

Office of Student and Academic Affairs
Guide for Entering Dental Students
2026-2027

Class of 2030



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Letter of Welcome

Dear Students:

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and administration of UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry, I extend a hearty welcome to the Class of 2030. We now count you among our 600 active undergraduate, professional, and advanced education students and residents, and you have a special place in the School of Dentistry family.

We know your expectations are high, and we share your enthusiasm. You're embarking on a journey that will change your life and the lives of those you care about. Along the way, you'll forge friendships with classmates who may be strangers today but will soon become lifelong colleagues and friends.

As you begin your studies, we challenge you to participate, question, contribute, and innovate as you learn. I encourage you to be active learners outside the classroom — in the lab, clinics, and even the hallways and casual or virtual gathering places. Information today is constant and easily accessible, so stay current via email, newsletters, town hall meetings, social media, and other means. Be active in class meetings, student organizations, and volunteer opportunities. Doing so will enhance your experiences in ways that will pay off for a lifetime.

We look forward to working with you over the next few years and to celebrating together when you join the ranks of more than 10,000 School of Dentistry alumni.

If you have questions or need information, please don't hesitate to ask for help. Be sure to check out the information in this guide, and please accept our best wishes for continued success along your path of learning. We never forget you're the reason we're here! Warmest regards,



Dean John A. Valenza, D.D.S.

William N. Finnegan III Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Dental Sciences

History of the UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry

For more than 110 years, UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry has set the standard for oral health excellence by educating outstanding dentists and dental hygienists, discovering new oral health advancements, and caring for the people of Texas. Founded in 1905 as the privately owned Texas Dental College, the School of Dentistry was the first dental school in Texas and the first professional school in Houston. The school became part of The University of Texas System (UT System) in 1943 as “The University of Texas School of Dentistry” and in 1955 was renamed “The University of Texas Dental Branch,” a name it held until June 1, 2011, when it again became the UT School of Dentistry. In 1945, the UT System Board of Regents authorized the creation of the Dental Hygiene Program as part of the School of Dentistry, and the first dental hygiene class was admitted in 1955. Since 1972, the School of Dentistry has been part of the UTHealth Houston system, and today is referred to as UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry.

The school offers 12 accredited programs: DDS, dental hygiene, two primary care general residency programs and specialty programs in endodontics, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthodontics, pediatric dentistry, periodontics, and prosthodontics, two dual degree programs DDS/MPH & BSDH/MPH, as well as an MD degree through the McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Houston, with an oral and maxillofacial surgery certificate.

UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry

Calendar 2026-2027

DATES

AUGUST 17, 2026	Fall Semester Begins
SEPTEMBER 7	Holiday – Labor Day
NOVEMBER 26-27	Holiday - Thanksgiving
DECEMBER 7	Finals Begin
DECEMBER 18	Fall Semester Ends
JANUARY 4, 2027	Spring Semester Begins
JANUARY 18	Holiday – Martin Luther King, JR.
MARCH 15-19	Spring Break
APRIL 30	Didactic Classes End
MAY 14	Fall Semester Ends
JUNE 1	Summer Semester Begins
JUNE 18	Holiday - Juneteenth
JULY 5	Holiday – Independence Day

UTHealth Houston School of Dentistry

Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)

Education Program Curriculum

The Doctor of Dental Surgery curriculum is designed to maximize the students' learning experiences through a structured presentation of basic sciences, pre-clinical training, and clinical activities. There is integration across disciplines to aid the student in assimilating the foundational knowledge and skills necessary for comprehensive patient care. The building blocks are the various courses, laboratories, and clinics offered at the School of Dentistry. Our goal is for you to graduate after four years of study, competent to practice general dentistry.

Courses use a variety of educational instruments to aid the student in learning. These include traditional lectures, problem-based learning sessions, written self-directed materials, textbooks, and other printed materials, as well as non-printed materials such as videos and Canvas-posted electronic resources. A syllabus is provided for each course as a guide.

The syllabus contains all the necessary information for successful completion of the course. A goal is stated, describing the overall aim of the course. Every course syllabus includes a list of behavioral objectives, i.e., what the student should know or be able to do upon successful completion of the course. Comprehension of these objectives allows the student to reach the educational goal. The syllabus also contains a list of resources used to achieve the course objectives. These resources include media, online, and human resources.

All syllabi have a suggested study plan and state the specific requirements of the course. Finally, all course syllabi list evaluation methods used to determine the course grade. This section states not only the type of examination/evaluation that will be administered, but also the relative weights of other evaluation instruments, e.g., quizzes, laboratory projects, etc.

The courses presented at the School of Dentistry have been scheduled to promote integration of information and timely progress from one course to the next. Students are required to attend all scheduled course sessions as presented in the semester schedule. The organization of instructional material is intended to help students appreciate the interrelationships among the various academic and clinical disciplines. Students are exposed to clinical experience in the first year and assume the responsibility for comprehensive patient care following pre-clinical training in the second year of the curriculum. As an addition to the core curriculum, the school's electives program offers enrichment courses in a variety of areas beyond the scope of the required pre-doctoral curriculum. Every student must complete four credit hours of elective courses and two continuing education courses in addition to the core curriculum.

The academic year is composed of two 18-week semesters. An eight-week summer session follows the first, second, and third years. School of Dentistry students are expected to complete their dental studies within four years. The graduation time is scheduled to coincide with the Western Regional Examining Board Examination.

Advisors

A faculty advisor is assigned to each student at the beginning of the academic year. The student is strongly recommended to meet with the advisor for an orientation meeting at the beginning of each semester and maintain regular contact throughout the year. The advisor will monitor the student's progress through their academic program and serve as a mentor and counselor when needed. The advisor will refer the student for services and support as necessary, and the student should consider the advisor as the first person to contact whenever advice is needed.

Student Peer Mentor Program

In the next few months, you will receive information from the second-year class about scrubs, mentors, and student "survival kits." Each first-year student is assigned a peer mentor from the second-year class to facilitate the transition of the students entering dental school. First-year dental students meet their second-year peer mentor during orientation week. Thereafter, student pairs meet as needed during the year.

Office of Student and Academic Affairs

The Office of Student and Academic Affairs provides student and academic services for applicants, current students and residents, and faculty. Student Affairs is responsible for admissions, student records, student life, and support services; Academic Affairs is committed to the pursuit of excellence in all the School of Dentistry's students and academic activities.

Email

All UTHealth Houston students are assigned a UTH.edu email address. This is the university's primary method of communicating important messages to you. Students are responsible for checking their UTH.edu email daily.

Registration

Applicants and student services are provided through [myUTH](#). Once your applicant information is loaded into the student system, you will receive two email notifications providing you with login instructions.

Upon receiving your login information, students should use [myUTH](#) to:

- View Account information/To Do list/Holds
- You must submit your immunizations through [myUTH](#) by logging in and selecting the immunizations link. This may be found under the “Holds and To-Dos” sections. List required dates and upload your immunization documentation and supporting proof. You will be able to upload multiple documents.
- Remove Health Insurance HOLD (this will need to be done each year before enrollment)
- Select an installment plan
- Make online payments
- Update your contact information
- Request transcripts
- View grades and course history

Doctor of Dental Surgery students are enrolled in classes by the Registrar’s Office. A variety of information regarding graduation, registration, and student information is listed on the [Office of the Registrar’s website](#) or by using the following methods:

Phone: 713-500-3361

Email: Registrar@uth.tmc.edu

Fax: 713-500-3356

If issues are encountered logging into myUTH, contact the HELP Desk at 713-486-4848.

Criminal Background Check

School of Dentistry acceptance is conditional until a criminal background check is completed. The dental school has selected an outside company, Pre-Check, to conduct these checks. Please visit the [Accepted Students](#) webpage for more information.

The results will be released directly to the School of Dentistry. If untoward search results are identified, applicants will be informed and subsequently given the opportunity to contest/question the report with the vendor. Please keep in mind that they need time to process each accepted student, and this must be completed by June 1.

CPR Training

Accepted students must complete CPR training prior to orientation. If one does not have a current, valid CPR Certificate, please be sure to take CPR training before June 26, 2026. The

course is required to be: A cognitive and skills evaluation in accordance with the curriculum of the American Heart Association Basic Life Support (BLS) for Healthcare Providers (CPR & AED) Program. Skills demonstration must be completed in person (didactic components may be completed online via heart.org). CPR certifications must be completed outside of our institution.

Please submit a copy of your certification via e-mail to Crystal.Johnson@uth.tmc.edu no later than June 26, 2026.

Certification must be valid until Dec. 31, 2026.

Orientation

A required three-day orientation for first-year dental students will be conducted Aug. 11-13, 2026. Students should be present in Room 4310 of the School of Dentistry on Aug. 11 at 8 a.m. Slacks/pants/skirts and collared shirts/blouses are recommended — no jeans or shorts please. Comfortable shoes are suggested as much walking is involved.

Textbooks

As in the case of instruments, students will need specific required textbooks and manuals. Students purchase books at the School of Dentistry Bookstore (Room 2202). For approximate cost of books and supplies can be found on the [Student Financial Services website](#).

Magnification

All first-year students enrolled in the DDS program must have visual magnification for use in preclinical courses and clinics. Various companies will have representatives present at the School of Dentistry during the middle part of the year to display their products. First-year dental students will be able to ask these representatives questions about their products and determine which product is most appropriate for their use. The financial aid budget includes an amount towards the purchase of magnification.

Health Insurance Requirements for All Students

The University of Texas System Board of Regents mandates health insurance for all students enrolled in the UT System health components. As such, each UTHealth Houston student who cannot provide evidence of continuing coverage under another approved plan will be enrolled in the student insurance plan with Academic HealthPlans and assessed a health insurance fee.

Before being able to register for classes each semester, every student must complete the health insurance certification process through their [myUTH](#) account. Through this process, students either provide proof of their own coverage or confirm their participation in Academic

HealthPlans. For students who attest to coverage under another approved plan, the health insurance fee will not be assessed to their student account.

For information regarding UTHHealth Houston insurance plans and fees, please visit the [Auxiliary Enterprises website](#), or email Student-Insurance@uth.tmc.edu or call 713-500-8400.

Instruments and Supplies

All first-year dental students must participate in the dental instrument rental program. **The expendable instrument and supply kit must be purchased from the School of Dentistry Bookstore (Room 2202) before the start of classes (during orientation).**

Purchase may be made with cash, personal check, Master Card, Visa, Discover, or American Express. The estimated cost of the first-year expendable kit for Fall 2026 is \$8,129.23.

School of Dentistry Educational Support Services (Room 3450) provides many items that can be checked out and used as needed at no additional cost, other than for loss or damage. Some of these items are Instrument Cases, Microscopes, Surveyors, Casting Equipment, and Gypsum Materials.

Message from Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs

Attention: Incoming Class

Incoming students are no longer allowed to purchase used dental kits. DDS and Dental Hygiene kits must be purchased as a complete set from the School of Dentistry Bookstore. Any student who does not purchase the kit from the bookstore will not be allowed to matriculate into the School of Dentistry as a first-year student.

This may seem like a draconian measure, but the purpose of this mandatory requirement is to ensure that all students have proper and safe equipment to use while in the clinic and lab. This will ensure that you have all the materials you will need to complete the first year, that all your products will be covered under warranty in case there is a problem, and that you do not end up buying a partial kit that will make extra expenses later. This has become an issue within the institution, and we have taken this step for your protection.

More information about the cost and when to purchase the kit will be coming soon. We just wanted to make sure that you do not buy an unapproved kit. Thanks, and see you soon!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Spears". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "S".

Robert Spears, PhD

Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs

Professor, Department of Diagnostic and Biomedical Sciences

Laptop Requirements

- A working web camera is REQUIRED for in-person and remote assessments
- Laptop computer (PC or Mac) with at least a 13-inch screen
- Minimum of 8GB RAM
- TPM chip – **This is for PC users only**. You can find out if your computer has a TPM Chip by searching your computer using your RUN feature for “tpm.msc”.
- PC users must run Windows 11 (Education, Pro, or Enterprise). Mac users must have Mac OS Sequoia (15) or higher
- Microsoft Office (Can be downloaded from Office.com once you have your UTH email address)
- An up-to-date virus scanner
- 3M monitor privacy filter (Gold screen is recommended)

Not Authorized

Microsoft Surface tablets or **Chromebooks** are not sufficient to meet the laptop requirements. **Virtual machines** are not sufficient and are restricted by ExamSoft, the school’s exam service.

Encryption

- **The hard drive in your laptop must be encrypted before the end of the first month of their 1st year at the School of Dentistry. This is a requirement by UTHealth IT Security and failure to complete this step can and will result in the loss of access to school resources.**
- Mac users must turn on FileVault 2.
- PC users must encrypt their laptop with BitLocker. Students who are attending the School of Dentistry will be added to a technology orientation course on Canvas during the week of Orientation to complete their laptop verification process.
- All students will be required to sign a statement declaring they will keep their computer hard drives encrypted for as long as they are students at the School of Dentistry.
- You will complete a technology orientation course to approve the use of your laptop at the School of Dentistry.

Check Cashing and Mail

Accommodation for cashing personal checks must be arranged through one of the local banks. Once Houston residence has been established, personal mail should be sent to that address since UTHealth Houston does not handle personal mail for students or employees. We would also recommend that students utilizing Financial Aid take advantage of the direct deposit option.

Parking

Student contract parking is available. For more information, please visit [Parking Services](#).

You can call 713-500-3405 or email parking@uth.tmc.edu for further assistance.

Student Organizations

There are several organizations that provide an opportunity for the School of Dentistry students to become familiar with the activities of professional societies. These include the Texas Dental Association, American Student Dental Association, Zeb Poindexter Chapter of the Student National Dental Association, Hispanic Student Dental Association, Asian American Student Dental Association, Christian Dental Fellowship, Muslim Health Professional Society, American Dental Education Association, Texas Association of Women Dentists, Student Research Group, Pediatric Education in the Dental Society, Donald Butler Dental Society, AGD Student Chapter, and others.

All students regularly enrolled at the School of Dentistry are members of the Student Association, which coordinates several student-related activities. The School of Dentistry Student Council serves as the governing body of the Student Association. Members of the School of Dentistry Student Council are the elected officers from each class. Students may also participate in UTHealth Houston student organizations such as the Student InterCouncil.

Fraternalities represented at the School of Dentistry are Delta Sigma Delta, Alpha Omega, and Psi Omega. More information on Dental Fraternalities will be provided during Orientation.

The Mu Mu Chapter of Omicron Kappa Upsilon, the National Honor Dental Society, was established in 1940. This society recognizes students who have been outstanding in their class during their four years of training at the School of Dentistry. Members of the graduating class who warrant such consideration, in the opinion of faculty members of OKU, are recommended to the Officers of Omicron Kappa Upsilon for membership in the honor society. The chapter annually recognizes the top ten percent of the first-year class at the OKU Awards Convocation in the spring.

Essential Skills for Dentists and Dental Hygienists

To be successful, dentists and dental hygienists must demonstrate cognitive skills in critical and logical/analytical thinking. Dentists and dental hygienists must possess and demonstrate psychomotor skills (fine motor dexterity and coordination) and observational skills (vision, hearing, and tactile abilities) sufficient to master the clinical procedures essential in the treatment of dental disease.

All individuals who apply for admission to the School of Dentistry, without exception, must be able to perform essential functions, with or without reasonable accommodation. Essential functions are the basic activities that a student must be able to perform to complete the curriculum. An applicant who cannot perform the following essential functions will not be considered for admission nor permitted to continue in the program. If you feel you cannot fulfill any of these functions, you are to contact the Associate Dean for Student and Academic Affairs immediately.

Communication

Students must be able to communicate effectively with patients and patient family members, peers, staff, faculty, and other members of the health care team. Communication requires the ability to assess all information provided by the patient, including non-verbal responses, within safety-related timeframes. Students must be able to communicate in oral and written formats that are succinct, organized, and complete. These communications will include assessments, prescriptions, and dental record notes. Students must be able to demonstrate sensitivity to cultural, emotional, and societal issues.

Sensory and Psychomotor Skills

Students must be able to gather patient information needed for a diagnosis through adequate visual, tactile, smell, and auditory senses. Students must have sufficient physical abilities and stamina to provide dental care and respond to emergency situations. Students must have the manual dexterity to execute both gross and fine motor movements required to provide dental care for their patients within the mandated time frame established by the curriculum and licensing boards.

Cognitive Abilities

Students must have cognitive abilities to master the dental curriculum, including the basic, behavioral, and clinical sciences. Students must be able to measure, calculate, reason, analyze, synthesize, integrate, and apply information. In addition, students must be able to comprehend three-dimensional relationships and to understand the spatial relationships required to provide

dental care. Students must be able to demonstrate critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills required in the practice of dentistry.

Behavioral and Social Abilities

Students must be able to demonstrate professional behavior and function with integrity and responsibility while maintaining a high ethical standard. In addition, the students must be able to demonstrate the ability to be compassionate, emphatic and tolerant. Students must be able to interact in a collegial manner and demonstrate the ability to participate in teamwork.

Students must possess the emotional health required to use their intellectual abilities fully, such as exercising good judgment, promptly completing all responsibilities attendant to the diagnosis and care of patients, and developing mature, sensitive, and effective relationships with patients. Students must be able to tolerate physically taxing workloads and to function effectively under stress. Students must be able to adapt to changing environments, respond appropriately to unpredictable circumstances, and to display flexibility.

Chronic Conditions

Students must not be subject to any chronic or recurrent illnesses that interfere with quality patient care or safety and are incompatible with dental practice or training.

Policies and Responsibilities

Professionalism

Professionalism is defined as, “the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterize or mark a profession or a professional person.” While these characteristics may vary from profession to profession, the practice of dentistry requires professionalism that goes far beyond basic honesty and integrity. The faculty and administration are dedicated to the development of professionalism in all School of Dentistry students. One aim of the institution is to create a learning environment, which offers students the opportunity to develop standards of excellence, which will sustain them throughout their professional careers.

Personal Hygiene

Students should follow good principles of personal hygiene daily. Men should be clean-shaven, or if wearing a beard or mustache, it should be a neat trim. Hands and fingernails should be clean, with fingernails trimmed to be no longer than the end of the finger.

ATTIRE

Students are expected to always maintain a professional appearance, which is consistent with the highest professional standards and one that projects an image in the mind of the public of cleanliness, competence, and professionalism. During operating hours, students are prohibited

from wearing shorts. Men's shirts must have sleeves, and women are prohibited from wearing tank tops or halters. Baseball caps, jeans, and non-School of Dentistry T-shirts are not considered appropriate attire in classes, pre-clinical laboratories, or clinics. Preferred attire for classes and clinics is surgical scrubs. Scrubs allow for a professional appearance, are relatively inexpensive, durable, and comfortable. The vertically integrated intra-professional nature of our clinics does require differentiation between the various classes of dental and dental hygiene students; a scrub color variation allows for this distinction. The class will be asked to wear one of the following colors: Navy, New Navy, Teal, Wine, Seaspray, Caribbean, Galaxy Blue, Ciel, Granite, or Sand.

The color for the **entering 2026 class is Ceil Blue**. Students who are not compliant with these minimal dress requirements will not be allowed to remain in the building.

Estimated First Year Dental Education Costs

Tuition and fees are subject to change and become effective on the date enacted. The Texas Legislature does not set the specific amount for any student fee. Student fees are authorized by state statute; the specific fee amounts and the determination to increase fees are made by the university administration and The University of Texas System Board of Regents.

For an estimated cost of tuition and fees, please visit the following link for a detailed breakdown: <https://www.uth.edu/bursars/studentresources/tuition-fees/school-of-dentistry>.

Required Fees: <https://www.uth.edu/bursars/student-resources/tuition-fees/required-fees-all-schools>

Student Services Fees: <https://www.uth.edu/bursars/student-resources/tuition-fees/student-service-fees>

Cost of Attendance: <https://www.uth.edu/sfs/cost-of-attendance.htm>

Financial Aid

The awarding of financial aid through UTHealth Houston is limited by available funds. All awards are made based on established financial need. Any funds awarded will be released on the first day of orientation. To continue receiving financial aid, a student must maintain satisfactory academic progress and submit the annual renewal application.

The Office of Student Financial Services strongly encourages all students to enroll in direct deposit to expedite the receipt of and access to funds.

For further information or to obtain a loan application:

Office of Student Financial Services

Email: <https://www.uth.edu/sfs/>

Phone: 713-500-3860

Student Health Services

The Student Health Service is in the University of Texas Professional Building, 6410 Fannin St., Suite 130. For further information or an appointment, they can be contacted at 713-500-5171 or via their website at <https://www.uth.edu/studenthealth/>.

Recreation Center: For detailed information about your student membership and optional services for family members, please visit: <https://www.uth.edu/recreation-center/>.

UTHealth Houston and School of Dentistry Administration

School of Dentistry school admin and faculty:

<https://catalog.uth.edu/dentistry/about/administration-faculty/>

UTHealth Houston Executive Leadership: <https://catalog.uth.edu/general-information/about/uthealth-houston-administration/>

UTHealth Houston Telephone numbers you may find useful:

Location:	Address:	Phone:
Student Counseling	University Center Tower, Ste. 1670	713-500-3327
Student Health Services	UT Professional Bldg., Ste. 130	713-500-5171
Office of Student and Academic Affairs	School of Dentistry, SOD 4120	713-486-4151

Administration:	Contact Information:
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