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## What Should I Know if I am a PRE-HEALTH STUDENT?

*An early guide for students interested in becoming a:*

***Physician, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapist, Dentist, Pharmacist, etc.***

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- 1. It's a marathon, not a sprint!** Realize that successfully preparing to attend a graduate health program (medical school, dental school, pharmacy school, etc.) after college is more like a marathon than a sprint! There are many, many steps involved and steady progress is more likely to help you reach your goals (rather than a rushed effort).
- 2. Explore:** One of the first and most important steps is to explore your options. A great site for viewing health care career options is <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>. Review the information at this site and then consider shadowing individuals working in the field you are considering. You should also look for volunteer opportunities in health care settings. Even if you have already done a great deal of exploring in high school, graduate health admission committees will expect that you continue to explore throughout your college years. Be sure to journal your experiences including information about what you did, when you did it, what you learned and why it makes you want to pursue the field more, or perhaps less? You should also be sure to record the name and contact information of someone who can verify when you participated and what you did.  
  
Keep in mind too, you don't have to shadow and volunteer while you are getting used to your courses your first term. If you're ready, that's great, but if you need to focus more on your coursework and adjusting to college, then that's ok too. Develop an exploration plan which makes the most sense for you.
- 3. Non-medical activities:** Make smart choices from the beginning of your college career! When ready, become involved in positive activities that you enjoy and are important to you. Examples include: student organizations, community or church volunteering, research, sports, hobbies, working, etc. Admission committees look for applicants who are passionate about something in their life and who know why they make the decisions they do. They also look for applicants who donate their time to help others and who act professionally.  
  
Be careful to avoid becoming involved in situations that could negatively impact your ability to attend graduate programs later. A few examples are: minor in possession, criminal acts, and even excessive debt that may lead to a poor credit rating (can make financing graduate school difficult).
- 4. Make connections:** Get to know others who may be from different backgrounds, cultures or have different points of view. Consider becoming involved in activities where you can lead and be part of a team. Interact with your peers, co-workers, academic advisors and yes, your instructors too! Most graduate programs require letters of recommendation or evaluation which should be written from individuals who know you well. Making connections early on can help you have strong letters later.
- 5. Academics:** Use all the resources available to you on campus! Connect with your academic advisor(s) on a regular basis and attend workshops/events for more information on how you can become the most competitive applicant you can be *BEFORE* you apply. Don't forget to use great resources on campus like the: Tutoring Center, Writing Center and Career Center too (see Resources).

## PRE-HEALTH BASICS:

1. **Any major is possible!** Realize you can pursue any major or undergraduate degree on your way to a graduate health program. Many students do choose science majors because of interest or for the amount of overlap with coursework required for their eventual graduate programs (prerequisites). However, as long as you fulfill your particular graduate programs' prerequisites, you can major in any area that interests you. Be sure to consult with your academic advisor(s) for guidance.
2. **Choose your programs early:** As early as you can, begin to look at what your specific target graduate health programs require for coursework (and letters). If you aren't sure where you would like to specifically attend, then consider a few likely examples. Compare both what programs have in common and how programs may differ? Consider looking for information on individual programs' websites that may help answer the following questions?
  - What are the prerequisite courses required?
  - Is AP or IB credit accepted?
  - Is community college coursework accepted?
  - Are online courses accepted?

You should also consider:

- What admission exam will you need to take? (MCAT, DAT, PCAT, OAT, GRE)
- What courses can help you best be prepared for your exam?

You certainly have time to plan for your coursework and possible admission exam, but it is good to keep these types of questions in mind. Please consult with your academic advisor(s) regarding your specific situation.

3. **Strive for coursework success and balance!** Everyone adjusts to the pace of college differently. Some students find college courses are not so different from course they had in high school. Some students quickly discover they have to use additional study techniques and put more effort into studying to be successful. Others find it difficult to balance classes, work and activities. Even if you never needed "help" to be successful in high school, don't be shy about seeking "help" now. Many college students benefit from study groups, tutoring, completing extra coursework, meeting regularly with their instructors and using resources like those listed below.

It is more competitive than ever to be accepted to graduate health programs, so pace yourself and take advantage of the resources Oakland University has to offer. **Wishing you continued success!**

## RESOURCES:

- Great place to start . . . <http://explorehealthcareers.org/en/home>
- Your academic advisor(s) . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/advising/findmyadviser/>
- Sign-up to receive **OU Pre-Health Info Announcements** (if you are not already receiving them).

3 EASY STEPS:

1. Go to . . . <https://espace.oakland.edu/course/view.php?id=749>
2. Login using your NetID and Password (must have Oakland University ID)
3. Click on Enroll

- Pre-Professional Advising/Pre-Health . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/advising/pre-professional>
- The Tutoring Center . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/tutoring/>
- The Writing Center . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/ouwc/>
- Career Services . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/careerservices/>
- Volunteer Opportunities . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/csa/volunteer/>
- Student Organizations . . . <https://orgsync.com/home>
- Graham Health Center . . . <http://wwwp.oakland.edu/ghc/>