

PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONAL ADVISING

Are you interested in becoming a physician (MD, DO, podiatrist), dentist, optometrist, physician assistant, chiropractor, or veterinarian or preparing for a professional graduate program to pursue other careers such as occupational therapy, genetic counseling, or physical therapy? If yes, we strongly recommend seeking pre-health advising. Successful applicants to professional programs begin early in their academic careers to lay a foundation for a strong application. The College of Science and Mathematics, in partnership with the Department of Biological Sciences, at NDSU provides advising services to students enrolled in any major and alumni interested in applying to health-related professional schools. This fact sheet summarizes some frequently asked questions for you.

Choosing a Major

Many health-related professional programs require a strong foundation in the natural and physical sciences. However, a student interested in continuing their education after graduation from NDSU can complete almost any major while preparing to apply. Students are encouraged to choose a major that they will enjoy and do well in and that allows them the flexibility to complete the necessary courses for their desired professional program. No matter the major, courses commonly required and/or highly recommended for professional program application include a full year of biology, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, and physics, as well as biochemistry, English writing, psychology, statistics, and math above the level of college algebra.

Plan of Study

Pre-health students generally complete four years of undergraduate education to earn a baccalaureate degree followed by three to four years in a professional school. A plan of study to prepare students to be competitive applicants will be a challenging one! As a result, students will find they are well-prepared for a rigorous course of study in their professional program.

Pre-health advisors work with students to plan courses needed by professional programs of interest. It will be necessary for students to research admission requirements for professional programs of interest to determine required and recommended courses, as well as extracurricular experiences and activities to become a competitive applicant.

Courses needed to apply vary by discipline and professional program, so it is essential for students to research their programs of interest early on to ensure that the required and as many recommended and special courses as possible are included in their plans of study. A pre-health advisor will assist students with how and where to explore professional programs and work with them to create a personalized plan of study that includes necessary and desired courses.

The following courses are commonly required or highly recommended for applicants to professional programs. In order to create a realistic, albeit challenging, plan of study, students should meet with a pre-health advisor as early in their academic career as possible to allow for sufficient planning.

Courses	Credits
BIOL 150 & 150L General Biology I and Lab	4
BIOL 151 & 151L General Biology II and Lab	4
BIOL 220 & 220L Human Anatomy & Physiology I and Lab	4
BIOL 221 & 221L Human Anatomy & Physiology II and Lab	4
BIOL 315 & 315L Genetics and Lab	4
BIOL 370 Cell Biology	3
BIOL 444 Vertebrate Histology	3
BIOL 460 Animal Physiology	3
BIOC 460 Foundations of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology I	3
CHEM 121 & 121L General Chemistry I and Lab	4
CHEM 122 & 122L General Chemistry II and Lab	4
CHEM 341 & 341L Organic Chemistry I and Lab	4
CHEM 342 & 342L Organic Chemistry II and Lab	4
ENGL 300-400 Upper level Writing	3
MATH 146 Applied Calculus	4
or MATH 165 Calculus I	4
MICR 350 & 350L General Microbiology and Lab	5
MICR 470 Immunology	3
PHYS 211 & 211L College Physics I and Lab	4
PHYS 212 & 212L College Physics II and Lab	4
PSYC 111 Introduction to Psychology	3
SOC 110 Introduction to Sociology	3
STAT 330 Introduction to Statistics	3

Extracurricular activities and experiences

Professional program admission committees look for students who demonstrate not only academic ability, but motivation for their chosen field by engaging in extracurricular activities like shadowing, related work, volunteering, community service, clubs and organizations, and research. Pre-health students are encouraged to participate in on-campus student organizations such as the pre-med club, American Medical Student Association (AMSA), pre-dental club, pre-physician assistant club, and pre-optometry club. These organizations are run by students with similar career goals and provide an opportunity to discuss career plans and gather information about professions of interest. These clubs also offer opportunities to become involved in leadership, volunteering, and community service.

Applying To Professional School

Most students choosing professional health careers have academic ability and levels of motivation sufficient to earn above average grade point averages. Grades, however, do not tell the whole story. Beyond GPA and courseloads, key factors commonly considered during the admissions process include: overall academic record, entrance exam scores, letters of evaluation, an applicant's personal statement, work and volunteer experience particularly in the health field, extracurricular activities, leadership positions, research experience, community activities, and personal interviews. Health programs are interested in an applicant's maturity, interpersonal skills, professionalism, and character suitable to their chosen field.

Ready to get Pre-Health Advising Assistance?

Pre-health advisors located in the Department of Biological Sciences assist students in planning their courses and extracurricular experiences, discuss ways to become a competitive applicant, and share information about the application and admissions process. Appointments are highly recommended as soon as possible in a student's academic career to allow sufficient planning. Enrolled students may arrange an appointment with a pre-health advisor via Navigate.

Jill Lodde Greives
Pre-Health Advisor (any major)
Stevens 218B, NDSU
701-231-5093
Jill.Loddegreives@ndsu.edu

Polly Olson
Advisor (Biological Sciences majors)
Stevens 218A, NDSU
701-231-9789
Polly.Olson@ndsu.edu