

What are the best things about attending Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine?

Our curriculum is a block schedule so it is fairly easy to stay on top of coursework because we usually only take two or three courses at a time. There is usually enough time to prepare for exams and students never really feel behind or that it's unmanageable. The tests are extremely fair for almost all courses and if the class doesn't do well on a particular question, it will most likely get thrown out.

A student from each course is assigned to be the curriculum representative for that specific course. Their job is to inform faculty if there is a problem with the course. For example, our curriculum reps have been able to get exams moved to more suitable dates and have even gotten exam questions thrown out if they were unfair. This shows how much WesternU CDM really cares about the students and making sure we're not overwhelmed with work.

Class size is small (69 students) so there are always enough faculty to help. The faculty in sim clinic are extremely nice and very approachable. We have really early exposure to sim clinic and clinic (during our first and second year). WesternU CDM tries to make the dental program as enjoyable as possible by making sure students are treated fairly and professionally. Every month we meet one on one with a faculty from sim clinic to talk about various projects we have completed and any struggles we might be having in class.

WesternU has 9 different health programs within the university. This allows the dental school to have very qualified professors teaching each course, as the dental school often borrows faculty from one of the other WesternU health programs.

There are no specialties at WesternU, so dental students are able to work on more advanced cases alongside faculty without having to refer those cases to residents.

What are the worst things about attending Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine?

The most challenging part of WesternU is the "hybrid curriculum." Most of our dental education (preparations, materials, periodontics, orthodontics, endodontics, pediatrics and even pathology) is taught completely online. We do have some "content reinforcements" where faculty will go over the material with us in person and answer questions. However, this happens about 10% of the time. This has created a problem because there isn't time scheduled to do the online material during the week so we're forced to do it at night or on weekends on top of all of our other courses we're taking. The program that we use online also has a few glitches that make learning the material frustrating. They grade us off of how much time we spend on the online platform and because the highlighting tools don't work, many students copy and paste the material

it into a word document and get points deducted because they don't spend enough time on the platform.

Sim clinic isn't open on weekends so practicing your hand skills outside of scheduled class time is challenging. The only practice we get is during sim class, but during this time we are usually really rushed trying to finish projects. The sim clinic is open after school on weekdays, but there is almost always something else that needs to be done. If sim clinic would be open on weekends it would allow students to practice more and not feel pressured all the time.

The location of the school is not very good. The school has a lot of public safety staff to try and help, but walking off campus at night can be scary. The cost of living is also extremely expensive compared to other places in the U.S.

WesternU College of Dental Medicine started 10 years ago and they are still working out the kinks. There have been a few times where faculty seem to be confused with who's in charge and at times one professor will say one thing and another will contradict them. WesternU continues to make changes to their curriculum every year and they are on the right track to making WesternU CDM a top program.

What do students need to know/what do you wish you knew before attending Western University of Health Sciences College of Dental Medicine?

I wish I would have known that I'd be taking a majority of my classes online because I have never been good at reading a lot of material and teaching it to myself, which I end up doing here all the time. This continues to be a huge problem for me as we continue to have a lot of online classes and no time scheduled for it.

We have off-site rotations about once every two weeks or so that students need to drive to. These locations are for school-based oral health clinics and WIC (women, infants, children) locations. Some locations are close (10 minutes away) while other are far away, sometimes up to an hour drive.

We have a trimester system with a fall spring and summer and there is a 2 week break between them.

During 3rd and 4th year we have to do two 7 week rotations at a location that is picked for us. Some of them are far from school and relocation may be required. This is an added expense that many students don't account for. However, these 7 week rotations help students tremendously, and offer great clinical exposure.

Many students believe the 'pros' outweigh the 'cons'. Dental school has been extremely manageable and the classes are not very difficult. The faculty are always willing to help and go out of there way to get students to where they need to be. Each year, WesternU CDM is making huge improvements to their curriculum based on

student responses. Because of this, you can expect that the curriculum will continue to improve and adapt to changes in technology and student reviews.