

Preparing for the DAT

The Dental Admission Test (DAT) is designed to measure general academic achievement, comprehension of scientific information, and perceptual ability. There are four sections on the DAT:

1. Quantitative Reasoning Test (algebra, some trigonometry and math reasoning questions)
2. Reading Comprehension Test
3. Survey of the Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry & organic chemistry, genetics)
4. Perceptual Ability Test

*For specific information on what is covered in each section, consult the Dental Admission Testing Program booklet published by the ADA.

For helpful classes see Predental Coursework handout

PREP COURSES

Prep courses are helpful and they may provide extra motivation to study because of the money invested. They are also taught by experienced tutors and can help you to regulate your time. Remember that a prep course is supposed to supplement, not substitute, your hours of personal study.

STUDYING FOR THE DAT

Treat studying for the test as you would a four or five semester-hour class. Start preparing for the DAT at least six months before you take the actual test. Set aside a definite time each day to study. Get organized and establish a consistent and habitual study pattern of all topics over which you will be tested, beginning with your weakest areas.

Individual study is not as expensive as prep courses are; however, it is not as guided. Whether you choose to study on your own or in a small group, learn each concept well enough to explain that you can explain it to others.

TIPS FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY

- Computer software packages are available that ask DAT-type questions and explain the answers. For information contact any computer software store.
- Purchase review manuals.
 - Strongly Recommended: The Dental Admission Testing Program DAT Guide is available as a downloadable PDF document at www.ada.org.
 - Suggested: Examcrackers, Barron's, Kaplan, and Flowers. These and other manuals are available at the BYU Bookstore, online, and at local retailers.
- Read the sub-tests in the DAT Guide. Scan all questions in the manual. Note which areas are your weakest. (This should be done at least five to six months before the exam).
- Take practice exams. These exams can be found in DAT review books and in the DAT review courses. It is particularly beneficial to take a sample or diagnostic DAT before you begin preparing for the test. The diagnostic exam will enable you to determine your weak areas.
- Make flash cards for basic laws, formulas, and important cycles, and quiz during spare moments. It is more helpful to create your own flash cards than to buy them.
- Don't skip difficult concepts while preparing.

REGISTERING FOR THE DAT

Registering for a day to take the DAT takes foresight and a little planning. It can take as much as a week for your request to process before you're even able to pick your date. It is best to register 2-4 weeks before you want to take the exam, but it's never too early to register.

Steps:

- Visit the American Dental Association website at ada.org/education/manage-your-dentpin
 1. Under the Register for a DENTPIN header click "Register Today"
 2. If the above website doesn't work, use the following menu items
(www.ada.org → Education → DENTPIN → under Register for a DENTPIN header, click "Register Today")
 1. DENTPIN applications are processed on Tuesdays, so it could take up to a week for you to receive your identification #.
- After receiving your Identification number
 1. Visit ada.org/education/testing/exams/dental-admission-test-dat
 2. Click on "Find a test site"
 3. After entering in your state/country click Schedule an Appointment at the top of the next page.
 4. When prompted, your eligibility ID is your DENTPIN

TAKING THE DAT

- One week before the DAT, take at least one full-length practice exam. Avoid burnout from excessive cramming. Take time for physical activity to refresh the body and mind.
- Get a good night's sleep the night before the DAT, but not too much. Eat a well-balanced breakfast that morning.
- During the DAT read questions carefully, especially on the reading and quantitative analysis sections. Remember that wrong guesses are not penalized. Eliminate obviously wrong choices, then make a best guess. Don't leave any question blank. Watch the time carefully and pace yourself.
- Relax between sections and don't worry about the section you just completed.