



Careers advice for GCSE and A level students

This document has been produced by the British Orthodontic Society

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So you want to be an Orthodontist?

What is Orthodontics?

Orthodontics is a specialised branch of dentistry. Orthodontic treatment corrects irregularities of the teeth or developing jaws and can improve the function and appearance of the mouth and face. Orthodontic appliances (braces) are used to straighten the teeth.



"Patient with crooked teeth who had orthodontic treatment"

Is orthodontics the career for me?

A career in orthodontics can be challenging, intellectually stimulating, creative and rewarding. You will need to be able to relate well to patients, who will mostly be children and teenagers. One of the attractions of a career in orthodontics is where and when you can work. You may wish to work in a specialist high street practice and run your own small business. Alternatively you may wish to work in a hospital, a community clinic or become a teacher of orthodontics in a university. There are plenty of opportunities for full-time or part-time work and career breaks are possible.

If you are interested in becoming an orthodontist then you possibly already have some idea of what the job entails. Maybe you attend an orthodontist yourself or know someone who does. If you are seriously considering working in this branch of dentistry, do spend some time with an orthodontist to find out if this could be the career you are looking for.

How can I become an orthodontist?

There are a number of stages to becoming an orthodontist and these are:

- Obtain good A level grades, generally ABB or higher in order to secure a place at University to study dentistry (in Scotland this will be ABBBB or higher). Due to the competitive nature, it is becoming more common to spend time doing an initial degree before embarking on the dental degree.
- It usually takes 5 years to become a dentist and obtain a degree in Dentistry (the Bachelor of Dental Surgery or BDS degree).
- After qualifying, work as a dentist and gain experience in all fields of dentistry.
- Apply for a place on an orthodontic training scheme. This training usually takes a further 3 years of study and consists of both academic and clinical training. At the end of this, if you are successful in the Membership in Orthodontics examination (MOrth) you will become a specialist orthodontist. Trainees usually also study for a higher degree, such as a Master of Science (MSc), Master of Clinical Dentistry in Orthodontics (MCLinDent) or a Doctorate of Dental Surgery (DDS).

Where can I study dentistry?

The Universities of Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Central Lancashire, Dundee, Exeter and Plymouth, Glasgow, King's College London, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Queen Mary (London), Queen's (Belfast) and Sheffield have dental schools where you can study to become a dentist. Applications are made via UCAS.

Where can I train to be an orthodontist?

You can apply to train to be an orthodontist at the following institutions: Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry, Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kings College Dental Institute (London), Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and UCL Eastman Dental Institute.

What are my options after becoming a specialist?

There are a number of options available for specialist orthodontists and these include:

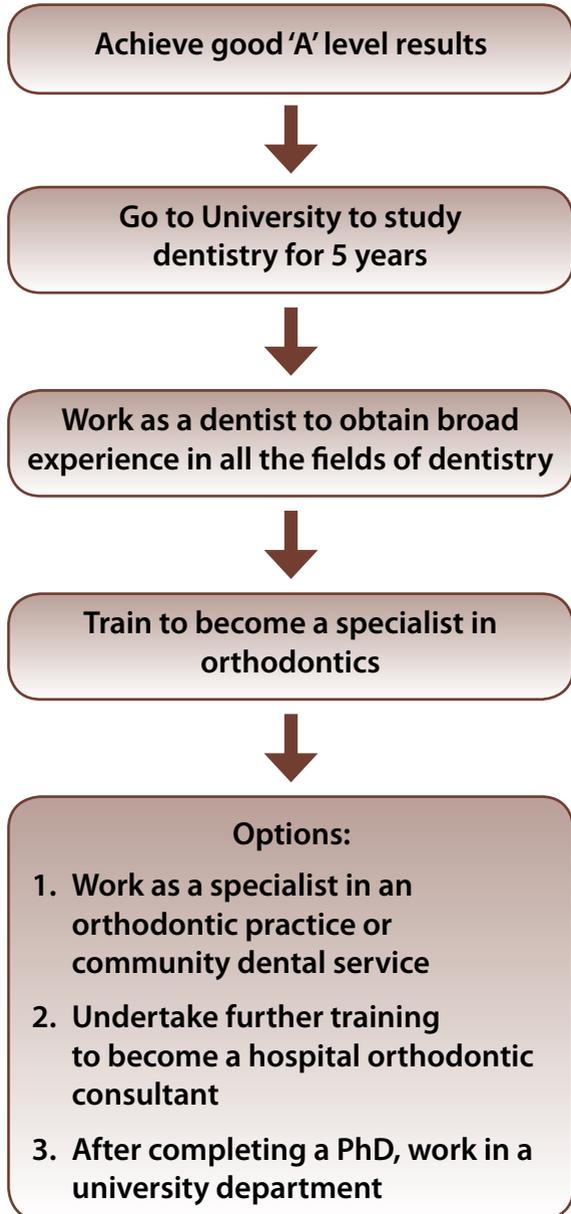
- Work as a specialist in orthodontic practice. You may eventually run your own business.
- Train for a further 2 years in a hospital to gain the Fellowship in Orthodontics (FDS Orth) and become a hospital orthodontic consultant. There is also the opportunity to become a cleft orthodontic consultant who specialises in treating patients with clefts of the lip and/or palate.
- Train for a further 4 years in a hospital / university. During this time, study for a PhD degree in order to work in the university.
- Work as a specialist in the Community Dental Service. All dentists or orthodontists need to keep up to date by studying and attending courses for as long as they are working.

Where can I find out more?

Start by talking to your own dentist and your local orthodontist. Your careers teacher may also be able to give you some advice. You may find it useful to contact the following organisations:

- The University & Colleges Admissions Service, UCAS. (www.ucas.com)
- British Dental Association (www.bda.org)
- General Dental Council (www.gdc-uk.org)
- British Orthodontic Society (www.bos.org.uk)

Steps to becoming an Orthodontist



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