a decision. Candidates with a disability are strongly advised to read the guidance document produced by the Dental Schools Council and Higher Education Occupational Physicians/Practitioners:

<http://www.dentalschoolscouncil.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Dental-Schools-Council-and-HEOPs-policy-on-Reasonable-Adjustments.pdf>

Health Assessment

Exposure prone procedures (EPPs)

EPPs are defined as 'those invasive procedures where there is a risk that injury to the worker may result in the exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood of the worker. These include procedures where the worker's gloved hands may be in contact with sharp instruments, needle tips or sharp tissues (e.g. spicules of bone or teeth) inside a patient's open body cavity, wound or confined anatomical space where the hands may not be completely visible at all times'. The dental undergraduate course entails extensive clinical practice involving EPPs. Dental students must gain competence in a wide range of EPPs as this is a requirement for gaining GDC registration following graduation.

Additional Health Clearance

All undergraduate dental students must undergo additional health clearance **before acceptance onto the course**. Additional health clearance stipulates that individuals must be non-infectious for HIV (antibody negative or on effective combination antiretroviral therapy [cART] and having a plasma viral load <200 copies/ml, or be an elite controller), hepatitis B (surface antigen negative or, if positive, e-antigen negative with a viral load of 200 IU/ml or less) and hepatitis C (antibody negative or, if positive, negative for hepatitis C RNA).

International applicants transferring to the UK will need to conform to the same testing arrangements as all other entrants to Queen's University dental school.

It should be noted that potential applicants who are found to be infectious carriers of hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV and who are successfully treated and appropriately monitored for their BBV infection will then become eligible to perform EPPs and therefore to apply for admission to dental school.

Candidates who meet the academic conditions of their offer and accept a place will be required to undergo appropriate screening before enrolment in order to demonstrate they meet the satisfactory health clearance condition.

Tuberculosis

Additional health clearance also includes evidence of satisfactory BCG vaccination or Mantoux test result.

The performance of the BBV tests and other tests will be available from the University Occupational Health Service immediately prior to registration for the first year of study. Dental candidates may attend the University Occupational Health Service, by appointment, (Tel:02890 975520) for testing.