

## **What are the best things about attending USC School of Dentistry?**

The simulation lab experience and the clinical experience from USC is truly one of a kind. Our program teaches us the fundamentals of dentistry but also provides an emphasis on aesthetic restorations with the guidance of respected and internationally renowned faculty. Every faculty member that grades and gives feedback in sim lab are highly qualified and are very well-respected in southern California. This gives you a chance to not only learn how to do procedures such as crown preps and making provisionals, but also to get to know successful dentists in the area.

The specialty programs at USC are also outstanding. The USC dental school has all specialties in house, which means that if you are interested in specializing, you can go into each specialty and shadow and assist as a first year. As you finish your 2<sup>nd</sup> year, you can choose to apply to selectives for each individual specialty, and if accepted, you will be mentored by the head of each specialty. For instance, the oral and maxillofacial surgery specialty has a selective that is led by Dr. Tung. She will help you become a competitive applicant, whether it be preparing for interviews, strengthening your resume, or giving lectures on CBSE material.

USC also does a good job of easing students into dental school. This gives you an opportunity to adjust to life as a dental student and it gives you time to meet your classmates and to make friends. While the workload will still be much greater than an undergraduate workload, the schedule for the first two semesters gives you the free time to go hang out with friends and enjoy Los Angeles.

Another great thing about USC is the alumni network. The Trojan network is enormous and allows us the opportunity to work in many different locations after graduating from dental school. There are many opportunities to meet and talk with alumni during school, and it gives you the exposure you need to build your network. USC dental school is well known in California for producing highly skilled dentists. Many aesthetic dentists at the top of their field who work in Beverly Hills and other coveted locations in southern California have graduated from USC. Some come back and teach as professors or visit to give presentations on what they're seeing in their clinics and how the profession is evolving.

## **What are the worst things about attending USC School of Dentistry?**

The first thing that bothers a lot of people is the cost of attending USC. USC's tuition is among the highest in the country, even when compared with other private schools. The overall cost of attending USC can be controlled by planning effectively. Once living costs are managed, the overall cost of attending USC is actually pretty similar to attending other private dental schools.

Another potential downside is the Problem Based Learning curriculum structure, in which traditional didactic material is taught without lectures. You will be placed in groups of 8 and presented with different medical cases in which you have to research topics (such as mechanism of action of Procardia) and write up an assignment presenting the facts and how it is applicable to the patient in the case. These sessions are three times a week, lasting 2-4 hours. While it is nice to not have to sit through didactic lectures, PBL does require you to be independent when it comes to studying for midterms and finals. There are no lecture slides to study from and you are only presented with major and minor topics of the cases that will be tested. Students should, in theory, use group members' assignments to study. Most students, however, learn the material directly from textbooks in our dental library database or from study guides. PBL is great if you have a solid foundation of the basic and biomedical sciences, especially physiology and anatomy, but it can be a challenge to those who don't feel as confident in these subjects.

### **What do students need to know/what do you wish you knew before attending USC School of Dentistry?**

USC dental school is a year-round program divided into three trimesters. This means that you will be in school for the summer. There are breaks in between each trimester, each lasting about 10-14 days, except for the winter break which lasts about a month. The fourth year is the only year where there will only be two semesters. All dental students will graduate in the spring.

Anatomy is taken during the third trimester (during the summer) and it takes place at the USC Keck School of Medicine. You will need to get yourself to this campus (about 20 minutes from our school), but you can either take the shuttle that takes you there or drive yourself. Also, anatomy is limited to head and neck.