

What are the best things about attending The University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston?

The University of Texas School of Dentistry offers a dual degree MPH/DDS program, which is a strong draw for anyone interested in the public health aspects of dentistry. This program is completed through online courses, an integrated learning experience (basically a project that culminates in some sort of written final product), and a practicum. The program provides a complete background in thinking about public health issues and the means to analyze and address them. Generally the classes require many online discussion posts where students respond to open ended questions, so we have the opportunity to research, learn, and report on the public health issue we are most interested in, while also reading about issues we may not have realized existed through our classmates' responses. The program started in 2017 and is being adjusted and I think that there is room for improvement to further integrate the public health knowledge with dental applications.

The University of Texas School of Dentistry is beginning to use CAD/CAM technology at the school. There is now a digital dentistry course where students work with faculty to learn how to scan, design, and mill crowns, so that we can become familiar with digital technology. We are told that starting in the fall of 2019, students will be able to scan and mill crowns for patients in the clinic

As a Texas resident, a major upside to attending the University of Texas School of Dentistry is the relatively low cost of tuition. Additionally, the cost of living is not as high as some other major cities in the nation, so generally the student debt accrued is less than other institutions. I have also talked to many of my out-of-state classmates, and they say that the non-resident tuition is similar to the resident tuition of their respective home states. Students are also eligible for university housing. It is cheaper housing solely for UT Health students and researchers, and it is also within walking distance from the dental school, which is awesome.

Our school is very involved with ASDA. National membership is included in our tuition and there are numerous opportunities to get involved. The school really promotes ASDA participation through the chapter leadership positions, district leadership positions, committee positions, and numerous conferences throughout the year. Faculty and the Student Affairs office are incredibly supportive and flexible in accommodating students who travel for ASDA events.

At our school, we are responsible for managing our patients and filling our own schedules. This provides us with the opportunity to learn how to interact with patients. As my practice director explained, some day many of us are going to own our own practices and we are going to hire front desk staff, who are arguably the most important people in the office, because they set the tone of patient interaction. And if

we don't even know how to answer the phone and talk to patients, how can we expect to train our front desk staff to do so effectively?

What are the worst things about attending The University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston?

I mentioned managing and scheduling our own patients as one of the pros of our program. However, it is worth noting that it belongs on the list of cons as well. Since we schedule our own patients, if our patient no-shows or cancels last minute then we have nothing to do for that clinic session, besides assisting a classmate. I have heard that other schools will ensure that there is a patient to fill your chair, so you have something to do every day, but that is not the case at our program. This could potentially mean that those who are not able to manage their patients well, ensuring they come to all scheduled appointments, may waste more clinic sessions and struggle to complete graduation requirements. Managing patients also adds an extra stress level on students: not only are we concerned about classes, exams, or the procedure we are about to do, but we must always think of the next patient we have to call or schedule, often needing to step out of lecture to answer patient phone calls.

Our school does not have a cafeteria or food options. We have a convenience corner that caters food such as tacos and chicken tenders. However, we are in the process of changing food service providers, so I am not sure what our food options are going to look like in the future. Regardless, it is safe to say that the food options at our school are extremely limited, borderline non-existent.

The area around the dental school is not the safest area. Although I am able to walk to school, it is most definitely not an area where I feel comfortable walking around after the sun has set.

What do students need to know/what do you wish you knew before attending The University of Texas School of Dentistry at Houston?

One of the unique pre-requisites to this program is Microbiology. Me and several of my classmates who took gap years after finishing undergrad had not taken microbiology, so we needed to take it at local community colleges for the credit.