

Dental Anesthesiology Timeline, Checklist, & Tips

Timeline

D1/D2 Years

- Explore each dental specialty and learn about the varying procedures, skills, patient pools, work environments and lifestyles that accompany each one. You want to make the right residency decision!
- Focus on academics to maintain a strong GPA, take electives and receive letters of recommendation.
- Begin shadowing dental anesthesiologists in your area and cultivate relationships with them who could write strong letters of recommendation.
- Attend various anesthesia/OMFS/sedation/pediatric related lectures, workshops, and expose yourself to the field.
- Begin studying for the CBSE. If possible, take the CBSE for the first time within these 2 years. (offered once in winter and summer per year)
- Begin doing research or get involved in something else that you are passionate about.

D3 Year

Summer

- First quarter in clinic!
- Focus on becoming comfortable working on patients and meeting clinic requirements.
- Continue exposure to anesthesia within and outside of UCSF institution.
- Build relationships with faculty, ask questions and shadow if possible.
- Research program requirements and what the focus of each school is.

Fall

- Consider prospective letter writers and cultivate relationships with the dental anesthesiology providers and UCSF faculty that you will eventually request letters of recommendation from.
- Begin to participate in externship programs, preferably completing 3-4 by the time of interviews. (you will need a letter from program director for externship)
- Continue to do well in classes and engage in extracurricular activities that interest you.

Winter/Spring

- Continue to go on externships during breaks from school. Most externships are 2 weeks, although some will allow 1-week programs if necessary due to school schedule.
- Write personal statement and have it reviewed by your letter of recommendation writers and other friends, family members or peers who know your story and possess excellent writing skills.
- **Reach out to programs that you are interested in and extern at these programs.** (make sure to extern first at a program you are not interested to get the mistakes out of the way)
- Request letters of recommendation from faculty.
- Take CBSE for 2nd time.

D4 Year

May

- Pass Match Applications open early in May – begin filling out applications.

June – Aug

- Submit application to residencies using Match System.
- Take CBSE in July if necessary for the last time.

Sep – Nov

- Interview offers are made.
- Go on as many interviews as possible!
- Send thank you cards to programs/interviewers.
- Rank residency programs in Match System.
- Take NDBE

December

- Match is made between applicants and residencies – ACCEPT MATCH!
- Reach out to your new program, thanking them for this opportunity.

Dec – Jan

- If not already completed, schedule/study for Part II of NDBE.

Jan – April

- Complete whatever steps necessary for licensure in your state of residency.

May

- Make sure to complete all requirements for dental school graduation.

June

- Graduate from dental school!

Checklist

What DA Programs Seek in Applicants

Desired Qualities

Strong Academic Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Developed talent, creativity, aesthetics, problem solving and hand skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Visited a variety of dental anesthesia programs I plan on applying to and determined if they are a good fit for me both professionally and personally. <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrated broad and active exposure to the field of dentistry, excellent communication skills, fluency in dental language, highly developed critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills. <input type="checkbox"/> Developed ability to understand sophisticated material in the sciences, research and dental technology. <input type="checkbox"/> Established a relationship with at least three faculty members who know me well enough to write me a comprehensive letter of evaluation.
Firm & Clear Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of the DA residency programs I am applying to, how the various clinics operate, patients they serve and how I will fit into the current pool of attendings, residents and employees. <input type="checkbox"/> An understanding of the role of a dental anesthesiologist in the dental community. <input type="checkbox"/> A well thought out answer to, "Why do you want to be a dental anesthesiologist?" <input type="checkbox"/> A trajectory for your professional career after residence i.e. private practice, academia, hospital based or military...
Outstanding Personal Qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Personal traits such as maturity, stability, integrity, dependability, responsibility, trustworthiness, leadership, enthusiasm, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Accomplished something worthwhile and have skills and abilities that will allow me to contribute to the success of my residency program. <input type="checkbox"/> The ability to carry out sophisticated conversation, make effort to know people's names, present myself professionally and interview well with faculty. <input type="checkbox"/> Desirable bedside manner, can communicate clearly and deal effectively with those of other cultural backgrounds.
ADEA PASS Match Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CV, only with relevant dental and dental school experience. <input type="checkbox"/> Letters of recommendation from faculty members and oral surgeons. <input type="checkbox"/> Deans letter: template- takes about 1 month. Good CV makes deans letter application easy. <input type="checkbox"/> DAT, CBSE, NBDE exam scores (programs vary in requirements). <p>* ADEA PASS Match application requirements are subject to change over years.</p>



Tips for UCSF Dental Students Interested in Dental Anesthesiology Residency

Which Programs Should You Apply To?

Dental anesthesiology is a highly specialized field with a limited number of residency positions. According to the **American Society of Dentist Anesthesiologists (ASDA)**, there are only a handful of CODA-accredited dental anesthesiology programs in the U.S., making the application process competitive.

Dental students typically apply to as many programs as they can, depending on their geographic preferences and career goals. Dental anesthesiology programs **require the CBSE** (as used in oral surgery), and strong academic performance, clinical experience, and a well-rounded application are essential.

A major determinant of acceptance is **your clinical exposure to anesthesia and sedation**, as well as **letters of recommendation** from faculty or professionals in the field. Shadowing a dental anesthesiologist and assisting in sedation cases will significantly improve your chances. Some programs prefer applicants with **post-graduate experience**, such as a **GPR or AEGD residency**, since these provide additional exposure to sedation and medical emergency management.

Choosing the Right Program

When considering dental anesthesiology residency programs, it's important to find one that aligns with your **career goals and training preferences**. Some programs are more **hospital-based**, offering extensive experience in general anesthesia for a wide range of medical and dental cases, while others focus on **outpatient sedation** in a dental setting.

Since dental anesthesiology residency is typically **three years long**, consider the following when selecting programs:

- **Hospital vs. Outpatient Training** – Do you want extensive hospital-based anesthesia experience, or do you prefer a program focused on office-based sedation?
- **Case Volume & Type** – Some programs have a heavier focus on pediatric sedation, while others may provide more experience with adult and special needs patients.
- **Geographic Preferences** – The limited number of programs means you may need to be flexible with relocation.
- **Board Certification & Career Goals** – Programs that provide strong preparation for the **American Dental Board of Anesthesiology (ADBA) exams** can set you up for future success in the field.

If possible, **attend externships** or shadow at different programs to get a better sense of the learning environment and expectations. Since dental anesthesiology is a relatively small specialty, networking and building connections within the field can significantly enhance your application.

DA Residency programs:

programs.adea.org/PASS/programs?type=Anesthesiology