



**Pre-Health Advising**

*Pre-Professional Advising Office*

**UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA**

# **Introductory Orientation**

## **For Pre-Dental and Pre-Optometry Students**

**Lise Kalla**

Pre-Dental/Optometry Advisor | Pre-Professional Advising Office

*Office of the Vice President for Instruction*



# About the Pre-Health Advising Office

- Our office advises all UGA students interested in healthcare careers.
  - Medicine, dentistry, vet, optometry, allied-health (GC, PT, OT, AA), physician's associate and nursing.
- We are located at 130 Memorial Hall
  - **Website:** [ppao.uga.edu](http://ppao.uga.edu)
  - **Email:** [pemed@uga.edu](mailto:pemed@uga.edu)
  - **Phone:** 706-542-0444
- Visit our [website](#):
  - To join our [Pre-Health UGA listserv](#).
  - To check out our [Pre-Health Event Calendar](#) for upcoming meetings/workshops/events.
  - To make an appointment with a [Pre-Health Advisor](#).
  - To check out our [Study Abroad programs](#).



# Meet Your Advisor!



Click on my picture to  
read my bio!

Hi! My name is Lise Kalla. I am your pre-dental and pre-optometry advisor. I am here to guide you in building your credentials so that you will succeed in your professional school application.

I encourage you to meet with me soon to get you on track for success. The first two years you will be focused on grades, shadowing, involvement, leadership, and community service. Most students apply at the end of their junior year.



# How to Contact Me

- Email me at [lkalla@uga.edu](mailto:lkalla@uga.edu) for a quick question
  - Allow to end of next business day for a reply
- Make an appointment with me in SAGE.
  - Appointments are 45 minutes in length and can be either in person or over Zoom (your choice)
  - By [FERPA](#) rules, meetings are with you only. If you must Zoom in a public space, find a quiet area and use earbuds.
- Visit my [walk-in](#) hours.
  - 15 minutes in length
  - Monday afternoon 1:00 – 2:00 p.m.
  - Wednesday morning 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.



# Pre-Professional Student Ambassadors (PPSA)

- PPSAs connect students to campus resources, provide peer mentorship, professional development opportunities, and support/guidance.
- Connect with an ambassador who can help you navigate your path at UGA!
- View the [PPSA bios!](#)



# Orientation Overview

- Choosing a Major
- Dental and Optometry Schools
- Prerequisites
- Building Your Credentials in College
- Letters of Evaluation
- Admissions Tests
- Application Timeline



# What should I major in?

- Major does not matter!
  - Students find life sciences convenient for prerequisites
  - There are NO pre-dental or pre-optometry majors.
- Challenge yourself, take a full-load (14-16 hours), and pursue your interests.
- Monitor your overall and science GPAs
  - BCP GPA = Biology, Chemistry, Physics and
  - Science GPA = BCP, math, and select sciences



# Dental Schools

- 73 accredited dental schools in the US and 10 in Canada
  - [US and Canadian Accredited Dental Schools](#)
- One dental school in Georgia – the [Dental College of Georgia at Augusta University](#)
- Most students apply to an average of 7-10 dental schools





# Optometry Schools

- 24 [optometry schools](#) in the US
  - None in Georgia
- Most students apply to an average of 5-7 optometry schools



# Dental School Prerequisites

- Always double-check with schools you are interested in!
  - Requirements can change year-to-year

General Dental School Requirements	
<b>Biology</b>	BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L
<b>General Chemistry</b>	CHEM 1211/L and CHEM 1212/L
<b>Organic Chemistry</b>	CHEM 2211/L and CHEM 2212/L* ( <i>*Organic Chemistry II is required by most dental schools and covered on the DAT</i> )
<b>Biochemistry</b>	BCMB 3100
<b>Physics</b>	PHYS 1111/L or PHYS 1211/L and *PHYS 1112/L or *PHYS 1212/L ( <i>*Physics II is required by most dental schools</i> )
<b>Misc. Recommended</b>	Art courses (Intro Sculpture, 3D Design, Intro Jewelry/Metals, etc.), STAT 2000/BIOS 2010, MATH 2250, GENE 3200, MIBO 3500, VPHY 3100/CBIO 3710/PMCY 3000 ( <i>*Physiology is extremely helpful for the DAT</i> ), CBIO 3010 ( <i>anatomy is required at some schools</i> )



# Optometry School Prerequisites

- Always double-check with schools you are interested in!
  - Requirements can change year-to-year

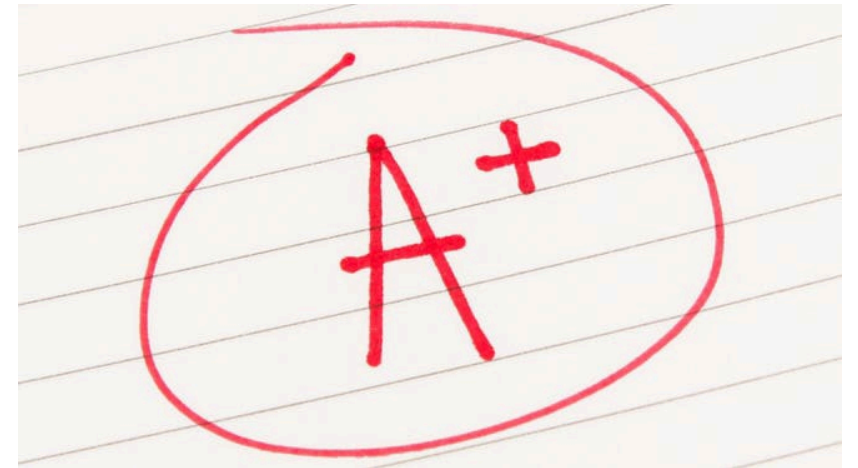
## General Optometry School Requirements

<b>Biology</b>	BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L
<b>General Chemistry</b>	CHEM 1211/L and CHEM 1212/L
<b>Organic Chemistry</b>	CHEM 2211/L* ( <i>*very few require Organic Chemistry II CHEM 2212/L</i> )
<b>Biochemistry</b>	BCMB 3100
<b>Physics</b>	PHYS 1111/L or PHYS 1211/L and PHYS 1112/L or PHYS 1212/L
<b>Math</b>	STAT 2000/BIOS 2010 and MATH 2250
<b>Anatomy</b>	CBIO 3000 or CBIO 3010 ( <i>if a physiology lab is NOT required</i> )
<b>Physiology</b>	VPHY 3100 or CBIO 3710 or PMCY 3000 ( <i>if a lab is required both CBIO 2200 and CBIO 2210 for anatomy and physiology</i> )
<b>Microbiology</b>	MIBO 2500/L or 3500 & 3500L/ 3510L
<b>Psychology</b>	PSYC 1000



# Is AP and community college credit accepted?

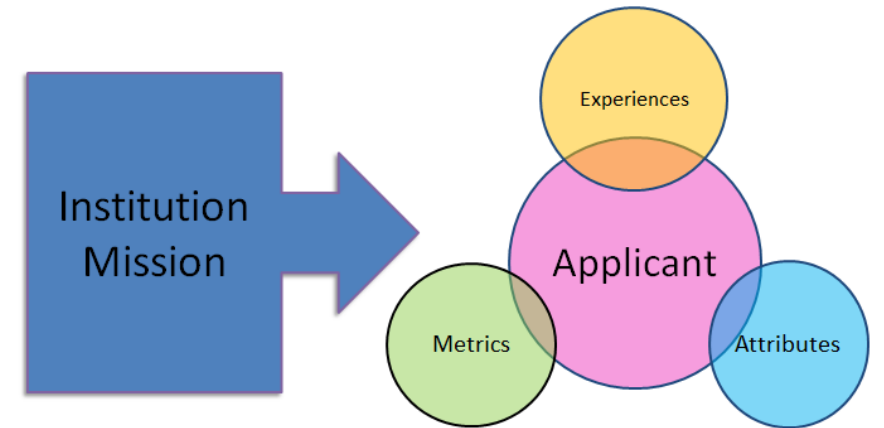
- Check with your target schools to see if they accept AP and community college credit.
  - Some do not accept AP or community college credit at all
  - Some may require you to take an upper-level course in the same subject area to accept the AP
  - Some have limits on the number of community college hours they accept.



# Holistic Review of Applicant

- Balanced consideration of personal experiences, attributes and academic credentials, along with qualities and characteristics that would prove valuable in both professional school and the health profession.
- Grounded in each institution's mission
- Metrics of academics, admission test
- Experiences of community service, involvement and leadership
- Personal attributes of interests, character, resiliency, diversity, etc.

## The Holistic Perspective



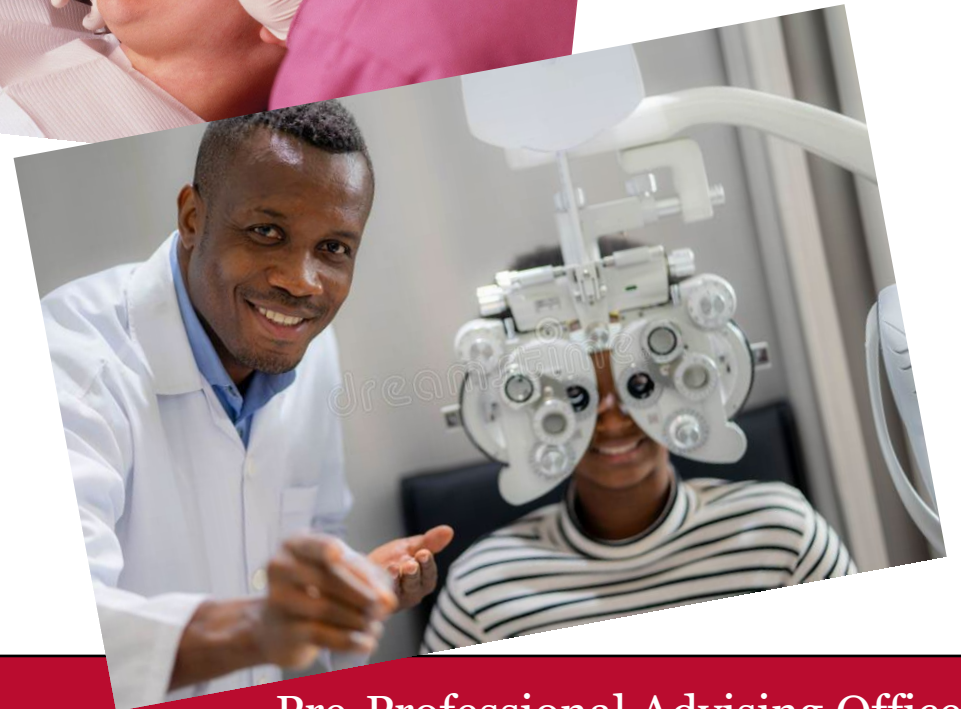
AMERICAN DENTAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

ADEA THE VOICE OF DENTAL EDUCATION



# Building Your Credentials in College

- GPA
- Shadowing your health profession
- Campus Involvement
- Community Service
- Leadership
- Research (optional)
- Employment (if needed)
- Manual Dexterity for Pre-Dental



# Competitive GPAs

## Dental School

- Overall 3.6
- Science 3.5
- BCP 3.5

## Optometry School

- Overall 3.5
- Science 3.5
- BCP 3.5

Have a rough start at UGA? Get help and get on track!  
Schools do consider trends, so pick up and keep going!



# Shadowing

## General Dentist

- Goal 150 hours for most; 300 hours for DCG

## General Optometrist

- Goal 100 hours

Specialists should be only 10% of shadowing

Keep a journal of your shadowing experiences!





# Shadowing/Clinical Experience

- Shadowing involves observing the professional providing care to patients.
  - Exposure to “doctor-patient” interaction
  - Experience reality of being a dentist or optometrist—not always about healing or curing!
  - Shadow 2-3 professionals in a variety of settings (single, multiple, corporate, diversity, etc.)
- Start with your hometown practitioner, if possible.
  - network for opportunities with Athens-area practitioners.
- Do not engage in activity that could be considered practice of medicine!
  - Especially important for mission trips and abroad experiences.
- Volunteering in a charity clinic is a good way to add professional experience.



# Volunteering

- Doing good work and giving back to your community.
  - Want to be a dentist or optometrist to help people? Show by your volunteer action!
  - Step out on your own and not as a part of a club/organizational requirement.
- Volunteering **does not** have to be health related!
  - Look for opportunities outside of clinical experience to showcase your commitment to service.
  - A balanced approach is volunteering to help people in need with one organization and following your passion with another
- No minimum hours, simply show consistent level of commitment.
  - Find something where you're helping regularly, not just one-offs.
  - Follow your passion!
  - The DCG matriculant has an average of 200 hours of volunteering consistently over time.
- Keep record of experiences.
  - Dates, location, who you worked with, what you did, etc.
  - You will enter this information on the application



# Finding Volunteer Opportunities

- Athens Area
  - Network with other pre-professional students for opportunities in Athens
  - Search for your interests on the [Athens Clarke County Volunteer Guide](#)
  - List of [Athens area volunteer opportunities](#)
- At Home
  - Return to your high school volunteering but only count hours since entering college
  - Find a volunteer opportunity in any community using the [Volunteer Match](#)



# Leadership

- Get involved in [student organizations](#)!
  - Dental and optometry schools like applicants who stay busy outside of class.
  - You want to be committed, but it is okay if your interest and experiences change over time
  - All experiences count, even if it was only for a semester.
- Attending meetings is helpful but look for leadership opportunities.
  - Leadership skills can be a lot of different things, such as mentoring, tutoring, event planning, committee work, etc.
  - You do not need to be on an executive board of a club/organization to have leadership skills.
- Network with other pre-professionals
  - [Pre-Dental Society](#) (and search “dental” for other clubs)
  - [Pre-Optometry Club](#)



# Research

- Research is not required for dental or optometry schools.
  - Can do it for course credit, for pay, or as a volunteer.
- Only do research if you're actually interested in it.
  - Best if done by sophomore year before upper-level courses
- Does not have to be health-related or laboratory research!
- Search UGA departmental websites for possible research mentors.
  - Email professors detailing who you are and that you're interested in their work.
  - Ask about current projects.
  - Search for opportunities [here](#).



# Summer Opportunities for Academic Enrichment

- Start researching programs early.
  - Most deadlines are in February and March.
  - Google “summer program” and the name of the institution you’re interested in.
- DCG hosts [STAR](#) and [SEEP](#) summer programs.
- [Summer Health Professions Education Program](#) for pre-dental
  - Multiple sites nationwide
  - Must be a freshman or sophomore
- National Eye Institute offers [internships and student programs](#)



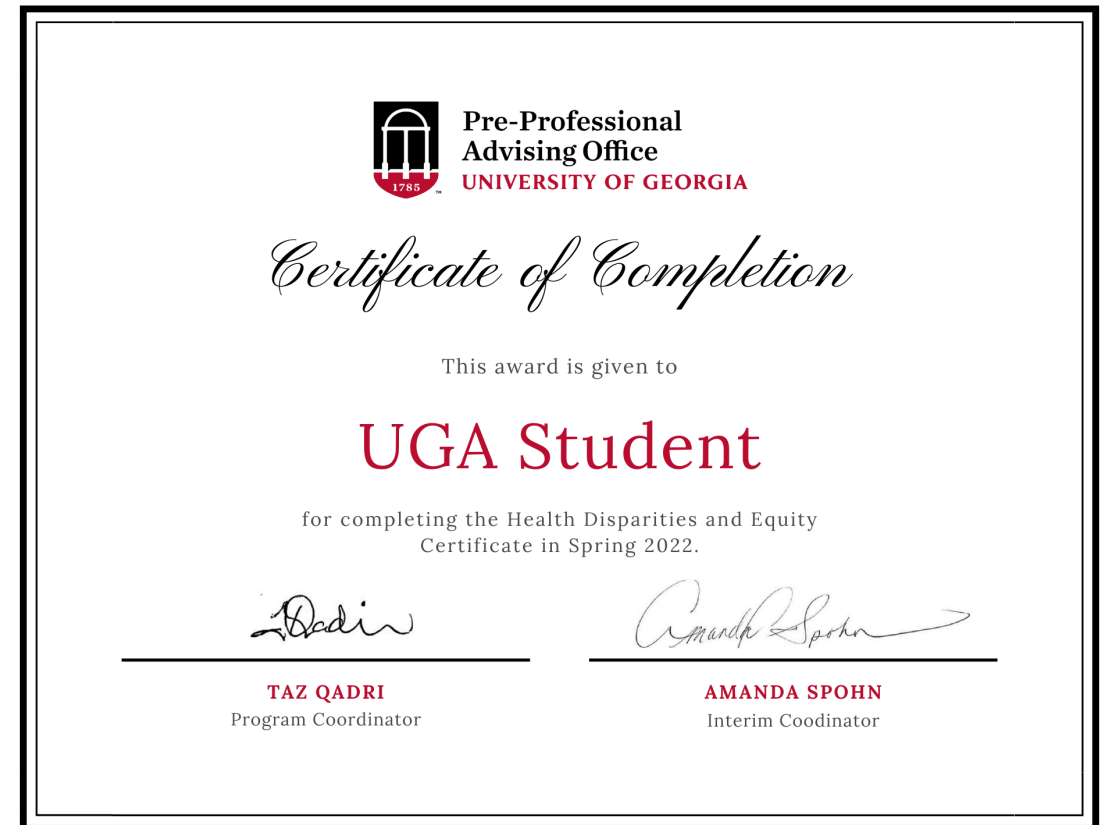
# Health Abroad Experiences

- Health in South Africa
  - Winter Break
- Health in Belize
  - Maymester
- Health in Cuba
  - Summer
- BIOL 4910 Topics in Biology
- Meets UGA's experiential learning requirement



# Health Disparities and Equity Service Program

- Increase awareness and develop best practices when working with vulnerable populations in the context of healthcare.
- Spring program
- Speaker series (4 of 5 offered)
- 50 hours service-oriented volunteering with approved organizations January -May





# Keeping Track of Experiences

## UGA Pre-Professional Planner

- iPhone app (Android TBA)
- Prompt with experience categories for your application
- Identifies skills
- Journal feature
- Downloads to Excel spreadsheet





# Letters of Evaluation

- **Need four letters:**
  - 2 hard science professors will satisfy all schools (Typically any course that would count in your BCP GPA)
  - 1 general dentist/optometrist (not a specialist)
  - Additional letters from another academic professional, dentist/optometrist, supervisor, or someone who knows you well enough to speak positively about your character and work ethic.
- Letters should come from people who know you!
  - Will need to describe you as an individual—behavior, character traits, maturity-level, etc.
- Check target programs for specific requirements.
  - [Optometry Letter Requirements by Institution](#)
- We do NOT provide committee, composite, or advisor letters



# What is the DAT?

- The Dental Admissions Test (DAT) is the test you'll need to apply to dental school.
- DAT contains 4 sections:
  1. *Survey of the Natural Sciences (Biology, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry)*
  2. *Reading Comprehension*
  3. *Quantitative Reasoning*
  4. *Perceptual Ability*
- DAT scores range 1-30.
  - Each section is scored 1-30
  - A score of 18 is ~50<sup>th</sup> percentile
  - You'll receive two scores, one for the first 3 sections and one for Perceptual Ability. You will receive your unofficial scores immediately and in 3-4 weeks schools will receive the official scores.
- The length of the DAT is ~5 hours.

New DAT Scoring  
in March 2025!



# What courses are needed before the DAT ?

## ▪ **Advised Pre-DAT**

- **Biology:** BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L
- **Chemistry:** CHEM 1211/L and CHEM 1212/L
- **Organic Chemistry:** CHEM 2211/L and CHEM 2212/L
- **Physiology:** (VPHY 3100, CBIO 3710)
- **Statistics:** (STAT 2000, BIOS 2010)

## ▪ **Recommended Pre-DAT:**

- GENE 3200, BCMB 3100 or 4020, Art courses and English/Literature.

## ▪ **Not Necessary Pre-DAT**

- MIBO 3500 or 2500/L, PHYS 1111/L & 1112/L or 1211/L & 1212/L

## ▪ You can study for the DAT on your own or take a DAT prep-course

- Key is to make a study plan and take several practice tests!



# What is the OAT?

- The Optometry Admissions Test (OAT) is used to apply to optometry school. Some optometry schools will also [accept other tests](#).
- OAT contains 4 sections:
  1. *Survey of the Natural Sciences (biology, general chemistry, organic chemistry)*
  2. *Reading Comprehension*
  3. *Physics*
  4. *Quantitative Reasoning*
- OAT scores range 200-400 and are reported in increments of 10.
  - Each section yields a raw score of correct answers which is converted to a scale score
  - A score of 300 is ~50<sup>th</sup> percentile, with 340 being a competitive score
  - You will receive your unofficial scores immediately and the optometry schools will receive official score reports in 3-4 weeks.
- The length of the OAT is ~4.5 hours.



# What courses are needed before the OAT ?

## ▪ **Advised Pre-OAT**

- **Biology:** BIOL 1107/L and BIOL 1108/L
- **Chemistry:** CHEM 1211/L and CHEM 1212/L
- **Organic Chemistry:** CHEM 2211/L (2<sup>nd</sup> O-CHEM not required at most schools)
- **Physics:** PHYS 1111 & 1112 or 1211 & 1212
- **Physiology:** VPHY 3100 or CBIO 3710
- **Statistics:** (STAT 2000 or BIOS 2010)

## ▪ **Recommended Pre-OAT:**

- Physiology, calculus, microbiology, genetics

## ▪ **Not Necessary Pre-OAT**

- Anatomy, psychology

## ▪ You can study for the OAT on your own or take an OAT prep-course

- Key is to make a study plan and take several practice tests!



# UGA/National Dental Admissions Data (2022)

## Acceptance Rate

- UGA 58.3%
- National 55.96

- Average Accepted Overall/Science GPA:
  - UGA 3.64/3.56
  - National 3.61/3.53
- Average Accepted DAT:
  - AA: 20
  - PAT: 20
  - TS: 20

*Always check your target schools  
for their averages!*



# National Optometry Admissions Data (2021)

## Accepted/Applied

- $1992/2684 = 74\%$
- Average Accepted Overall/Science GPA:
  - 3.48/3.35
- Average Accepted OAT:
  - AA: 320
  - TS: 313

*Always check your [target schools](#) for their averages!*





# Takeaways

- Major in what you're interested in and do well in your science courses.
- Shadow professionals
- Start getting involved early in campus organizations and be consistently involved.
- Volunteer in the community in Athens and at home
- Utilize the Pre-Health Advising Office!
  - Join the Pre-Health Listserv
  - Meet with your Pre-Health Advisor
  - Review our website ([ppao.uga.edu](http://ppao.uga.edu))



# Questions?

## **Pre-Professional Advising Office**

**Website: [ppao.uga.edu](http://ppao.uga.edu)**

**Email: [lkalla@uga.edu](mailto:lkalla@uga.edu)**

**Phone: 706-542-0444**

To make an appointment with Pre-Health Advisor, please visit our website.



# Follow Us



Get Connected  
for Our Latest  
News & Updates



Groupme



Pre-Health &  
Pre-Law Listserv



Instagram



@ugaprehealth



@ugaprelaw



Google Calendar



PPAO Events



PPSA Peer Mentor

