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 and more.

1. Your Graduate school application starts in your freshmen year

Realize that successfully preparing to attend a graduate health program (medical school, dental school, pharmacy school, etc.) is a three to four year process. Each year you build on your academics, networking, activities and community service to create a competitive application. Steady progress in each area throughout your undergraduate career is the way to reach your goal of admission.

2. You will explore, network and shadow off campus in medical settings

One of the first and most important steps is to explore your options. A great site for viewing health care career options is explorehealthcareers.org. Review the information at this site and then consider shadowing individuals working in the fields you are considering. Graduate health admission committees will expect that you shadow professionals throughout your college years. You will also volunteer or work in health care settings where you have patient contact.

Use your Grizz Org “Involvement” tab to journal your experiences: what you did, when you did it, quantify your hours, what you learned and why it makes you want to pursue the field more, or perhaps less? Keep in mind, you don’t have to shadow and volunteer while you are getting used to your courses during your first term. If you’re ready, that’s great. Develop an exploration plan which makes the most sense for you.

3. You will also have non-medical activities

Get to know others who may be from different backgrounds, generations, cultures or have different points of view. When ready, become involved in community service with events that you enjoy and are important to you. Admission committees look for applicants who have a lifestyle of service. They also look for applicants who donate their time to help others in rural settings, urban settings and other medically undeserved communities.

4. You will network with peers and faculty

Make smart choices from the beginning of your college career! Consider becoming involved in activities where you can lead and be part of a team. Examples include: working, student organizations, research, sports, hobbies etc. Interact with your peers, co-workers, academic advisers and 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. Your transcript is like your resume for graduate school

Use all the resources available to you on campus! Your college transcript will reflect your mastery of the material and use of campus resources such as faculty office hours, tutoring center etc. The content of first semester science coursework will be applied on admissions exams three or four years later. Invest in yourself by attending workshops/events for more information on how you can become the most competitive applicant you can be BEFORE you apply.

6. You should be protective about your reputation

Avoid becoming involved in situations that could negatively impact your ability to attend graduate programs later. Of course, social media reflects your choices. Other examples include being a minor in possession, criminal acts, providing medical services before you are trained and even having excessive debt that may lead to a poor credit rating. Any of these can make admission to or financing graduate school difficult.

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1. Any major is possible
Realize that you can pursue any major or undergraduate degree on your way to a graduate health program. Many students choose science majors because of their interests, or the amount of overlap with coursework required for their eventual graduate program. 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 adviser(s) for guidance.

2. Choose your programs early
As early as you can, look at requirements for your specific target graduate health programs. If you aren’t sure where you would like to attend, then consider a few likely locations. Compare what programs have in common and how they differ? Here are some items to research:

- What are the prerequisite courses required?
- Are AP / IB / community college / online courses accepted??
- What admission exam will you need to take? (MCAT, DAT, PCAT, OAT, GRE)
- What courses can help you best be prepared for your exam?
- Has there been Oakland University alumni that had attended? Do they accept out of state applicants?

Please consult with your adviser or career consultant regarding your specific graduate health career interest.

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 courses 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. It is challenging to balance classes, work and activities. Many college students benefit from study groups, tutoring, completing extra coursework, meeting regularly with their instructors and using resources like those listed below.

4. Engage with OU Pre-Professional Advising
In addition to general academic advising through their department and faculty advisers, pre-health students enrolled at OU have access to the following additional pre-health services:

- OU Pre-health Info Announcements: Opt-in to receive informative campus-wide pre-health messages sent directly to an Oakland University email address.
- Pre-health Quick Question Sessions: No appointment needed, weekly group drop-in advising sessions.
- Pre-health Workshops: Presentations covering key topics such as health career exploration, admission exams, application strategies, letters of evaluation, interviewing and more.
- Individual Pre-health Advising Appointments: Discuss specific pre-health goals with the Coordinator of Pre-professional Advising.

You will need a detailed plan that includes shadowing, community service, medical volunteering/employment and research in order to reach your healthcare career goals. It is a great time to be a pre-health Grizzly!

RESOURCES
- Academic advisor(s):
  oakland.edu/advising/findmyadviser
- Career research:
  explorehealthcareers.org
- Career Services:
  oakland.edu/careerservices
- Pre-Professional Advising fact sheets:
  oakland.edu/advising/pre-professional
- Pre-Professional Advising Organization:
  oaklandu.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/ou-pre-professional-advising
- Pre-Professional Advising Blog:
  preprofadvising.wordpress.com
- Student Organizations on Grizz Orgs:
  oakland.edu/csa
- The Tutoring Center:
  oakland.edu/tutoring
- The Writing Center:
  oakland.edu/ouwc
- Volunteer opportunities:
  oakland.edu/osi/volunteer