



PRE-DENTAL 101

SEPTEMBER 26, 2022

SHADOWING

The image features a minimalist design with a white background. The word "SHADOWING" is centered in a dark brown, serif font. In the top-right and bottom-left corners, there are abstract, organic shapes in a light peach color, each outlined with a thin, dark brown line.



WHY IS SHADOWING IMPORTANT

- SOLIDIFY YOUR PASSION!
- ADMISSIONS - 100 HOURS SHADOWING
 - FOCUS FIRST ON GENERAL DENTISTRY!
- YOU NEED A LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FROM A DENTIST



WHEN

- **START SHADOWING *NOW***
 - Finish your 100 hours before you apply!
- **IT'S GOOD TO SHOW CONSISTENCY WITHIN THE FIELD (SHADOWING, ASSISTING, VOLUNTEERING)**
- **THE FREQUENCY DEPENDS ON THE INDIVIDUAL! (SOME DO ALL OF THEIR HOURS WITHIN A FEW WEEKS, OTHERS SPREAD IT OUT)**



WHERE

- ***ASK YOUR DENTIST FIRST!***
 - They know you so they're more likely to say yes when you ask!
- **ANY PERSONAL CONNECTION YOU HAVE WILL HELP!**
 - Ask your friends
 - Ask your family
 - Ask your dentist for their other dental friends!
- **Call or email local dentists (call > email)**
 - Be patient! You may need to reach out multiple times to multiple providers especially if you're cold calling/cold emailing



Example:

"Hello! My name is _____ and I am a [grade level] pre-dental student at The University of Texas at Dallas. I am interested in learning about the dental field and wanted to reach out to see if Dr. _____ was allowing students to shadow?"

- Add something personal: I found your office through my friend _____, I was interested in your office because of the technology, I wanted to gain a more in-depth understanding of orthodontics

I was interested in shadowing XXXX (for one day, for a few days, set your timeline). I want to respect your COVID guidelines and Dr. ____'s schedule, so please let me know if it possible to shadow at this time! I can provide any additional information that is needed. Thank you so much!



BEFORE YOU SHADOW

- Ask the dentist what they want you to wear!
 - It's oftentimes scrubs, and they may have a color preference
 - If you don't have scrubs already, start off with black scrubs
 - Wear comfortable shoes, you'll likely be on your feet the whole time
- Ask the dentist about mask requirements, vaccination requirements



WHEN YOU'RE SHADOWING

PATIENT CARE ALWAYS COME FIRST

- Read the room. If a patient is anxious, it may not be the best time to ask questions. If a patient talks to you, it's ok to talk to them! Follow the lead of the dentist.
- Each dentist is different! Some are okay with you asking questions while they're doing the procedure, others prefer that you ask questions when they're done.

ASK QUESTIONS!

- This is your time to understand the field
- Ask about **procedures**: why did you do xxx first? why did you recommend xxx treatment? could you explain this step of the procedure?
- Ask about their **experiences**: what made you choose dentistry? what do you find the most rewarding? what made you choose this specialty?
- Ask about the **field**: what's the biggest issue you see in dentistry? how has the field changed?



AFTER YOU SHADOW

SAY THANK YOU

- *Especially* if you are shadowing for multiple days, it's always nice to write a card to the dentist/the office to express your gratitude!
- Leave on a good note! You may come back to shadow again or ask for a letter of recommendation. The dentist could even ask you to join their team!

REFLECT!

- Were there any cases that surprised you? intrigued you?
- What made today different than your other shadowing experiences?
 - Dentists have different ways of interacting with patients, different reasons for entering the field, different ways they do procedures, **LEARN FROM THEM!**



AFTER YOU SHADOW

DENTAL ASSISTING

- A great way to start dental assisting is by working with a doctor that you have shadowed
- Some dentists let you begin assisting without your RDA, it all depends on the dentist

Getting your RDA Certification:

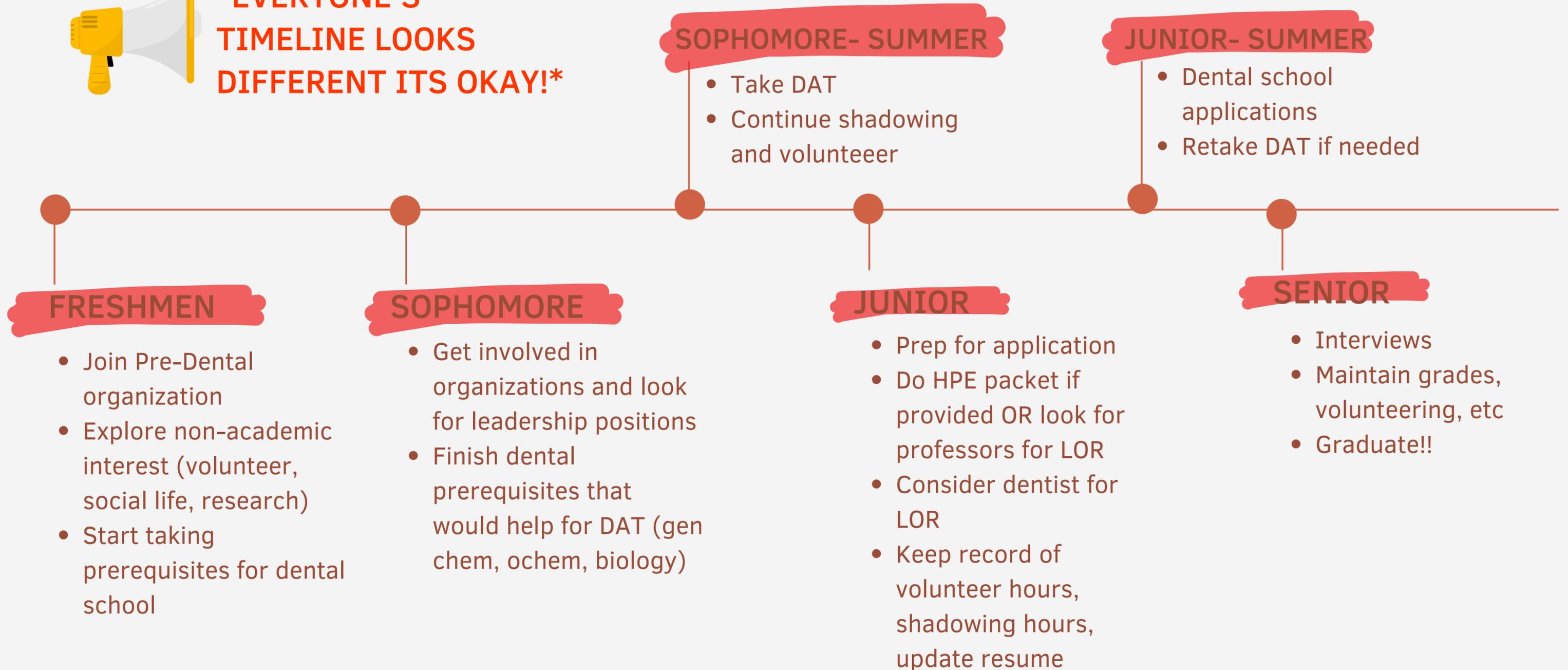
- Dental Assisting Course
- Online Course (UT Health San Antonio)
 - This is basically just to get the certification, you won't know the physical skills of dental assisting. You'll need to find a dentist who is willing to train you!
 - https://smile.uthscsa.edu/course_dAPI.php?rc=32Xxe3

TIMELINE

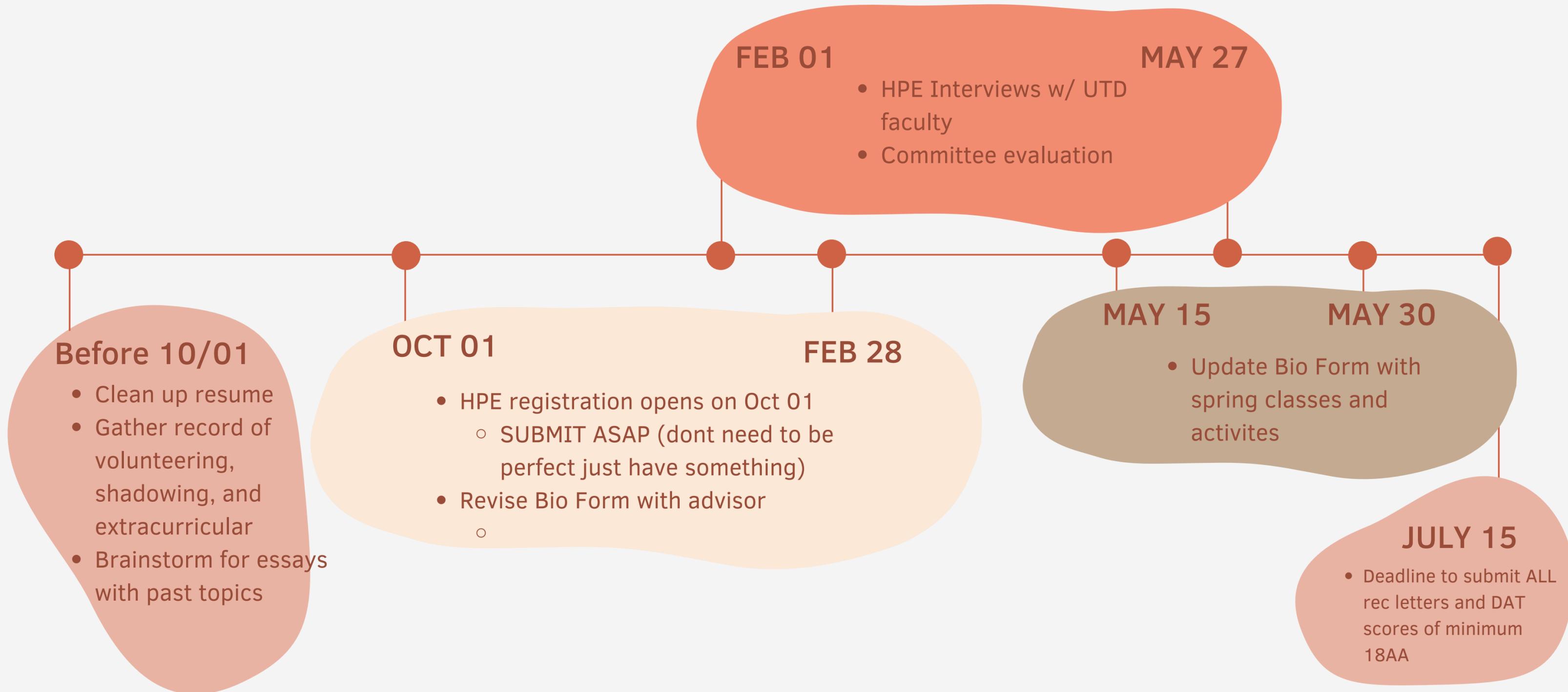
Traditional Timeline



***EVERYONE'S
TIMELINE LOOKS
DIFFERENT ITS OKAY!***



HPE Timeline @ Juniors/EY24



The image features a white background with decorative orange shapes in the corners. In the top right, there is a solid orange shape with a wavy, hand-drawn border. In the bottom left, there is a solid orange shape with a wavy, hand-drawn border. The text is centered in the middle of the page.

GENERAL ADVICE!



BUILDING YOUR APPLICATION

DO YOU DENTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Try to keep your GPA up!
- Take the DAT
- Get 100 hours of shadowing + assist if you can!
- Take the required classes (look up prerequisites for each school)

DO WHAT YOU LOVE

(cliche, but if you're genuinely passionate about something they love to hear about it)

- Dentistry is all about interacting with people! Every experience you have, dental related or not, will help you become a more empathetic provider



THE TMDSAS APPLICATION

- Leadership
- Employment
- Research (if you did it)
- Healthcare Activities
- Community Service
- Extracurricular and Leisure Activities
- Academic Recognition
- Non-Academic Recognition



KEEP TRACK OF YOUR ACTIVITIES

- By the time you're filling out your TMDSAS application, it can be hard to remember everything you've done throughout your college career
- Keep a sheet and update it every semester with the activities you've done + hours
- If something memorable happens, record it!
Stories give life to your application



SERVICE

- Any service is better than no service!
- Service that has direct interaction with people is incredibly valuable, even if it's not in a dental office.
 - Building up your people skills will show once you're shadowing and/or assisting

The image features a white background with abstract, organic shapes in shades of orange and red in the corners. These shapes are defined by thick, hand-drawn style lines. The top-right corner has a shape that looks like a stylized leaf or a piece of fabric. The bottom-left corner has a similar shape, also appearing to be a stylized leaf or fabric piece. The text 'Q&A!' is centered in the middle of the page.

Q&A!