

What are the best things about attending UNLV School of Dental Medicine?

UNLV SDM is a relatively new school and there are a lot of benefits that go along with that. Also, Las Vegas is an awesome location because there is something for everybody. What a lot of people don't realize is that there are great communities 20 minutes away from the strip that are quiet and great places to live if you're coming to dental school with a family. The weather is great year round (though hot in the summer!), and it's within a few hours of LA and all the beaches as well as the national parks in the southern part of Utah (Zion's, Bryce Canyon, Red Rock, Hoover Dam, Grand Canyon, etc.)

In terms of the school itself there are a lot of faculty that have the student's best interests at heart and are always trying to make our experience better. The curriculum is challenging (like any other dental school). Exposure in simulation lab starts during the first semester and only increases each semester. By the summer of our first year we are in sim lab or clinic for over half of our weekly schedule. During this summer term we also have 2 afternoons a week set aside to participate in one of the many research opportunities the school provides to those that are interested. Every member of the class that wants to do research is paired with a research project. For those that are not in research, these afternoons are free time to practice procedures, assist in clinic, or do as you please.

Having a new department chair for clinical sciences has resulted in some very positive changes to the way our clinic operates. The school will also welcome a new dean this summer and the trajectory of the school and the changes being made are very positive.

There are also lots of faculty in sim lab and clinic that are willing to help you learn, are approachable, and want to help you succeed. Having enough patients and meeting clinical requirements has never been an issue at UNLV since we're the only dental school in the state and have grants to treat Ryan White patients, which expands our patient pool. UNLV only has pediatric and orthodontic residencies, so we have the opportunity to be exposed to and perform many endodontic, OMS, periodontics, and other procedures that other schools have to pass on to their residents. Many students graduate from UNLV having extracted over 100 teeth, many of which are third molars. In addition to the normal clinic days, the school sponsors the Ferrin clinic (a Saturday clinic where veterans receive free dental treatment), Give Kids a Smile, and a Saturday women's clinic where underserved populations receive free care.

The admissions committee at UNLV SDM does a great job of selecting students that work hard and fit together and as a result there is a lot of unity between class members. The classes are graded on an A, B, and C scale but there isn't a lot of competition between classmates. Everyone works together and is always sharing notes, study guides, and other resources with each other.

One of the best things about UNLV is that anybody coming from out of state can get in-state tuition after their first year if they become Nevada residents. If you are a Nevada

resident the school has a mandate to accept 50% for each class of 82 (so if you're having a hard time getting into school, move to Nevada, become a resident, and up your chances!).

What are the worst things about attending UNLV School of Dental Medicine?

One of the hardest things about UNLV is the uneven workloads from semester to semester. The first semester is extremely busy and difficult. The fall of year two is very light, then the spring is extremely heavy again. The first semester of the first year seems excessive, especially because there are a ton of one credit classes that take more time than they should.

The students are required to purchase a specific laptop from Dell that we take all our tests on, take notes, and manage clinic charts. The computer is extremely overpriced for the quality you receive, but you have no choice. The computers are so underwhelming that the majority of the class had to spend more money to purchase iPads and other laptops to use for school and only use the school computer for exams.

UNLV started a medical program 2 years ago, and it has caused some challenges for dental students. The main issue we've experienced is that the medical school took over half of our academic space while they wait for a building to be finished. In the meantime, the dental school is now lacking adequate study space. Often students will have to study in the very classrooms that we spend most of the day in already. If you prefer to study at home, then this may not be an issue for you.

Our lectures are not recorded, and attendance is mandatory. This is partly why we are so busy: you don't have the option of not going to class although there are students who still don't go from time to time.

What do students need to know/What do you wish you knew before attending UNLV School of Dental Medicine?

You will be busy. If you're looking for a lot of free time and a program that requires minimal effort, then this may not be the program for you. You must be willing to go to class every day and put in the work outside of class. If you're interested in specializing, UNLV will give you everything you need to be a quality applicant with your GPA and class rank as a valuable way to set you apart from students from other schools that are in pass/fail programs. If you aren't interested in specializing, UNLV will also give you all the experience you need to go straight out into general practice without the need for a GPR or additional training.