



Are you ready to make the Pacific a
happier and healthier place?

Do you have what it takes to improve
the lives of your people?

Are you willing to work hard and
dedicate yourself?

Do you want to be respected and
earn a good living?

If so, then you're ready for...

The Dentists and Doctors of Tomorrow

DDFTMICRONESIA.ORG

Congratulations on your interest in the DDFT program!



We are very excited that you have the heart and the desire to help your people by becoming one of the dentists and doctors of tomorrow.

To help you learn more about this exciting program, which has been running since 2017, and is based off the medical officer training program of the 1990s, we have prepared the following list of questions you might have.

After reading this list of questions and answers, we hope you are as excited about the DDFT program as we are, and that you will take the challenge to become the dentists and doctors of tomorrow by applying to the program.

Is there really a need for more dentists and doctors?

Yes! All the countries in the Pacific have a shortage of dentists and doctors.

Many of the doctors who were trained in the 1990s under the medical officer training program are now retiring and need to be replaced. Other doctors and dentists are not from the countries they serve and will one day retire and return to their own homes.

We need more doctors, dentists, nurses, and other healthcare providers to care for the people of the Pacific. You can be the next generation of healthcare providers who know the language, understand the people and culture, and have the heart to care for your own people.

The global doctor shortage

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there is a shortage of 4.3 million doctors, dentists, nurses, and other healthcare providers.

As of 2023, there are over 400 vacancies for doctors, dentists, nurses, and allied healthcare providers in the Pacific region.

The shortage is real, and we need your help to fix it in the Pacific!

What is the DDFT program?

DDFT stands for **Dentists and Doctors for Tomorrow**. DDFT is based at National Campus of the College of Micronesia-FSM (COM-FSM) located in Palikir, Pohnpei.

DDFT was created in 2017 to help high school graduates from Micronesia, and now from across the Pacific, get the necessary education and skills they need to become dentists, doctors, and more.

We believe that the people of the Pacific are strong and dedicated, and that they can succeed. That is what the DDFT program is about: taking a strong and dedicated people and giving them the academic skills they need to enter medical, dental, nursing, and allied health schools in Fiji after they graduate from COM-FSM.

DDFT is a 2.5-year program. Students will be part of closeknit, caring community of learners who are supported by faculty and staff. Students will live in the dorms at COM-FSM. They will eat in the cafeteria. They will study on campus. They will observe doctors, dentists, and others doing real life procedures in the hospital and clinics of Pohnpei.

YOUR TIME IN THE DDFT PROGRAM

Year 1: June to August

Summer Semester

We have already detailed the summer semester, which is your first official semester in the DDFT program

Remember, this is the time when you will arrive in Pohnpei, meet and make lifelong friends with other DDFT students and form friendships

You will take classes in study skills, medical math, health sciences, and other subjects to give you a strong foundation

Year 1: August to May

During the fall and spring semesters of your first year, you will take the following courses

Fall Semester

Reading Skills
Writing Skills
Human Biology
Statistics
Computers

Spring Semester

Advanced Writing Skills
Social Studies
General Chemistry
Anatomy and Physiology
College Math

Year 2: June to August

This begins your second year in the DDFT program

Summer Semester

This is your second summer in the DDFT program

During the first summer you learned valuable foundation skills and made friends

During the second summer you will spend more time in the hospital and clinics

You will also have the chance to complete a research project or other activities as you continue your journey

Year 2: August to May

During the fall and spring semesters of your second year, you will take the following courses

Fall Semester

Human Nutrition
Psychology
Advanced Anatomy and Physiology

Spring Semester

Advanced Psychology
Human Nutrition
Speech
Public Health
Advanced Public Health

Graduation in May!

How is the DDFT program different? What will I learn?

DDFT is a different program than other science programs at COM-FSM. We use special teaching methods. We help you learn to work as a team. We give you special access to the hospital and clinics. We help you apply to dental and medical school when you finish the program. We help you arrange funding for your dental or medical studies. In short, DDFT is different because you will receive personal attention you need to succeed and become the dentists and doctors of tomorrow. We care, and we want you to succeed!

You will be taught using problem-based learning (PBL), which is a special teaching method that is designed to help you learn real-life problem-solving skills by solving medical problems in sample patients. Not only is PBL learning much more interesting than listening to a lecture, it is also the method of teaching in medical and dental school in Fiji.

You will learn science, math (but math that is focused on the math you need to care for patients), history, English and writing skills (focused on the skills you need as a doctor or dentist), computer skills, presentation skills and more. All of the classes you take will give you a laser-like focus on preparing to go to Fiji for dental or medical school.

After 2.5 years, DDFT you will graduate from COM-FSM with an associates degree and the skills and knowledge to apply to school in Fiji to continue their journey towards being the dentists and doctors of tomorrow. Of course, we will support you all the way in this journey, including helping you apply for and be accepted to schools in Fiji. We want you to succeed!

What is problem-based learning?

Problem-based learning (PBL) makes learning fun. Instead of just listening to your teacher lecture, memorizing what they say, and repeating it, you actually learn to think like a dentist or doctor by solving patient problems. It is much more enjoyable for both the teacher and the student.

For example, do you want to listen to a lecture about the muscles and nerves of the body, or would you rather learn them by studying an accident victim that has problems with his muscles and nerves? I know what I would rather do.

For example: A 22-year-old man is rock climbing in Guam. He falls from a height of fifteen feet. He can no longer feel his hands and legs. Where is the fracture in his back? What nerves have been impacted? What would you expect from his breathing?

PBL makes learning fun!

Who can apply?

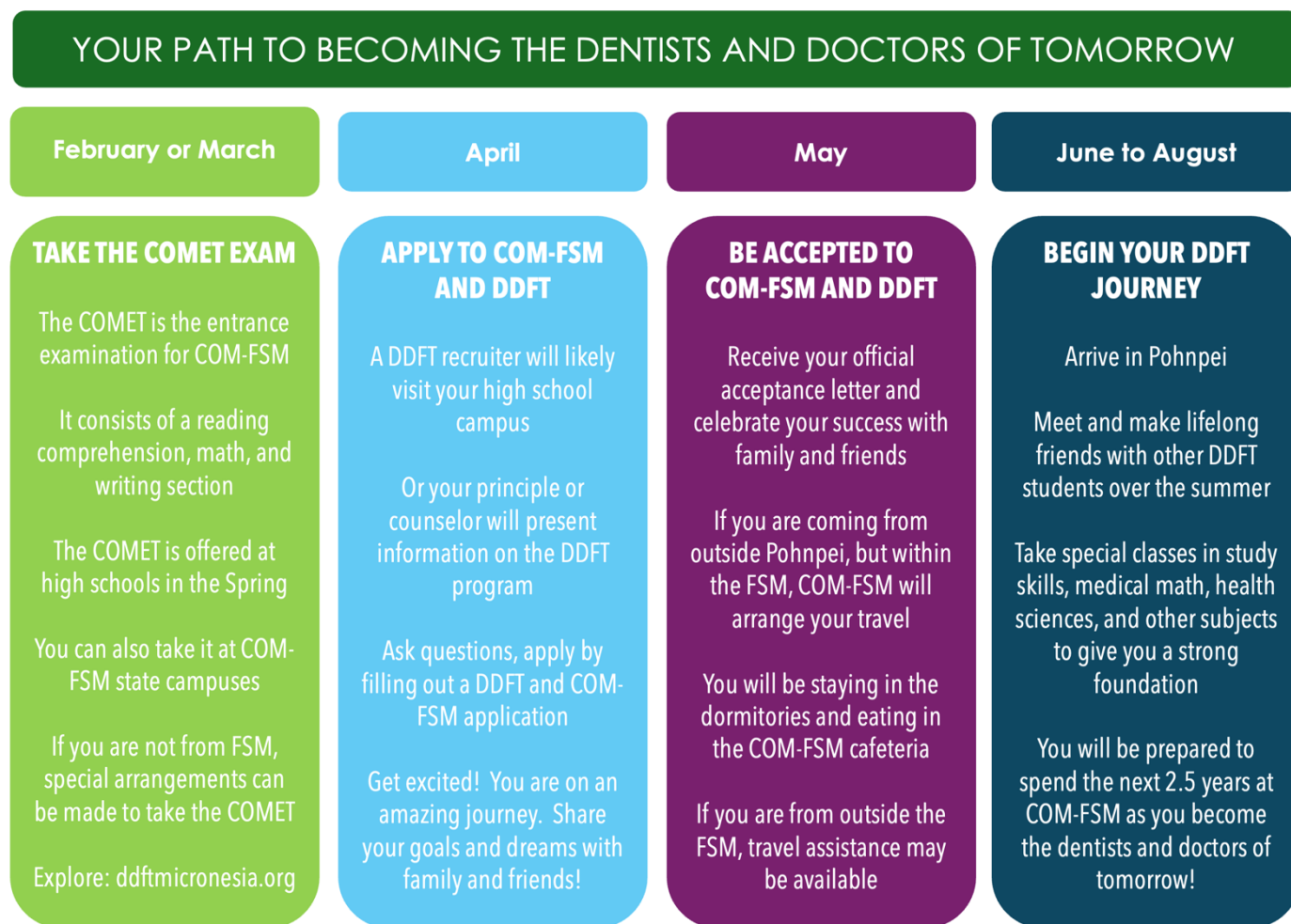


Anyone can apply!

Most DDFT students are just graduating from high school and ready to start on a career that will make the world a better place. But we also take those who have graduated and been working, possibly at the hospital or in the public health sector. We also take those who are in other programs at COM-FSM but want to make the change to DDFT where they can better the world. In short, if you have a desire

to make the Pacific a healthier and happier place, if you want to help people while earning a good income and being respected in your community, then you should apply to DDFT.

How do I apply to the DDFT program?



How much does the DDFT program cost?

The DDFT program is free! Yes, you heard that right. This program is free.

We take advantage of special money from the US government that has been set aside for your education. We also have access to additional funds that allow us to give you special perks, like a laptop computer, international faculty, visiting dentists from Taiwan, and more to give you an amazing experience. Not only will you be learning and making lifelong friends, but you will be doing so for free.

What happens after I graduate?

Graduation from COM-FSM is just the beginning! Remember, your program is 2.5-years long. So, if you start in May, then you graduate in May two years later. DDFT staff will then help you

begin the process of applying to dental, medical, or allied health schools in Fiji. You will apply in the fall of the year you graduate and begin your studies in Fiji in January of the next year.

We currently place students at the University of Fiji or Fiji National University. Both are excellent schools.

At the University of Fiji you can study to become a physician, or a doctor as we say.

At Fiji National University you can study to become any of the following:

- **Physician (doctor)** - physicians care for the body. There are different kinds of physicians, such as family doctors, pediatricians, obstetricians and gynecologists, surgeons, and more
- **Dentist** - dentists care for the teeth and mouth. There are different kinds of dentists, including general dentists, oral surgeons, endodontist, orthodontists, and more.
- **Dental hygienist** - dental hygienists clean your teeth and help care for the teeth, gums, and mouth
- **Dental therapist** - dental therapists do everything a dental hygienist does, but they can also do procedures like pulling teeth. The dental therapist is like a junior dentist.
- **Physiotherapist** - physiotherapists help people recover from injuries by improving movement and function.
- **Clinical laboratory scientist** - clinical laboratory scientists are the investigators of medicine. They use samples, such as blood, to run tests in the lab to understand what is wrong with a person.
- **Radiographer** - radiographers take pictures inside the human body using x-rays and other technology to assist in diagnosing and treating patients.
- **Nurse** - nurses take care of patients in hospitals and clinics by carrying out the treatment plans prescribed by doctors, such as administering medications and treatments. They are the backbone of the healthcare system.

What is an allied health provider?

You probably have noticed that we keep referring to dentists, doctors, nurses, and allied health providers (sometimes called allied health practitioners).

What is an allied health provider?

Allied health providers are a group of health care professions that provide a range of diagnostic, technical, therapeutic, and support services in connection with health care, and which are distinct from the fields of dentistry, medicine, and nursing. They are very important, and provide the support that doctors, dentists, and nurses need to provide care to their patients.

Being an allied health provider is an important and satisfying career that many DDFT graduates pursue.

- **Pharmacist** - a pharmacist is a specialist in medications. They dispense medications and work with doctors to treat patients.
- **Public health practitioner** - public health practitioners are specialists in preventing disease through immunization programs, healthy eating programs, exercise programs, and more. They work to keep groups of people and prevent disease.
- **Dietician and nutritionist** - dieticians and nutritionists are specialist in diets. They



work in hospitals and clinics to help people make healthy eating choices.

We will help you decide which programs to apply to depending on your grades, as well as what you want out of your career, and what you are interested in. Remember, during your time with DDFT you will have seen all kinds of healthcare providers in action and will have had the chance to decide which one you want to be.

During the application process we will help you arrange scholarships through organizations such as the WHO, Australian Agency for International Development, the government of your home country and state, and more so that your education in Fiji is also paid for.

AFTER YOU GRADUATE FROM THE DDFT PROGRAM

May to August

BEGIN APPLYING TO FIJI

This is a time for celebration!

You graduated in May with your associates degree from COM-FSM

You are now ready to begin applying to school in Fiji

You will work with DDFT staff to identify what programs to apply to and begin applications

August to December

TAKE ADDITIONAL COM-FSM COURSES

CONTINUE FIJI APPLICATIONS

You have the option to take additional classes

Many graduates take extra classes in nursing which are very helpful in Fiji

Or, you can take classes in public health to learn to prevent disease

Continue applications

December to January

BE ACCEPTED TO COM-FSM AND DDFT

This is another exciting time!

By late December or early January you will be notified if you are accepted to Fiji

You will be told what program you have been accepted to

Travel arrangements will be made for you to move to Fiji in early January

Assistance will be provided in finding housing

Your time in Fiji

COMPLETE YOUR STUDIES IN FIJI

Your time in Fiji will range from 3-5 years depending on what you study

RETURN HOME

The day you graduate and return home will be one of the proudest moments in your life!

You will return home to care for your people as you are now the dentists and doctors of the present!

Congratulations!

What success has the DDFT program had?

In the past, 100% of our graduates earned a place in either medical, dental, or allied health schools in Fiji. Recent years have seen acceptance rates between 85-100%. Graduates will be advised on what programs to apply to in Fiji which will give them the best chance of success. We have graduates who are now physicians practicing in the FSM, and we have even more who became nurses, public health practitioners, psychologists, and more. If you are willing to work hard, we can help you achieve your dream of becoming a healthcare provider.

How much are doctors and dentists paid?

Each country in the Pacific is different and it would be hard to say how much you will be paid after you graduate from Fiji. But what we can say is that you will be one of the top earners in your country. You will make enough to afford a home, vehicles, a family, and to travel. This is one of the perks of being a dentist or doctor, or that you are well-paid and can afford some of the nicer things in life. We know that you are not applying to the DDFT program to be rich, but because you want to make the Pacific a happier and healthier place, but it is nice to know that you can earn a good salary while doing so.

Are doctors and dentists respected in their communities?



Yes! Doctors, dentists, and other healthcare providers are some of the most trusted and respected members of their community. People will look up to you. They will respect you. Imagine how proud your parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends and others will be when they see you as a dentist, doctor, or other healthcare providers. You will be an important part of the community. You will be an example to young people and can encourage them to follow your path as well. Across your career you will

What do our graduates say?

We are proud of our graduates. They have accomplished great things and will go on to make the Pacific healthier.

One of our first graduates is now practicing medicine in Chuuk. She says:

“Without DDFT I could never have lived my dream! I have always wanted to be a doctor, and now I can. Thank you DDFT for giving me my dream.”

Another graduate from our first cohort who will finish medical school in Fiji in 2025, says:

“DDFT gave me everything I needed to be successful in medical school. I am so thankful to DDFT. Without DDFT I could never have gotten this far!”

see thousands and thousands of patients who will trust you and be thankful for the care you provide. That will be your legacy: Respect and a healthier Pacific.

Can being a doctor or dentist lead to travel and other exciting opportunities?

Yes! One of the perks of being a healthcare provider is the travel opportunities that come with it. You will be invited to conferences all over the world where you will meet other providers and learn from them. You might even be able to take your family with you and see places, and have adventures, you never thought possible.

Can I watch videos of DDFT students in action?

Please visit our website, DDFTMicronesia.org, to watch videos of our past students in action. We have three exciting videos we would like you to watch.

Yes, You Can! This is a special video for anyone who has ever doubted that they have what it takes to succeed. You can do anything if you just believe. At DDFT we believe in you!



Pathway to Success! This video showcases our students, who are now graduates attending medical school in Fiji, in action. It also gives an overview of this exciting program.

Believe in You and the Pacific! This video also shows our students in action, but with a special emphasis on believing in yourself, your island, your culture, and your ability to be the dentists and doctors of tomorrow!

I'm ready to take the challenge. I want to apply so I can make the Pacific a better and healthier place as one of the dentists and doctors for tomorrow.

We are thrilled you want to take the challenge!

Visit DDFTMICRONESIA.ORG to fill out an application.

Email us directly: comfsmddft@gmail.com



AT THE DDFT PROGRAM...

We believe in you!

We believe that you have the skills and
heart to make the Pacific better!

**We believe you have what it takes to be
the dentists and doctors of tomorrow!**

APPLY TODAY!

DDFTMICRONESIA.ORG