
Why I Want To Become A Dental Student

My exposure to dentistry as a prospective career path came from spending time with my grandmother, who suffers from Bipolar disorder. Depression and lethargy meant she was unable to care for her health, most notably her teeth. Her self-esteem became very low; she developed acute, painful Periodontal disease and became reliant on dentures. Her experience allowed me to appreciate the extent of the positive impact that dentistry can have on a patient's life, as once the dentures were in place her self-esteem improved enormously. I realized that whilst I can access dental treatment and care easily, that is not the case for everyone. Understanding that not only does a dentist have the opportunity to improve the mouth practically; but a dentist has the ability to contribute to their patients' overall well-being by creating an environment of support and compassion was inspirational.

My decision to pursue a career in dentistry was reinforced through work experience which I organized and undertook at an NHS practice and dental hospital. I have shadowed professionals in several dental specialties to observe what this expanding profession entails. I witnessed an array of complex procedures such as root canal treatment, implant preparation and tooth bridging. During placements, I became aware of the confidence and resilience required to treat patients to the best of your ability, irrespective of time constraints. Shadowing clinicians working in Special Care clinic was touching as it was for patients with physical and mental disabilities.

The challenges that practices face was emphasized during my time here. Great empathy and respect was shown by the dentists, building trust and establishing positive relationships with patients as well as treating them clinically. A dentist requires a desire to learn, excellent manual dexterity, understanding, dedication and strong communication skills. My ability to manage time effectively without losing my academic focus has allowed me to maintain extracurricular interests to develop these qualities.

My diligence and perseverance are reflected in my commitment to sport where I have been awarded the Paddy Craig Memorial Prize for my outstanding dedication. Success in this challenging profession is dependent upon interpersonal relationships with patients and healthcare professionals. As captain of the school netball team, I have been able to develop leadership and teamwork skills whilst furthering my ability to communicate. My passion is sprinting which, like dentistry, has a minimal margin of error. Having become South West Scotland 100m Champion and ranked in the national top 10, experience in this specialism has improved my hand-eye-coordination, spatial awareness and ability to remain focused under pressure; crucial skills required when carrying out delicate treatments. I have been able to use my manual dexterity further in art where I won Young Artist of the Year. The subtle changes in holistic approach which the dentists I shadowed used when treating each patient was inspiring.

Being House Captain at school has allowed me to acquire the interpersonal skills required as a dentist. I fulfill this leadership role effectively because I can relate to a wide range of people, whether giving encouragement, support or advice. Volunteering has given me the opportunity to develop as a confident, caring and empathetic individual; gaining my 200-hour Saltire Award through coaching disabled athletes. Whilst studying science subjects, I have entered national

biology competitions; achieving Silver in the UK Biology Challenge and Bronze in the UK Biology Olympiad. It is imperative for a dentist to be self-motivated and my effort to increase my breadth of scientific knowledge out with my qualifications reflects this.

Dentistry is a unique profession and one which I believe I am eminently suited to. I possess the unique skills, determination and enthusiasm to cope with the challenges being a dental student will present.

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