

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Where can I learn more about health careers?

You may be interested in a specific path, but have you explored enough options yet to be sure? The health care field is very broad and there may be several areas that would be a good fit for you. If you are open to considering options, then [ExploreHealthCareers.org](https://www.explorehealthcareers.org) is a great place to start. This is a very reputable site that can provide you with an overview of different health care career options, years of education required, average salaries, lists of programs, links to national organizations and so much more! Be sure to also check out [Is a Health Career Right for You?](#)

What's the difference between shadowing and volunteering?

At the most basic level, shadowing is following someone around on the job – with permission of course! However, it is a great way to see the “daily role” and inquire about the “life style” associated with a particular health career. It is also an opportunity for you to observe patient care and to learn about how the delivery of health care relies on a team of health care providers working together (the interdisciplinary nature of health care).

Volunteering is a more active way for you to connect with patients or others in the community. Although most pre-health students are more familiar with volunteering in health care settings it is important for you to volunteer in non-medical settings too. Health professional programs look for individuals who have the potential to not only be leaders in their respective fields, but also valued contributing members of the broader communities they will eventually belong to.

Shadowing and volunteering are important activities and admission committees will expect you have multiple, meaningful experiences in both areas before you apply to graduate programs. You can learn more about these roles on the “Clinical Exploration” tab of the “Exploring Your Options” page.

What should I major in if I am interested in a health career?

The reality is you can choose ANY MAJOR and be successful in applying to health professional programs as long as you also successfully completed the prerequisites! Some students choose a science major because of their interest in the subject. Others choose a science major because of the amount of overlap between the major and the courses required by their target health professional programs. Still other students choose a non-science major like English or History because they really enjoy these areas of study. These students find ways to elect their science prerequisite courses alongside their other non-science courses.

Admission committees are interested in applicants who have varied backgrounds and experience. As they “build their incoming class” they like to accept students with different majors because they value the unique perspectives and greater diversity a variety in majors and experiences can bring to an incoming class.

So, think about your interests, timeline and intended health career as you choose your major. Think also about how you would explain your degree choice(s) to someone if asked. In the end, choose options that are meaningful and make the most sense for you!

How long should I study for my graduate health admission exam?

It really depends upon the level of knowledge you are starting from, when you intend to apply and what other courses or activities will be ongoing at the same time. Know though, it is common for students to spend two to three months preparing for the GRE and four months or more preparing for exams with science content like the DAT, MCAT, OAT and PCAT exams. Since there is risk in repeating these exams, a great strategy is to plan to take your admission exam once when you are most prepared. See the “Admission Exams” tab of the “Academic Preparation” page to learn more and be sure to connect with your advisers to discuss your specific situation.

How difficult is it to be accepted to health professional schools?

It is a tough reality that there are always more applicants than available class seats in health professional programs, although the overall acceptance rates can really vary depending upon specific programs the career path. As an example, for the past five years nationally less than ½ of the applicants who applied for admission to US medical programs (MD) were accepted.

While it’s interesting to know the overall acceptance rates, what is more important is for you (the applicant) to focus on what you can do to increase your chances of being successfully admitted to your target schools! So, explore and investigate your options thoroughly. Use all available resources. Continue to evaluate your progress by assessing your strengths and what you can still strengthen. Take your admission exam when most prepared. Choose the timing that leads to you applying when you are the most competitive applicant you can be. And finally, be sure to show admission committees who you are and why you are so passionate about pursuing your chosen health career. See “What Should I Know BEFORE I APPLY?” and the rest of the “Preparing to Apply” page for more information.

What advising services does Oakland University offer pre-health students?

In addition to general academic advising through their unit and faculty advisers, pre-health students enrolled at OU have access to the following additional pre-health services:

- **OU Pre-Health Info Announcements** – Opportunity to opt-in to receive informative campus-wide pre-health messages directly to their Oakland University email addresses.
- **Pre-Health Quick Question Sessions** – No appointment needed, weekly group drop-in advising sessions.
- **Pre-Health Workshops** – Presentations covering key topics such as exploring health careers, admission exams, application strategies, letters of evaluation, interviewing and more.
- **Individual Pre-Health Advising Appointments** – Appointments scheduled with the Coordinator of Pre-Professional Advising to discuss their specific pre-health goals.

Additional details for all these services can be found on the “Pre-Health Events” page.