



ASHTON FIELDS

CLASS OF 2025

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Fayetteville, NC

Undergraduate Major: BS Biology & BA Chemistry and minor in Public Health

Career Aspirations: General Dentist

Professional School: ECU School of Dental Medicine

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

My favorite part of the journey of applying to dental school has been the opportunity for growth and self-reflection. Throughout this journey I have had to constantly self-reflect on my personal, academic, and clinical experiences. Each of these unique experiences helped me grow immensely and constantly reminded me why I started the journey in the first place: to serve my community through dentistry. While there have certainly been challenges, I've also met incredible people along the way whose passion and support have inspired me and helped me grow.

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

I would say the biggest challenge is the DAT. It is a very tough test and trying to stay motivated after studying 8-5 every day was challenging.

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

I prepared myself for applying by mapping out first which pre-requisite courses I would need for dental school. After this I made a plan of when I would take them in the most efficient manner so I could take my DAT the Fall semester of my junior year. I knew taking the prerequisites within two years would be critical to allow me a full summer of studying. I also prepared for this by doing all of my shadowing the summer prior to entering college and the summer after freshman year. Lastly, I prepared myself for the application by having my personal statement completed by January of my junior year. I also asked for recommendation letters in January of my junior year.

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

For students interested in professional school I would say remember your "why" and never give up on your dream. Everyone's journey is different and with hard work and determination anything is possible.

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

I would definitely recommend utilizing the Pre-Professional Advising Center and meeting with Ms. McAllister to stay on track with pre-requisite courses. Also, take advantage of the free practice exams provided for the DAT. In undergraduate I also frequently utilized the PASC to ensure I was making the best possible grades in all of my courses.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

I was involved in numerous organizations as an undergraduate student. I was a general member of the Pre-Dental Honor society, Alpha Epsilon Delta and Tri-Beta research honor society. The organization I was primarily involved in was ECU Ambassadors where I was able to obtain two valuable leadership positions.

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed for one summer at an orthodontic practice and another summer at a general dentist's office. I chose to shadow in two different specialties to gain a broader perspective on the variety of procedures, day-to-day responsibilities and patient interactions within the field. These experiences provided me with valuable insight and helped me solidify my passion for pursuing dentistry.

What type of volunteering did you do?

A majority of my volunteer hours came from being an ECU Ambassador. This is a service organization that serves not only the ECU campus but the greater Greenville community. Through this organization I was able to volunteer at events like Pirates Aboard, Special Populations Proms, and at the Boys and Girls Club of Greenville.

How did you gain clinical experience?

During each of my shadowing experiences the practices became understaffed which allowed me the opportunity to gain clinical experience. I was trained to be the sterilization assistant in both offices.

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

I did research for three years in the Chemistry department under Dr. Spuches. We investigated cadmium and calcium binding to full-length human cardiac troponin C using intrinsic fluorescence.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My most rewarding experience at ECU was having the opportunity to study abroad in Switzerland, France and Italy. This was truly the opportunity of a lifetime and was led by Dr. Cofie and Mrs. Haddock in the Public Health Department. During the trip, we had the incredible privilege of actively engaging in the World Health Assembly. Hearing firsthand the crucial conversations among global healthcare professionals was truly eye-opening. This trip will be something I never forget and it will always be something I reflect on to help me become a well rounded healthcare provider.