



**THE DENTAL STUDENT'S  
GUIDE  
TO  
APPLYING FOR POSTGRADUATE TRAINING**

**PREPARED AS A MEMBER BENEFIT BY  
ALPHA OMEGA INTERNATIONAL DENTAL FRATERNITY**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Your decision to pursue post-doctoral training marks a significant landmark in your dental career. This material will serve as a guide to help you make that choice with the assistance of your fellow Alpha Omegans.

Recommended Timetable:

Winter of Junior Year - Decide on post graduate education

Spring of Junior Year - Write for information; narrow your selection; request applications

June of Junior Year - Submit applications; MATCH program enrollment

Summer of Junior Year - Interview (if applicable)

### **WHEN TO APPLY**

The basic rule is to apply as soon as you have decided what you want to do after graduation. Whether you are applying for a General Practice Residency or for a Dental Specialty Program, the decision should be made by the end of your junior year and applications requested during the summer before you start your senior year. Seek advice from other fraters, specialists, dental school faculty and from Alpha Omega's Postgraduate Education Committee. It is a good idea to visit offices of specialists to discuss, evaluate and determine your actual interest in a specific specialty area.

### **LOCATION OF PROGRAM**

Once you have made the decision to apply for postgraduate training, write to your dental association to request a copy of the brochure "Accredited Advanced Dental Education Programs." This booklet lists all General Practice and Postgraduate Residency Programs and includes information such as the name of the Program Director, the stipend or tuition, the number of students accepted, application deadlines and starting dates. The addresses of the North American Dental Associations are as follows:

American Dental Association  
Council on Dental Education  
211 East Chicago Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312-440-2500

American Student Dental Association  
211 East Chicago Avenue  
Suite 840  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
312-440-2795

Canadian Dental Association  
1815 Alta Vista Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1G 3X6  
613-523-1770

## **NARROWING YOUR CHOICES**

The applications and brochures from the institutions of your choice will help you narrow down your choices. You may be attracted to programs for three reasons: geographic location, program benefits and entrance requirements. You should confer with people who have attended or are attending these programs, your dental school faculty or with your fellow Alpha Omegans who have expertise in the area you will be studying or special knowledge about these programs.

## **NATIONAL MATCHING SERVICE**

Many programs utilize the National Matching Program. First, determine if the programs in which you are interested subscribe to this service. The MATCH is similar to a computer dating service in that the preference of the applicant and those of the programs are computer matched in rank order so that if both applicant and program are ranked number one the computer declares a match and the applicant and program are notified of the selection at the same time. If you enter the MATCH, you are obligated to abide by its rules and meet all deadlines. You can contact the MATCH Service at the following addresses:

National Matching Service  
P.O. Box 1208  
Lewiston, New York 14092  
716-282-4013

or

National Matching Service  
20 Queen Street W  
Suite 200, Box 75  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 3VJ  
Canada  
416-977-3431

## **Postdoctoral Application Support Service (PASS)**

Another service that you will find useful if you apply to a number of programs is Postdoctoral Application Support Service, sponsored by the American Association of Dental Schools. This service functions as a clearinghouse for all documents that you submit to various programs. If you use this service, you mail all material to the PASS. They collect the data and forward it to the respective programs, making the actual application process much simpler for both the applicant and the program. PASS is highly

recommended if your programs accept its use. Information on the PASS program can be obtained from:

American Association of Dental Schools  
Postdoctoral Application Support Service (PASS)  
1625 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036-2212  
202-332-8790  
202-667-0642 (FAX)

## **APPLICATION**

The application itself must be complete, neatly typed and convey a professional appearance. Since programs receive such a large volume of applications, many worthy applications may be downgraded or not considered at all due to a poor appearance. It is critical that your application be typewritten on a word processor and printed on quality paper using a laser or inkjet printer. Everything must be neat, organized and error-free. If a photograph is requested, it should be a professional portrait shot. Nearly all programs require a curriculum vitae (CV). Introducing yourself with a professionally-prepared CV will make a lasting impression on many Program Directors. It should be brief, concise and accurate. The pertinent details should stand out and the needless details omitted. It is crucial that you call the institution a week or so after you mail your application to verify that it was received and is complete.

## **SAMPLE CURRICULUM VITAE**

NAME:  
SCHOOL ADDRESS: HOME ADDRESS:  
SCHOOL PHONE NUMBER: HOME PHONE NUMBER:  
EDUCATION: (List most recent degree first, list all universities attended, dates)  
EMPLOYMENT: (List professional experiences, most recent first)  
TEACHING: (Your title, name of institutions and dates)  
EXTERNSHIPS:  
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE:  
ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE:  
PUBLISHED PAPERS:  
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:  
PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS:  
HOBBIES:  
REFERENCES: (Available on request)

## GOAL STATEMENT

In addition to the CV, your application should include a cover letter stating your goals. This personalized letter gives you the opportunity to sell yourself. A positive listing of your goals and accomplishments should be included. Be assertive in presenting your best side; don't be timid. Tell them what makes you special.

## INTERVIEW

The program will evaluate the applicant using the following criteria: grades, National Board scores and letters of recommendation. If you meet its requirements for selection, you will be invited to an interview. The interview is extremely important in the final selection as it gives you the opportunity to stand out from the other applicants who may have similar credentials.

You should interview at all programs under consideration. If you do not receive an invitation for an interview, call the Program Director and ask if it would be possible to arrange a meeting anyway. This may show a drive and commitment on your part that might not be evident in the written application.

In the late summer before the start of your senior year, call the Program Director stating your interest and desire to be interviewed. There are occasions where you may arrange to be interviewed at national meetings such as the ADA or AAP. Be sure to arrange for an interview well in advance of the deadline for applications. **DO NOT CALL AT THE LAST MINUTE;** this does not put you in a good light with Program Directors. The interview allows you to sell yourself to the Program Director and to evaluate the program.

Try to familiarize yourself with the clinical and research interests of the Program Director or the person who is directing your interview. When you go to an interview you must be **ON TIME**. It is important to dress neatly and be well-groomed. You should be yourself; sincerity, honesty and punctuality are extremely important qualities to present at your interview. It is often helpful to practice with a friend.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Before you make a commitment to a program, you will need a great deal of information. You can obtain this information by asking selective questions of the Program Director, consultants, past and present residents and staff.

The following is a list of sample questions that you may ask or be asked during your interview. Preview these carefully because they will help you determine the type of program you should attend. After your first interview, you should take the time to evaluate the questions and answers. In most cases, you will find the questions that each Program Director asks will be similar so you can be more prepared in future interviews.

Do not make the mistake of taking a submissive role and not asking pertinent questions about the program during the interview.

After the interview, write a thank you note to the person who met with you.

### **SOME QUESTIONS THAT APPLICANTS MIGHT ASK:**

1. What is the length of the program?
2. Does the curriculum qualify you as a specialist in your field?
3. How many full and part-time faculty are there on the postgraduate staff and is their time spread over the week or on a certain day?
4. What is the teaching and clinical involvement of the senior faculty members?
5. Do senior faculty members provide clinical instruction or just lead seminars?
6. What is the stipend and/or tuition?
7. Is it permissible to treat private patients on nights or weekends (moonlighting)?
8. What do the present residents think of the program?
9. Do you know any recent graduates that you can confer with?
10. What is the hospital and/or dental school affiliation?
11. Is a research project required for receiving a certificate and how time-consuming will the project be?
12. Is the program located in an area where you may want to practice?
13. Does the program offer a Master of Science program and how long does it take to receive the degree?
14. Is the patient load adequate to gain the required expertise in your field?
15. How many other residents are there?
16. Is there a certain philosophy of treatment taught and how much latitude is there in trying new techniques?
17. What percent of the time is allocated to clinical and didactic time?
18. How organized is the didactic curriculum?
19. How are off-service rotations integrated into the program?
20. Are the physical facilities modern and adequate for the number of residents?
21. Does the institution have adequate funding for supplies, equipment and staff?
22. What is the institution's reputation?
23. What other postgraduate programs are offered?
24. What is the Emergency and On-Call policy?
25. Are the library facilities adequate and provide the necessary access in terms of hours, computer searches and interlibrary loans?
26. Were the present residents picked as top choices or were they on the alternate list?
27. What is the background of the residents in terms of dental school, class standing, geographic areas, Alpha Omegans etc.
28. What evaluation procedures are used to review resident performance?
29. Do the residents evaluate the program at various intervals?
30. Does the institution keep detailed records of all resident activities?
31. Are there an adequate number of outpatients, inpatients and admissions to enable the resident to become sufficiently knowledgeable in the field?

32. How are patients referred to the residents for treatment?
33. Does the program offer comprehensive care to patients or a block rotation system?
34. How much laboratory work is required of the residents?
35. Does the program have strong support from the administration of the institution?
36. Is there a residents manual stating the objectives of the program and is it followed by all staff members?
37. Does the Program Director have adequate time to perform his/her duties?
38. How fair is the Program Director?
39. How accessible is the Program Director?
40. How well qualified is the Program Director in terms of counseling and consultation ability?
41. How interested is the faculty in teaching?
42. What is the status of the morale of the faculty and staff?
43. Is the program affiliated with a trauma hospital?
44. How many residents are accepted each year?
45. How often do you meet with your Attending Dentists?
46. What are the off service rotations?
47. How much time is spent on off service rotations such as Anesthesia or Medicine?
48. Are there block rotations to each specialty area or is there comprehensive care?
49. What is the ratio of residents to Attendings?
50. What are the demographics of the patient population?
51. How many Operating Room cases are performed and do the Post Graduate Residents get to perform actual cases in the OR?
52. Can ideal treatment be performed?
53. Are there financial limitations to what can be performed in terms of treatment?
54. How is IV and conscious sedation taught?
55. How much outpatient general anesthesia, IV and conscious sedation is performed?
56. What is the schedule for lectures and literature reviews?
57. What didactic courses are required for certification?
58. Are residents required to purchase cameras and/or instruments?
59. What are the program's philosophies of treatment?
60. Can other treatment philosophies be attempted?
61. What is the patient load for implant placement and restoration?
62. What is the relationship with other departments such as periodontics or restorative?
63. What are the case requirements?
64. How many years are required for completion of the program?
65. Is an MD program offered or required (Oral Surgery)?
66. What is the hospital affiliation with the program?
67. How much trauma, TMJ, orthognathic and implant surgery is performed?
68. What is the relation between oral and maxillofacial surgery, ENT, and plastic surgery?
69. What types of research facilities are available and is a research project required?

70. What is the reputation of the institution and its staff?
71. What is the relationship between oral and maxillofacial surgery and other dental disciplines such as orthodontics?
72. How many types of (specialty) procedures and philosophies are taught?
73. Does the program stress technique or diagnosis?

#### **TYPICAL QUESTIONS ASKED BY INTERVIEWERS**

1. What prompted your interest in (**specialty**)?
2. Have you ever been an (**specialty**) patient?
3. What courses did you enjoy most in dental school?
4. Do you enjoy treating children or adults?
5. What is your (**specialty**) experience?
6. What do you feel is the future of (**specialty**)?
7. In what manner could successful (**specialty**) treatment provide physical and mental improvement for a patient?
8. Why do you want to come to this program?
9. What fields of dentistry did you like the least in dental school?
10. Describe your academic standing at your school.
11. What extracurricular activities do you participate in?
12. Describe any research or special projects that you have participated in.
13. Are you planning to practice in this area?
14. Do you feel that you can function in a big group practice as opposed to a single practice?
15. Tell me about yourself.
16. Tell me about a specific technique for (almost anything in dentistry).
17. What does the literature say about (almost anything in dentistry). The interviewer may be trying to find out if you know anything about his/her published research or techniques. Be sure to become familiar with his/her publications prior to the interview.
18. What do you feel are the greatest challenges facing dentistry today and in the future?
19. How do you picture yourself practicing five or ten years from now?
20. Are you interested in pursuing an academic or clinical career?