

What are the best things about attending the University of Kentucky Dental School?

First and foremost, the clinical experience here is really strong. We begin seeing patients the first semester of second year, increasing the amount of time we spend with patients during each subsequent semester. By the time fourth year rolls around, which is 80% clinical, each student already has a list of patients and experiences to make them confident with the increased clinic load. Fourth year students are allowed to work pretty independently with most of the faculty. By this point in school, many have had the opportunity to do some more advanced procedures such as full mouth extractions, implant placement, and complex prosthetic cases. In other words, if you want to good experience in all aspects of dentistry, even pediatric dentistry, you really can make the experience to be what you want it to be.

All students are required to participate in a four-week externship between D3 and D4. This has proven beneficial in increasing clinical skill and competency, as well as gaining a real-life experience for how dentistry will feel post-graduation.

Covering faculty in clinic range from seasoned private practitioners (experienced and passionate), young (and very capable) private practitioners, and of course academic faculty. I prefer working with those who have more private practice experience, they have a more realistic approach to treatment. There is usually someone available to help throughout the procedure, though you may have to wait a bit at times depending on the day.

Class size averages 65 students, and the admissions committee really does a nice job selecting a cohesive group of students. They focus most on selecting well-rounded applicants rather than preferring only the academic geniuses, which creates good mix of personalities. We spend a lot of time together over these years, so it's nice to have a good mix of people.

The previous dean, Stephanos Kyrkanides, did a fantastic job updating the dental school, and current faculty members continue to do all that they can to modernize the pedagogy and improve the learning experience. Both student clinic floors are newly renovated, with the addition of a digital dentistry lab, numerous intraoral scanners, 3D bench top scanner, 3D printer, and mills. CAD/CAM is available for interested students to take advantage of and same-day-crowns are provided regularly by students. Students are taught the conventional and digital techniques side-by-side from day one.

All academic classes are private to the dental students, or otherwise said, they are never combined with medical students. This keeps the curriculum dental focused (as much as it can be) and keeps the examinations consistent. Most professors require attendance, though almost all of the classes are recorded on Echo to be viewed post-lecture at the student's convenience. Some professors don't take attendance. Most coursework proved to be valuable to passing board examinations

Vacation time between school years: 7 weeks between D1 and D2, D2 and D3. 4 weeks between D3 and D4. The breaks are really nice to be able to prepare for and take the board examinations (part 1 between D2 and D3, part 2 between D3 and D4). Some other schools I've heard give no break time and students end up studying during the semester and vacation breaks, and then taking the exams during these same holiday breaks. Our schedule has a definite advantage, but some still prefer to study for and take boards during the semester anyway to be able to enjoy a study-free break. Either way, it is nice to have a break between the busy years.

The supporting faculty (academic affairs, admissions, financial, maintenance, etc.) feel like family. Every member is 100% dedicated to the students and loves working with the students. Simply put: UK feels like a big family.

Lexington is a great city to live in! Not too big, but with all the major offerings of a larger city. There is always an event happening and the cost of living is very affordable.

What are the worst things about attending University of Kentucky Dental School?

Some of the core science classes can be monotonous and are taken too early in the curriculum to be very helpful in preparing for board examinations.

This is most likely a shortcoming in most dental schools due to the nature of how clinic is set up, but experience using different dental materials is very limited. It would be helpful to be able to try out different composite brands and types.

Cost of attendance is expensive, especially as an out of state student, and tuition has been creeping up by well over a thousand dollars every year, for no apparent reason. Also, if you have a family, the budget for loans is strictly designed around a single student.

The business education of the program is extremely lackluster. There are two business courses, one second year, and one fourth year. Neither of which prepare students to be able to effectively analyze practice opportunities as an owner, partner, or associate. The skills of marketing, management, leading, etc. are not covered either. Every dentist needs to be well-versed in the business of dentistry, regardless if they ever intend to own a practice, so that they can ensure the work opportunities they find will provide the income they need to pay off debt, live comfortably, and save/invest for the future.

The research opportunities at this school are certainly a weakness. This is a strong clinical school and not a strong research school.

While some like to have a class rank and GPA, it certainly leads to a more competitive environment, which can be frustrating. Pass/Fail would certainly alleviate this and foster the more comradery among a class.

What do students need to know/what do you wish you knew before attending University of Kentucky Dental School?

This program is very strong clinically. If you want to get your hands dirty early in your dental school career and build competence in general dentistry before graduating, this is a great option. Also, the opportunity to learn digital dentistry is certainly a strength if it is something you are interested in getting into right out of school.