

MATTHEW RUSSELL

CLASS OF 2021



STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Cary, NC

Undergraduate Major: Exercise Physiology

Career Aspirations: General Dentist or
Orthodontist/Cosmetic Dentist

Professional School: The University of Pennsylvania
School of Dental Medicine

What's been your favorite part of the journey to apply to professional schools?

My favorite part about applying to professional schools was being able to choose programs that I felt were the best fit for me. Along with that, I really enjoyed interviewing with programs and getting to meet and interact with other pre-dental students as well as current dental students/faculty.

What were some of the challenges you came across when preparing to apply to schools (what was tougher than you expected)?

Being the first person in my family to attend dental school, it was difficult navigating the application itself and ensuring I had all of the requirements. Fortunately, with help from other pre-dents and pre-professional advising, I was able to get everything together and have my applications in early.

How did you prepare yourself for the process of applying to schools?

The biggest thing I did to prepare for applications was to prioritize the process over everything else going on in my life at that time. I made to-do lists and created deadlines for myself to make sure I was swiftly moving through the application and putting my best foot forward. Envisioning your end goal is a great motivator as well!

Looking back, what advice would you give to students who are interested in professional schools? What do you wish you had known earlier?

Apply early and be proud of what you are putting on your application! Applying to professional school is a very impressive feat, so have confidence in yourself and know that you will achieve your goal of becoming a professional in the medical field.

What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?

Utilize PPAC! They are a huge help and can guide you towards submitting a well-rounded application.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

Member of the ECU Men's Track and Field/Cross Country teams & USNDA

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed two different general dentists in Greenville at the Dental Care Center as well as an Oral Surgeon. Due to COVID, I also did a lot of virtual shadowing through Dental Shadowers where I shadowed orthodontists, prosthodontists, oral surgeons, cosmetic dentists, general dentists, and periodontists

What type of volunteering did you do?

All of my volunteering hours were through ECU Athletics which included time with the Food Bank of Eastern NC, local road races with Fleet Feet, food drives, SAAC events, and more. I also worked part-time as a pharmacy technician at CVS during part of undergrad.

Did you do research? If so what was the topic?

I worked in the sensory-motor integration laboratory (SMILe) with Dr. Mizelle for a couple years during undergrad. During my time with him I helped prep EEG caps for testing, learned how to analyze brainwave data, as well as set-up a fully functioning hardware/software system in the lab to measure gross and fine motor movements. With this technology we were able to investigate differences of gross motor compressive forces between dominant and non-dominant hands.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

Being able to make special connections with faculty during undergrad was something that I will carry with me forever. Furthermore, building relationships with classmates, teammates, and coaches allowed me to build a support system that constantly had my back and wanted to watch me succeed.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Have confidence in yourself and keep your end goal in mind! There's a lot of time and hard work that goes into applying, so take it day by day and control what you can control. Don't be afraid to seek help because in the end you are only bettering yourself for your future. And most importantly, enjoy it!