

**NOTE:** Usually when GradSchoolGrades receives multiple submissions for a specific program, the reviews are synthesized and posted as a single review. These two reviews we received for University of the Pacific mentioned many unique aspects of the program without much overlap between them. Thus we decided to post both reviews without synthesizing them.

### **What are the best things about attending University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry?**

The 3-year program makes almost all the inconvenient things about the school worth it. We are immersed into the dental school experience from week one, and while some found it to be overwhelming, others felt it put us on a good pace and developed solid study habits right off the bat. The school knows they don't have very much time to work things in, so they are looking for ways to streamline the education and make it easier for students to learn.

After completing the first year they hold the white coat ceremony. We are each assigned patients and are the sole providers from then on. If they need a crown, we prep and deliver the crown. Several students performed crowns, extractions, and multiple fillings within the first couple of months in clinic. A new requirement is to restore at least one implant, and several students have placed over a dozen by the time they graduate.

The school typically has a very high national board pass rate, and the classes are geared toward success of the students. If students are struggling in either the simulation lab or in the sciences, the school will provide a tutor until your performance improves. They stopped sharing class rank to the first years, and it has lessened the competitiveness and increased collaboration on test prep and studying.

The facilities at UOP are top-notch. Most of your classes are in a gorgeous, brand-new building in the heart of San Francisco. The school is close to all forms of public transportation which makes it easy for students and patients to get to the school in a city with minimal parking.

The school is committed to producing top notch dentists, and not compromising despite the accelerated curriculum. They are always looking for innovative and effective ways of teaching.

### **What are the worst things about attending University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry?**

San Francisco is a very expensive city to live in (#2 most expensive city in US). Some students live across the street in 2 bedroom apartments and pay upwards of \$4,500 a month.

The simulation lab grading system is very subjective. Drilled preparations that look identical could receive an 8/9 or a 4/9 depending on who is grading and the practical

exams are worth 80% of your grade. Although the whole class is curved at the end, a single bad practical preparation could drag down your grade.

A couple of the instructors for preclinical courses aren't familiar with newer techniques, so getting CAD/CAM into the preclinical curriculum has been pushed by a single instructor and was just added this year.

Many of the important lectures are given by people who are experts on a subject but are not teachers. A series of lectures on one clinical subject took several hours over the course of a quarter, but most of the information could have been given in a single clear lecture and ultimately was learned by YouTube videos.

**What do students need to know/what do you wish you knew before attending University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry?**

Even though the school is 3 years, it is still one of the most expensive schools in the country. The high living expense and tuition add up to almost \$500,000 dollars in student loans. Be prepared to continue to live like a dental student years after you graduate.

This might be a plus to some, but a big part of the culture is centered on drinking. The most popular part of school sponsored events is the bar, and most students pregame beforehand so things can get wild. It can feel a little like a frat party at times, so heads up if you are not into that.

The alumni association is very strong and involved. They put on a couple of big events a year and are a great group for networking. Many alumni practice owners come looking for associates every year, so once you graduate from UoP you are part of the Dugoni Family.

## **What are the best things about attending University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry?**

The biggest pull for UOP is that it is a 3 year program. It is really the only thing that distinguishes UOP from all other dental schools in the US. Since it is a 3 year program, you assist in your first year and treat patients in the second and third year. Some people may feel skeptical about a 3 year program. Often they think that it means corners are cut or that it hurts you for opportunities later, but that isn't the reality. Most people who have worked with UOP grads are impressed by their work and skills. Some people are also worried about how difficult it would be since it is accelerated. I found that it is very manageable. The reality is that at UOP, it can be as difficult as you make it. Some people want to coast and just pass. They can do that with ease. Those who want to specialize have to work hard to get good grades.

At UOP, we refer to the staff, students and alumni as "the Dugoni family". We treat each other as family. Everyone is kind to each other. There isn't a hostile, competitive environment. There are occasional conflicts between students, but nothing out of the ordinary. I have found that for the most part, everyone helps each other. They do that by answering questions in the class's GroupMe or by sharing study notes/test files. I think this is because the admissions committee carefully selects who will be interviewed and accepted. They are very particular about who you are as a person, in addition to your stats. It is also worth noting that they don't like to interview very many people. The vast majority of those who are interviewed at UOP are accepted.

Another benefit of attending UOP is the opportunity to learn dentistry in a beautiful building. The current building is located in SOMA, which is near the financial district. It moved from Pacific Heights to its current location in 2014. The new building has state-of-the-art equipment. The simulation lab is large and beautiful. Often, when students from other schools come to visit (for ASDA or other events) they are very impressed. At the last ASDA meeting at UOP, students were saying things like "this sim-lab is as big as our entire school". Another perk of the new building is that it is located next to a BART station (Bay Area Rapid Transit). This allows patients to easily access our services from all over the bay area. This has led to a large patient pool (I will discuss that more later).

The staff at UOP is incredible. We have world-renowned researchers and clinical instructors. Among our staff, we have several CDA past-presidents, AAE past-presidents and several instructors who have traveled across the world to live in SF and teach at our school. At the school, we also have several specialties: pediatrics, endodontics, orthodontics and oral surgery. We take time to do rotations in each of these specialties and gain more clinical experience.

UOP has a reputation of clinical excellence. The location of the school has created a huge patient pool that is very diverse. In addition to the huge patient pool, we also accept all insurances and denti-cal, allowing people from many backgrounds to be

treated at our program. Within this patient pool, there is a lot of work to be done. We also get experience scheduling our own patients (some might not like that - I don't mind). But it is important to note that we do not have to find our own patients. Everyone has plenty of patients and you do all the work on them. In addition to a great patient pool, we are very proud about our hand skills and the program is known for that as well. Our simulation lab courses are very difficult and meticulous. The grading is very hard and unforgiving, which raises us to a higher standard than we would have otherwise. It is not uncommon for students to see other cavity preps from students at other schools on instagram and cringe. Yes, we are very proud of our hand skills, but we really do believe that we do excellent work.

There is a false reputation that circulates regarding UOP and specializing. A lot of people think that UOP only wants you to produce general dentists. That is just not true. UOP does produce great general practitioners, but they also have a lot of people specialize. Last year we had 90% of applicants accepted to post-graduate residencies (and that was a pretty normal year). Within UOP, it is known that if you want to specialize, you can do it - you'll just have to work hard to do it (like at any program).

UOP's didactic courses are organized into the "Helix" system of learning. That just means that all the classes focus on the same subject at the same time. For example, you are learning the anatomy, physiology and biochemistry of the lungs at the same time. It helps students to relate and tie-together all the information you take in from different courses. We also have clinical courses that are workshop focused every week. For example, this is where we practice prophylactic treatments and periodontal exams on each other.

Each class is divided alphabetically into "pods" (while in sim clinic) and then "group practices" in the clinic. They are groups of about 20-24 students depending on the class size. They are all together in a group with the same instructors in sim clinic. Those instructors change every quarter, so you get a lot of different opinions and views. Once clinic starts, the pod becomes a group practice. The group practice has a group practice leader (GPL). The GPL directs the group practice and is there to help with anything. There is also a group practice coordinator which helps the GPL and does paperwork - among other things.

San Francisco is an incredibly fun city. There is delicious food of all types throughout the entire city. There are great hikes nearby. There are lots of small parks and two very large parks (the Presidio and Golden Gate park). There are beaches nearby and several professional sports teams. There are 2 nearby international airports (a lot of students travel on breaks). There are lots of clubs and bars. Every weekend students get together to go bar hopping and they usually pregame beforehand. It is very difficult to be bored while you are here. People should know that even though the schedule is strenuous and difficult, everyone makes time to go out and have fun.

## **Schedule**

- 4 quarters/year (10 weeks/quarter)
  - July-September
    - 1 week break in late september
  - October-December
    - 2-3 days off for thanksgiving
    - 2 week break for the holidays
  - January-March
    - 1 week off in late march
  - April-June
  - Summer break
    - Mid-june to mid july
      - It is usually 3-4 weeks
- 1st year
  - 2 whole days each week are spent in the sim lab
  - 1 day is spent on integrated clinical sciences (preparing for how clinic works)
  - Everything else focuses on biomedical sciences
  - Class is usually 8am - 1pm and 2pm - 5pm each day
    - There are some days with extra breaks or early outs
- 2nd year
  - Assigned to either morning or afternoon clinic
    - You are responsible for patient treatments
  - When you aren't in clinic, you go to classes (opposite of clinic)
  - NBDE 1 is taken in the fall (usually October/November)
    - Usually ~98% pass rate on the first time
- 3rd year
  - Clinic all day (2 appointments usually)
  - Class every other week for an hour or two
  - NBDE 2 is taken in June before graduation

### **What are the worst things about attending University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry?**

One of the things I dislike about UOP is the dress code. Some don't mind it. I looked forward to wearing scrubs for dental school and was disappointed to learn that UOP does not allow scrubs. We wear business casual. For men, that means a button up (some people also wear a tie, but not all do) or polo with slacks. Women often wear trousers and blouses. Sometimes they wear skirts, too. Since there are no scrubs, in clinic we have to wear gowns which end up being really hot.

The school location is rough. Downtown area is rough altogether though. SOMA is an area that is improving, but has a long way to go. There are lots of homeless people,

which means urine and feces on the sidewalk/street. It often smells too. They often talk to you as you walk by. I have seen several different individuals using intravenous drugs on the street near the school. I have also seen naked homeless people in the area. This last year, two students were assaulted and robbed while studying in a cafe across the street. It is worth mentioning here that we have an excellent security staff at the school that keep such people from coming into the school.

The cost of living in San Francisco is the highest in the nation (or close to it). Most studio apartments cost ~\$2000-2500, 1 bedroom apartments cost ~\$2750-3300 and 2 bedroom apartments cost ~\$3500-4500. Most students will put 3 people into a 2 bedroom apartment (converting the living room into a bedroom) and they end up paying ~\$1300-1700 each. It is pretty common for students to live across the street at "Mosso" and have that set up. Food is expensive. Parking is expensive (~\$300/month at most garages) and street parking is doable, but sometimes challenging (~\$100/year).

The overall cost of attendance at UOP is high, but it is no higher than other private schools or out of state costs at most public schools. It is just higher per year because it is 3 years instead of 4. Here it is worth mentioning that UOP grads have 2.9% default rate on student loans - the national average for dental schools is 11.9%.

The large class size (~140) can have its drawbacks. I do not know everyone's name in my class. There are people who do, but I don't. Some students want to know everyone personally and be close to everyone. You can do that here, but for me that is difficult.

### **What do students need to know/what do you wish you knew before attending University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry?**

I have loved attending UOP. There are drawbacks to living in San Francisco and the school is not perfect, but I would not have it any other way. Personally, I can't imagine taking a 4th year of school. That would not be something I want to do. Overall, I think that people who come here have a great time in the city and enjoy the experience while setting themselves up for excellence in their career.