Having successfully gained a first-class degree in physiology and achieved the University of Bristol R.W. Meech prize for the highest overall mark, I am now excited to explore my true desire to become a dentist. Dentistry will allow me to utilise my passion and understanding for the science behind health and disease, as well as giving me the opportunity to use my creativity and ability to establish strong interpersonal connections.

During my degree, I kept up to date with medical advancements and became fascinated by the correlation between oral health and systemic disease. For example, the link between periodontal disease and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, respiratory conditions and preterm labour. I began shadowing dentists on a weekly basis in a local general practice. I observed routine exams, conservative dentistry, endodontics, dental health education and orthodontic assessments. Time spent in clinics allowed me to recognise the fundamental characteristics that dentists share; sympathetic communication, excellent listening skills, detailed treatment planning, patience and acute manual dexterity. I have developed strong listening and communication skills by volunteering in a hospice for three years and supporting patients undergoing palliative care. My dexterity has been nurtured by my silversmithing hobby, spending countless hours creating intricate pieces of jewellery. This requires a methodical, patient approach and attention to detail - invaluable skills that will prepare me for the intricacies of dental procedures and patient management.

Confirming my desire to pursue a career in dentistry, I spent a week in an NHS Community Dental Centre. Many patients were vulnerable/ anxious adults and children who presented with a variety of physical and mental disabilities. Techniques such as the 'Tell-Show-Do' method were successfully implemented – building trust and creating a relaxed, safe environment. Whilst volunteering in a neurological day centre, I employed similar coping methods to help patients with feelings of distress or agitation in an unfamiliar environment. I enjoyed the holistic approach taken by dentists to improve patient's long-term oral and overall health, including psychological and social needs. Consultations required assessment of the patient's capacity to make decisions, taking into account specific communication barriers.

I currently work as a Patient Care Coordinator (PCC) in a multidisciplinary team of specialists in Central London. This has developed my knowledge of dentistry, allowing me to gain first-hand experience and appreciate the multi-faceted approach to optimal oral care. As a PCC I help to explain treatments, build rapport with patients and allow them to fully understand the consent process including the risks/ benefits of each procedure. I manage diaries of various clinicians and the day-to-day running of a large dental practice.

Consistently obtaining first class marks alongside three part-time jobs and competing within a national level rowing team shows that I am exceptionally determined, resilient and highly self-motivated. Rowing requires a huge amount of perseverance and discipline. I thrive within this demanding environment and enjoy being part of a close team. My public speaking skills and ability to deliver information to a variety of people was enhanced by completing a Nuffield Health research placement at the University of Cambridge. I was chosen to present my findings to a large audience at the Cambridgeshire STEM awards. As Head Girl at school, I introduced a smoking cessation campaign to raise awareness and educate my peers about the consequences of smoking on oral health.

I believe I have the ability, stamina, commitment and emotional reserve to allow me to excel within the course and career. I would deem it a privilege to have the opportunity to be a dentist; a challenging yet rewarding vocation that offers huge scope for personal and professional development.