

Dickinson

Center for Advising, Internships & Lifelong Career Development

Pre-Health Professions Program

STUDENT GUIDE 2021-22

Promoting Medical Hands-on Learning

Internships | Observing | Research | Shadowing | Volunteering | Careers

Dickinson

August 2021

Dear Prospective Pre-Health Program student,

If you are reviewing this booklet, you must be considering a career in the health professions. The faculty members comprising the Committee for the Health Professions (CHP) who support the Pre-Health Program will guide you as you consider a career in the healthcare industry. The College believes strongly in the importance of education for the useful professions through our historic liberal arts tradition, as envisioned by our founder, Dr. Benjamin Rush.

While the roles of health care providers have changed significantly since the time Dr. Rush began this institution, some things remain the same. You need to pursue specific science courses, possess a genuine interest in caring for the whole person, and effectively combine the two during your education here. You will quickly learn that both your classroom and healthcare or research-related activities matter as you explore and prepare for a career in healthcare or medicine.

Early in your time at Dickinson, you will consider whether the pursuit of a healthcare career is your goal. Do you have the science aptitude to perform effectively in laboratory science courses? Do you want to work with people at the intersection of the sciences and interpersonal communications? Can you imagine spending the next eight to eleven years (or more) of your life in professional school? Perhaps you will consider the pursuit of a science or research career without direct contact with the patient population. To remove the unease that answering these questions can cause, the Pre-Health Program at Dickinson can help you with an advising partnership.

We look forward to working with you during your time at the College. Please reach out whenever you have a question or need guidance. The committee wants to support you as you refine academic and career plans while developing learning outcomes that will lead to satisfactory careers and transition to life beyond the limestone walls of Dickinson.

Sincerely,

The Committee for the Health Professions



This is the staff of Aesculapius (Latin) – symbolic of Asklepios (Greek) the ancient Greek god (deified) of medicine and healing. It is not to be confused (but often is) with the winged staff with two intertwined snakes (called a Caduceus in Latin) wielded by Hermes, also

an ancient Greek god. Hermes was a godly messenger and, among many things, was responsible for guiding souls of the dead to the underworld and bringing dreams to those asleep. Hermes was also associated with commerce. The staff of Aesculapius is generally used by civilian health care professionals (official symbol of the American Medical Association), while the Caduceus is used by health care professionals in the military (US Army Medical Corps). *Definitions in the above paragraph were derived from entries in Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 27th Edition and from "Hermes." Encyclopedia Mythica from Encyclopedia Mythica Online. <<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/h/hermes.html>>*

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NEW STUDENT PRE-HEALTH ADVISING

All first-year students will have the opportunity to learn about careers in healthcare, as well as participation in the program, in the fall of your first year. In the spring semester of your first year, after attending at least two sessions, you can choose to join the Pre-Health Program by completing the required materials listed below. **You must attend at least two of the three Noon meetings during the fall semester** to ask questions and to learn about course options as well as career choices. We encourage you to attend all three Noon meetings as we will share different content at each meeting. **You must also attend the final meeting in January.**

If you eventually decide that this is not the path for you, please notify the [Pre-Health Program](#) that you will be changing your plans and pursuing another direction. Please include the other healthcare profession that you will be pursuing. If you're planning to leave any one of the hundreds of healthcare careers, please indicate that you will be entering another industry. You should then schedule an appointment with a Career Advisor in the Center for Advising, Internships & Lifelong Career Development.

First Year Advising Meeting Dates:

Thursday, September 23, Noon, Althouse 106

Thursday, October 14, Noon, Althouse 106

Thursday, November 18, Noon, Althouse 106

Thursday, January 27, Noon, Althouse 106 unless notified (MANDATORY MEETING)

Steps to Entering the Pre-Health Program**:

Following your attendance and participation at the fall meetings, you will need to **complete the on-line Pre-Health Program materials** prior to the **January meeting** to join the Pre-Health Program. Following completion, we will assign you to a Faculty Pre-Health Advisor:

- ❑ **Waiver Form**—Please complete this upon notification at the end of the fall semester to proceed in the program
- ❑ **Information form and Essay**—In this essay, discuss why you would like to pursue a healthcare career, anticipated research and/or “hands on patient care” experiences that you will pursue (i.e., volunteering) and potential career plans. Be sure to include any experiences you may have had as a high school student.
- ❑ **Research at least one school** (*but up to five*) where you plan to apply to for medical school, veterinary school, nursing, or the other health program of your choice. We expect you to determine the courses that you may need to schedule during your college years to gain entrance into that school. For example, what courses will you need to take while you are at Dickinson? Will the school require courses that Dickinson does not offer? Do you have to take the general GRE? Are the MCAT's required? This information will help to guide your first advising session with your newly assigned Faculty Pre-Health Advisor in the spring semester. You should schedule this visit before Spring Break.

Sophomore, junior or senior students: If you are entering the program following the first year, please plan to complete the Steps to Entering the Pre-Health Program (above). Contact Kris Betts (Pre-Health@dickinson.edu) to arrange your orientation session.

Questions prior to entering the program:

Should you have questions prior to your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor assignment, please plan to discuss them at the sessions or email Prof. [Chuck Zwemer](#), Chairperson of the Committee for Health Professions, or [Debi Swarner](#), Pre-Health Professions Advisor.



When choosing a career in the field of healthcare or deciding whether a health career is an appropriate fit for you, there are several points to consider. Discuss these points with your pre-health advisors to make the most effective decision for your goals.

Do you wish to deal with people?

One of the first questions you should ask is how much you prefer to deal with people as opposed to objects. For healthcare providers, a warm and caring personality is one of the most desirable attributes. Others, such as medical laboratory technologists, pathologists, or medical illustrators, have little or no contact with patients.

Are you comfortable with science?

You should be comfortable combining applied science and observational skills in problem-solving situations. Some programs demand much more scientific study than others do, but preparation for all health care careers involves laboratory science study.

Are you prepared for a career of life-long learning?

To fulfill the obligation to give your patients the best care available, you need to be willing to continue studying throughout your career. Most clinical licensure requires career-long continuing education.

Are you comfortable in a health care setting?

Are you emotionally able to deal with a wide variety of people? Some students fail to anticipate the effect of spending much of their lives in the company of sick, disabled, or dying people. As illness follows no set schedule, your career in health care may require you to attend to a patient's needs over holidays and throughout the night. Your comfort, leisure, and often family time take second place to patients in your care.

Are you a team player?

Health care is increasingly a group activity where a successful outcome depends on each member of a medical team performing his or her specific function. Sometimes cross-training in job roles provides the best benefit to patient care.

What lifestyle do you envision?

Some healthcare careers include dealing with emergencies. Most include managing long hours. Some specialties require varying levels of responsibilities. In some, you will deal with crises while in others you will deal with the care of patients over the long-term. Many medical careers are stressful and leave little time and energy for work-life balance. The variety of career options and responsibilities within the healthcare industry will allow you to make the best selection for your career.

Your choice, your career

Entering a healthcare field requires great commitment. You will work for three to eleven years or more following graduation from Dickinson to obtain the credentials needed for licensing. Your commitment to your patients will be deeper than the obligation many other professionals have to their clients. It's important that you take the time now to get a clear picture of the realities of your chosen profession and of your own abilities, needs, and aspirations.

Preparation for your career

Throughout the next several pages, you will learn more about your undergraduate level requirements. You will need to act now to make decisions early in your student career and meet academic requirements. It's also important to explore and complete service or work options that will support your application to professional school. To become a well-rounded future clinician, you will need to get involved in limited social activities and build leadership roles or experiences on campus. These will help you to build your application to meet the expectations of professional schools' admissions committees.

Timing and Exploring Other Options

Think about what you will do if you are not accepted to or choose not to apply to graduate or professional school. Some students decide that the amount of time needed to pursue these careers may not be a preferred lifestyle choice. Lately students have even been choosing to work for a few years prior to applying for professional school. Initiate conversations with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor and the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to discuss your options and decide on your plans and timeline for the future. It is important that you make decisions that will benefit you both personally and professionally.

PRE-HEALTH STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES CHECKLIST

Academics

- ❑ Establish your GPA by studying effectively and succeeding in your first semester classes at Dickinson.
- ❑ While one size doesn't fit all, many students study one to three hours outside of class for each class hour. That could add up to nearly forty hours or more hours weekly, so think of your student years here as your job, just as you will in professional school.
- ❑ Develop strong study and time management skills beginning in your first year.
- ❑ Utilize campus services that we will discuss in the first-year group advising sessions to benefit your academic success.
- ❑ Connect with your mentors and your faculty members to seek tips for academic success and to grow personally.
- ❑ Learn to maintain a healthy balance of social/creative time, exercise, and course work.

Communications

- ❑ Introduce yourself to your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor in the spring semester of your first year in order to discuss courses from the fall semester and future semesters. After that, maintain the relationship and plan to meet each semester to discuss your schedule of courses, including time for study abroad and clinical/experiential activities. *The Pre-Health Program may release students when they choose not to meet with their advisor at least one time annually.*
- ❑ Talk with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor at least one time per year about exploration, experiential opportunities, testing and application plans.
- ❑ **Check your email and the Pre-Health Moodle regularly. Respond to communications from the program promptly.**

Exploration and Experiential

- ❑ Explore the health professions generally. Spend more time learning about the ones in which you find a greater interest.
- ❑ Gain hands-on experiences such as significant volunteering, internships, or paid work experiences to prepare for admissions after shadowing. It is likely that you will need to gain at least 500 hours or more in experiences relevant to your field.
- ❑ Participating in relevant community service and leadership experiences will improve your application.
- ❑ Begin early and wisely select your other campus involvements, volunteer work, and/or employment off-campus.
- ❑ Limit activities to those that most interest you. Focus on these and grow into leadership roles that you pursue.

Pre-Health Program and File

- ❑ Attend at least the minimum and all required First Year Group Advising meetings.
- ❑ Attend all relevant Pre-Health Program (including DDS or VET Career Interest Groups plus Application Series) meetings whenever you receive the announcements via email. Respond promptly whenever we request a sign-up.
- ❑ Request course evaluations from your professors each semester. Follow-up with faculty members as needed for completion.
- ❑ Track your completed evaluations via the Pre-Health Student Information System through Gateway Pre-Health Forms page.
- ❑ Join the student-run Pre-Health Society Club by contacting a Pre-Health Society officer whose information is on the Pre-Health Program website. Please note that recorded attendance counts towards receipt of a graduation cord from the Pre-Health Society whenever you attend at least twelve meetings and events during your four years at Dickinson.
- ❑ Students who recognize themselves as coming from a background that is underrepresented in medicine are welcome to join the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students (MAPS) Chapter Club at Dickinson by contacting a student officer to join.

RESOURCES

You can find study materials in Biddle House 102 for the various standardized tests that you might use for your career field. Whenever the campus reopens, you may use these resources daily during office hours (9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). Sign them out by checking with one of the team members on the first floor of Biddle House.

The Waidner-Spahr Library also maintains MCAT, DAT and GRE preparation materials on reserve.

Checklists and other resources are available on the [Pre-Health Program website](#) and on the Pre-Health Program Moodle page.

PREPARING: PURSUING THE COMMON ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Previously, professional schools required a basic set of courses from every undergraduate entering their programs. These policies have changed and will continue to adapt during your years at Dickinson. Professional schools are now implementing competency-based education for future healthcare providers. To support the competencies, professional schools still require a basic science education, but they have added holistic preferences and interpersonal development. In the exploration of your continuing education, during your first year at Dickinson, we want you to research the requirements needed for at least one specific school. This project will help you to prepare for the first meeting with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor in the spring semester.

Differences in criteria for professional schools might include geographic specifications, coursework, quantified hours of “hands-on” experiences, personality assessments, etc. Various professional associations send admissions information to the Pre-Health Professions Advisor who will share this information via a website posting or an email. After you have officially joined the Pre-Health Program and received advisor assignments, your advisors can help you to find ways to acquire these requirements as discussed in the next pages. Consider us your partners in planning throughout your student years.

COMMON MAJOR CHOICES AND ACADEMIC PREREQUISITE COURSES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONS STUDENTS

Major Choice and Special Course Information

For most professional schools, *any major* is an appropriate route of study as you prepare for a career in a health profession. Many schools report that they value liberal arts majors whenever considering candidates. When you complete the science requirements and other courses below, along with their individual program prerequisites, schools will consider you as a valuable candidate. *To take advantage of your liberal arts education at Dickinson, choose the major that most interests you in consultation with your Faculty Pre-Health advisor and the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.*

Common Courses to complete before application:

- **Chemistry:** 5 semesters (inorganic- 131, 132 OR 141 plus 243/244; organic- 241, 242; and Biochemistry – 331, no lab, OR 342, with lab)
- **Biology:** 2 semesters (131, 132 – these courses are not sequential. Neuroscience students should take the 132, PSYC 125 sequence)
- **Physics:** 2 semesters (Sequence 141,142 preferred; however, 131, 132 will suffice)
- **Mathematics:** 2 semesters (Choose a sequence: 170, 171 OR 170, 121)
- **English/Writing:** 2+ semesters (FYS counts as an “English” or writing intensive requirement but consider adding an English 101 course.)
- **Psychology/Sociology:** Discuss options for specific courses with your Pre-Health Advisor

It is important and necessary for you to create a potential list of schools to which you will plan to apply. You must check their prerequisite courses in your first year as well as in subsequent years. When meeting with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor in the spring semester, discuss **potential, additional courses** that will benefit your goals when creating your academic plan. These might include Statistics, Microbiology, Cell and Molecular Biology, Genetics, Histology, Vertebrate Anatomy, Metabolism, Physiology, or humanities courses.

Professional schools sometimes indicate that they will not accept AP credits. While Dickinson College accepts them and records these on transcripts with the appropriate scoring, professional schools require that you take higher course levels in the same category as noted in their prerequisites. If you have questions, please ask your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor. Whatever the advice or your decision, individual professional schools make their own final decisions on this topic during your application cycle.

MD/PhD

If you have enjoyed research work and spending time in the lab environment over the long summer days or for the two years that you may spend following your graduation from Dickinson, perhaps you might choose to pursue an MD/PhD program. While there may be significant financial benefits to this type of academic program, the years that you will need to dedicate to this type of education are significantly longer than traditional medical school. Should you wish to learn more about pursuing an academic or research career in medicine or industry, please contact the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to request and discuss the handout noting additional courses, as well as experiential and research career options that you may need to consider prior to applying for this type of academic program.

Major Choices

To pursue the MD/PhD degree, a science major is preferable; however, you should pursue the major that most interests you for most health professions. It is important that you discuss your ideas and career plans with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor as well as the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.

Course Planning

- Some of the courses that you may find interesting will have pre-requisite courses. Take these courses in sequence.
- Some professional schools will not accept AP courses, so you will need to take the required Pre-Health courses. You can take upper-level courses in order to meet the prerequisites.
- Prerequisites for professional school should not be taken on a Pass/Fail basis, except those completed during COVID virtual semesters. A “C” grade or higher needs to appear on your transcript for a prerequisite course to be accepted by most programs.
- It is important to take the prerequisite courses featured on your preferred professional school standardized test prior to the semester when you plan to take the test. You must allow for study and preparation time as a part of the process.
- If you plan to take summer school courses, please see the Committee for the Health Professions Policy Number Eight (#8) to make sure that you are taking the right steps to assure that you will be able to transfer the credit as a student.

Study Abroad

About 50% of our Dickinson Pre-Health students study abroad annually, with COVID exceptions. This personal development experience may benefit your long-range plans. With the addition of the extra courses for medical school preparation as well as in other health professions including dentistry and veterinary medicine, it is becoming more difficult to do so during your student years. If you are planning to wait until after graduation from Dickinson to apply to professional school, as about 50% or more of our alumni do, semesters abroad become easier to pursue. Please understand that it is still possible to complete the prerequisites and make this desired Dickinson opportunity work for you. If you would like to pursue this program, here are a few things to take into consideration:

- Discuss this interest with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor and develop your plan.
- Consider taking requirement courses approved by the Biology and Chemistry Departments at either the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England or at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. These should appear on your Dickinson transcript to apply to professional schools, as this is an important application consideration; however, it is still possible to pursue other options.
- Participate in a Dickinson partner program whose grades will appear on your Dickinson transcript.
- Application services do not accept documentation from the following services and their credits must be transferred to the Dickinson transcript in order to be verified by professional school application services:
 - Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE)
 - International Education of Students (IES)
 - International Studies Abroad (ISA)
 - Danish Institute for Study Abroad Program (DIS).

If courses from these programs are not on your Dickinson transcript, you may need to pay to have them evaluated by the official evaluation service(s) of the application service prior to submitting them to your application.

- If you choose to pursue an independent program, please understand that some of the application services will not utilize or accept transcripts through international evaluation services or may require that you pay for an evaluation by a specific transcript evaluation service in order to submit your application.

ACADEMIC FACTORS (CONTINUED)

Institutional Action

Because of the increase in visibility of ethics and behavioral standards for certifications for healthcare professionals, please be mindful to document any violation of the Dickinson community standards, either academic or social, in your application to a professional program. You are also required to disclose an incident with Public Safety or local, state and/or federal law enforcement officials in your application. You can explore the specific instructions in the year of your application via your appropriate application service. Please make wise life choices during your Dickinson years to make your application year and career path worry-free.

PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS PREPARATION

Develop Your Competencies for Entering Medical and other Professional Schools

Your college years will be the time that you learn and grow the most both academically and personally. Qualities and knowledge that medical schools, along with other programs of the health professions, will now evaluate include the competencies shared below. Through your academic courses, related out-of-class experiences, and organizations that you are involved with outside of classroom or study hours, you will grow and develop in each of these areas.

Choose your activities wisely. Unlike your high school years, professional schools would prefer to observe your active membership with greater leadership roles in limited numbers of organizations. Additionally, seek noteworthy leadership opportunities to accomplish your goals and meet your competencies.

INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

SERVICE ORIENTATION: demonstrates a desire to help others and sensitivity to others' needs and feelings; demonstrates a desire to alleviate others' distress; recognizes and acts on his/her responsibilities to society locally, nationally, and globally.

SOCIAL SKILLS: demonstrates an awareness of others' needs, goals, feelings, and the ways that social and behavioral cues affect peoples' interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; treats others with respect.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE: demonstrates knowledge of socio-cultural factors that affect interactions and behaviors; shows an appreciation and respect for multiple dimensions of diversity; recognizes and acts on the obligation to inform one's own judgment; engages diverse and competing perspectives as a resource for learning, citizenship, and work; recognizes and appropriately addresses bias in themselves and others; interacts effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.

TEAMWORK: works collaboratively with others to achieve shared goals; shares information and knowledge with others and provides feedback; puts team goals ahead of individual goals.

ORAL COMMUNICATION: effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; listens effectively; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.

PREPARATION COMPETENCIES (CONTINUED)

INTRAPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY TO SELF AND OTHERS: behaves in an honest and ethical manner; cultivates personal and academic integrity; adheres to ethical principles and follows rules and procedures; resists peer pressure to engage in unethical behavior and encourages others to behave in honest and ethical ways; develops and demonstrates ethical and moral reasoning.

RELIABILITY AND DEPENDABILITY: consistently fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; takes responsibility for personal actions and performance.

RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY: demonstrates tolerance of stressful or changing environments or situations and adapts effectively to them; is persistent, even under difficult situations; recovers from setbacks.

CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT: sets goals for continuous improvement and for learning new concepts and skills; engages in reflective practice for improvement; solicits and responds appropriately to feedback.

THINKING & REASONING COMPETENCIES

CRITICAL THINKING: uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.

QUANTITATIVE REASONING: applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: effectively conveys information to others using written words and sentences. .

SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY: applies knowledge of the scientific process to integrate and synthesize information, solve problems, and formulate research questions and hypotheses; is facile in the language of the sciences and uses it to participate in the discourse of science and explain how scientific knowledge is discovered and validated.

SCIENCE COMPETENCIES

LIVING SYSTEMS: applies knowledge and skill in the natural sciences to solve problems related to molecular and macro systems including biomolecules, molecules, cells, and organs.

HUMAN BEHAVIOR: applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, socio-cultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.

AAMC, Washington DC. 2014. AAMC Admissions Initiative, Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students. On-line: www.aamc.org/admissionsinitiatives/competencies.

Medical schools will consider these competencies in all phases of your application. Other schools of the health professions will be implementing similar considerations for candidates in the upcoming years, so you should pursue these and other announced types of competencies for your career field.

An important part of your preparation to meet these competencies will be securing the experiential learning opportunities described later in the booklet. It will be ideal to begin these experiences following the first year, as noted in the timeline. Completing these experiences outside of the classroom will help you to develop a basic level of professional interaction and observation that will be important in understanding how the inter-professional environment works within the healthcare industry today.

ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO HEALTH PROFESSION TRAINING PROGRAMS

Completing your prerequisite courses will help you to prepare for your preferred program after graduation. Professional programs require different prerequisites. As far as variations go, math is a good example. Some medical schools require no math courses (although most applicants need some math background to succeed in science courses). Others may require up to two semesters of calculus and/or statistics. There is no easy way to know exactly what courses you need to complete prior to your application year. Scheduling these courses will be an important topic to discuss with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor.

You will need to explore the professional schools that interest you early in your career. The exploration will help you to understand the courses that you may need to schedule during your student years. The chart below can serve as a guide to find professional programs prerequisites. Click on job title links to reach the association site to find the ones that they suggest. Create your own table to explore at least one school. Whenever you meet with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor, the list of potential prerequisites that you find will provide a starting point for your first conversation.

Requirement	Dickinson Course	MD or DO	Dental	Optometry	Pharmacy	Physician Asst (PA)	Physical Therapy	Podiatry	Vet Med	Accel. Nursing	OT
Chem I w/lab	CHEM 131	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	some	
Chem II w/lab	CHEM 132	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	some	
Organic I w/lab	CHEM 241	✓	✓	✓	✓	some	some	✓	✓	some	
Organic II w/lab	CHEM 242	✓	✓	✓	some	some	some	✓	✓	some	
Biology I w/lab	BIO 131	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	some	✓
Biology II w/lab	BIO 132	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	some	✓
Physics I w/lab	PHYS 131 or 141*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Physics II w/lab	PHYS 132 or 142*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Calculus	MATH 151, 170, 171	some	some	most	some	some	some		some		helps
Statistics	MATH 121	some/MCAT	some	✓	some	most	✓	some	some	some	✓
Biochem	BIO/CHEM 331 / 342	most/MCAT	most/DAT	most	most	most		✓	most	some	
Microbiology	BIO 326	some	few	most	some	most	some	some	some	*most*	
Human Anatomy & Physiology w/lab Vertebrate Biology	<i>not offered</i> at Dickinson BIO 334 BIO 333 may count	few - DO	most (some will accept Vert & Physio)	most	most	most	✓	some	some	✓	✓
English	WR + FYS English 212 or 213	most	many	some	some	some	✓	✓	some	some	some
Others <i>(Medical Terminology & Nutrition may be taken on-line or at CC)</i>	Individual school prereqs	PSY/SOC for MCAT Adv. Biology (multiple courses)	Adv. Biology	Psych, other humanities or social sciences	Public Speaking, Micro-economics Psych	Psych - 2 Some <i>Nutrition</i> <i>Medical Terminology</i>	Psych, social sciences <i>Medical Terminology</i> Others like Ethics, CPR, Nutrition	Adv Biology Psych Medical Terminology	Varies widely Adv Biology Public Speaking	Psych Nutrition Others vary widely	Psych one or two courses Humanities & <i>Medical Terminology</i>

Important notes:

All requirements must be taken for an appropriate grade, not Pass/Fail/C-/D/F. Some pandemic related exceptions will allow C/NC.

Some programs may not accept AP courses. Check pre-requisites at individual programs before choosing not to take the course.

Whenever considering study abroad programs, check with schools of interest as some will not accept prerequisite courses taken abroad. The study abroad course grades must be on the Dickinson College transcript in order for most professional programs to consider them.

PRE-MEDICAL ADMISSIONS FACTORS

Medical College Admission Test (MCAT)

If you plan to start medical school immediately following graduation from Dickinson, you should register for and take the MCAT in the **spring of your junior year**. Please note that the preparation process takes one year (minimum) with 20-30 hours weekly (studying and completing mock tests) to develop an effective score. After taking the test, you will receive your score in approximately one month.

Contents: The test covers the chemistry, biology, biochemistry, and physics courses as well as psychology and sociology. **Plan to complete the courses prior to your scheduled test time.** You will take the test virtually at Pearson Vue or future contracted testing centers on specific dates. To find the details on scheduling and content for the MCAT, explore the following website: www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat.

Preparation: Take the exam only after you have studied using a mix of resources for **at least** 400-500 hours or more. Create study plans. Completing mock tests and question banks weekly are important ways to develop an appropriate score. Utilize question resources such as those on the Khan Academy MCAT tool to prepare to score effectively. Taking the MCAT later than May in your application year hinders your application process. Admissions committees take no action until a candidate's application file has been completed. July or August testing results may cause your application to be too late for consideration in the rolling admissions process.

Scores: You will receive your scores within four weeks after the test, so plan this into your application schedule. MCAT scores include four section scores, one total score, and a percentile ranking. Medical schools indicate that they are likely to accept candidates whose test scores fall within the 509 to the 512 range or higher. Please grant advisor release whenever you sign up to take the MCAT so that we can effectively support you during review of the results as well as during your application phase.

Grade Point Average

You need to maintain an average of 3.6 or better to have a good chance of acceptance. With the holistic review process in admissions, the clinical experience becomes equally crucial in addition to your grade point average and MCAT score.

Application Factors

The Medical School Admissions Requirement (MSAR) tool from the American Association of Medical Schools (AAMC) supplies specific information on schools and their preferences. You will receive additional information on application processes at the required Application Series meetings and via the Applicant Newsletter. Consider our suggestions for balanced experiences, including academics, campus involvement, hospital/medical "hands-on experience", research, and post-grad work experience, to succeed in your application process.

DENTAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FACTORS

Dental Admission Test (DAT)

Contents: The DAT covers materials related to course content including general Biology from a diversity of life to the development, structure, and function of systems, Cell and Molecular Biology, Genetics, General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry, English for reading comprehension, and Mathematics including Algebra, Statistics and Probability. It does not cover the material in the Physics courses; however, those courses are required by dental schools. The exam consists of multiple choice test items with sections including the Survey of Natural Sciences, General Chemistry, Perceptual Ability, Reading Comprehension and Quantitative Reasoning.

Preparation: Complete required courses prior to the DAT seating. Plan to take the DAT during the spring of the junior year if you want to attend a program immediately following graduation. You should study for the test for a minimum of four months using a mix of resources. You can find these in the [DAT Program Guide](#). You can also consult the DAT Destroyer or use materials from companies like CE Webinar, Princeton Review, Kaplan, and ExamKrackers to benefit your preparation.

Scores: Most dental schools view the DAT as one of many factors in evaluating candidates for admission. While there are more questions for most sections, with standardized scoring reported to dental schools, the standard score of 18 typically signifies average performance on a national basis. Scores used in the testing program range from one to 30. There is no passing or failing score. Median accepted scores for admissions in each section range from 20-21. Prometric Testing Centers host the test nationwide. For more information, see the [DAT Frequently Asked Questions page on the ADA website](#).

DENTAL SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FACTORS (CONTINUED)

Grade Point Average

Students with a 3.6 or higher average have a strong chance of acceptance. Most accepted students demonstrate a minimum 3.4 science average prior to admissions.

Application Factors

We will provide additional information at the Application Series meetings as well as in the Applicant Newsletters in your application year. Refer to the annual ADEA Official Guide to Dental Schools or to the ADEA website early in your first year to evaluate course options and verify specifics on schools.

American Dental Education Association urges dental schools to use consistently applied assessment of the applicant's non-academic attributes, including leadership and significant work in dental offices/clinics as well as other "hands-on" types of programs that were completed prior to the admissions process.

VETERINARY PROGRAM ADMISSIONS FACTORS

Graduate Record Exam (GRE)

Applicants should take the GRE Tests at Prometric Testing Centers preceding applications. Registration is available on-line, and they offer tests often; however, registration is first come, first served. The registration website is www.gre.com.

Preparation: While the GRE does not have the same scientific rigor as the MCAT, it is the test required for review in the application by many programs. Some schools will also accept an MCAT score report. Though the test does not have the same scientific challenges, it is still important to study for several months prior to the test and to take at least one mock test weekly during this time to build your confidence and your scores. Preparation materials are available on the gre.com site.

Scoring: While competitive scores at all schools vary, those candidates in the 290-315 (or higher) range appear to be the most likely to be accepted into programs. Both the Verbal Reasoning and the Quantitative Analysis sections range from 130-170 and the Analytical Writing section ranges from 0-6. Scores are reported unofficially on the day of the test and candidates will submit these to the application service as notified in mandatory Application Series meetings.

Grade Point Average

While the schools vary in the GPAs accepted, most would appear to view a 3.5/3.6 or higher as competitive within the application process.

Application Factors

We will provide additional information in your year of application, but there are a few differences to consider within this field. Check potential schools in your first or second year to understand the required course pre-requisite differences. Specific additional courses required for some programs include Biochemistry, additional humanities, and behavioral science courses—sometimes totaling up to 12 credits in those subjects. Other course prerequisites may include animal nutrition, genetics, embryology, mammalian or animal physiology, histology, immunology, statistics/biostatistics, etc.

Additionally, you should plan to complete 500 hours of veterinary clinic experiences prior to your application. Admissions committees recommend pursuing work with a variety of types of organizations including those at large or small animal veterinarians, zoos, food science companies as well as other specialties. You may receive wages for these experiences, such as a kennel assistant; however, volunteering can be a good choice too. The opportunities should offer applicants a "hands-on" overview of veterinary practice prior to application. It's a good idea to complete them with non-relatives, as an additional piece of the objective is to gain support for letters of recommendation from those who supervise you in such roles.

ADMISSIONS FOR OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS

A small number of Dickinsonians choose to pursue healthcare careers outside of the “big three” careers noted on the previous pages. Pursuing careers such as nursing and physician assistant programs following graduation has been a growing trend due to the well-paying career opportunities available as well as the shorter period to complete the degree, in comparison to medical education.

As with the popular programs, patient-based experience is required for many types of health career professions programs. However, in the case of these other health professions, the experiences will both help you to explore and to confirm your interests in pursuing these fields after graduation. Please plan to make an appointment with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to discuss the types of opportunities you might be interested in pursuing. Resources are available for most fields. You can also visit the Explore Health Careers website (<https://explorehealthcareers.org>) for info on a wide variety of healthcare careers, including educational requirements.

After you have decided on your career path, these guidelines will be helpful for you while considering various allied health careers. Meet with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor early to explore options as well as potential courses required to apply to these schools. If you do not see information in the booklet for your program of interest, please contact the Pre-Health Professions Advisor for additional information.

Courses

Some professional programs may have the same basic requirements as medical and dental schools, but they *may require additional courses*. Other programs may require very different courses without the same levels of chemistry or biology. Review the checklist on page ten as well as information in the following sections to choose your academic exploration. Dickinson does

not offer some of the prerequisite courses. Check with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor and the Pre-Health Professions Advisor, as well as with the schools to which you intend to apply, to find out about specific course requirements within your first year or sophomore year.

Entrance Exams

Most of the health-related schools require the GRE unless there is a specific entrance exam, such as for Optometry (Optometry Admissions Test – OAT or PA-CAT for PA programs, etc.). Check the websites of the schools to which you intend to apply or contact the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to ask which exam is required along with discussing the timing on the test in order to meet application requirements. The application and date information changes annually but usually begins during the summer.

Grade Point Average

Students with a 3.00-3.25 or higher average have a strong chance of acceptance for many of the programs. Individual schools that are more competitive may require higher GPAs.

Application Factors

Some programs for specific health careers may require additional courses. Please check with your Pre-Health Advisors for more information related to your program of interest. The Pre-Health Professions Advisor will share potential updates and changes announced by the associations supporting these professional programs to interested students, so please join the Allied Health Career Interest Group, and receive useful career and event information. You should also update the Pre-Health Assistant with your career choice if you change your mind about the pursuit of a particular career field.

TIPS FOR FUTURE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

The Physician Assistant (PA) career began in the 1960s to adapt medical corpsmen who wanted to pursue similar jobs after leaving military life. The Physician Assistant is a “mid-level” provider who leads the health team but reports to and often consults with a physician. A PA is a graduate of an accredited PA program who has earned a national certification and a state license to practice medicine with physician supervision (or without supervision, in an independent practice, in just over half of the US states).

To learn more about the work of a Physician Assistant, visit [Explore Health Careers](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org) at www.explorehealthcareers.org or at [American Academy of PAs](http://www.americanacademyofpas.org). It is also important to talk with and observe PAs employed in the field currently as you consider this career opportunity along with other healthcare providers whose careers you might be considering. You can complete informational interviews as discussed with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor as well as pursuing shadowing, internships, or other experiential work to learn more about this career option for your future.

TIPS FOR FUTURE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS (CONTINUED)

What major and courses should I study at Dickinson?

You can pursue **any major** during your student years as long as you study the courses noted. Studying a program that is interesting to you, along with other courses that you choose to study at Dickinson, will allow you to be well-rounded and prepared to interact professionally with a variety of colleagues and patients. It is important that you explore courses early so that you can make good decisions and progress towards the prerequisites for PA programs.

Visit various PA program websites early in your student years to learn about other courses that you may need to take. The prerequisites vary from program to program, as noted on the chart on page ten. Dickinson may not offer some of the courses needed for PA programs such as Human Anatomy & Human Physiology, Medical Terminology or Nutrition. Please contact your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor or the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to ask about managing requests for Human Anatomy and Physiology.

Meet with your assigned Faculty Pre-Health Advisor to discuss academic options and questions about this program.

How will I apply to PA programs?

- Research programs early to make sure that you're taking the right courses
- Gain "hands on patient care" or research experiences. Because of the hours needed, ranging from 75 to 2000 hours, this could include working full-time after graduation to prepare for your application and career.
- Take the GRE and/or the PA-CAT. Discuss timing and preparation with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor.
- Attend the mandatory Pre-Health Program Application Series workshops in the year that you plan to apply.
- Apply via CASPA or the appropriate PA program website(s) to apply after you have met the requirements.

TIPS FOR FUTURE NURSES

While nursing is a historic career, this is a significant time of change for those wishing to pursue a career in the field. Today's nurses have a variety of career options that require additional training. Most nurses need to have earned a Bachelor's in Nursing to be hired and to practice in a hospital or office setting. Nurses also work in patients' homes and a variety of other settings. Nurses that focus on a specific area of practice or in leadership need to pursue higher degrees such as the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) or the Doctor of Nursing Practice

(DNP). The PhD in Nursing is an academic degree for nurses that wish to pursue teaching or leadership positions.

To learn more about the work of a nurse, visit [Explore Health Careers](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org) at www.explorehealthcareers.org or [The Campaign for America's Future](http://www.discovernursing.com) at www.discovernursing.com.

What major and courses should I study at Dickinson?

You can **choose any major** during your student years if you study the courses noted on program websites prior to pursuing an accelerated Bachelor's or Master's of Nursing degree following graduation. Studying a program that interests you will allow you to be well- rounded and prepared to interact professionally with a variety of colleagues and patients. It is important that you explore science courses required for accelerated programs early so that you can make good decisions as well as appropriate progress towards the prerequisites for nursing programs following Dickinson.

Special course notes for nursing:

- Depending on the professional program, courses such as Organic Chemistry (perhaps one semester), Biochemistry, and Statistics may be required. Others may not require these sciences at all.
- Dickinson does not offer some courses like Nutrition, Human Anatomy, Human Physiology, Medical Terminology, or others that may be required by individual programs.
- Some nursing programs require additional Psychology across the Lifespan and Humanities courses, in addition to the other courses noted on page ten.

Research program prerequisites early, after you have made your decision to pursue this field, so that you will make good courses choices for your schedule. This will help you to be prepared whenever you apply for programs, as the prerequisites will vary.

Meet with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor or the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to discuss options and questions.

How will I apply to nursing programs?

- Complete training courses prior to pursuing experiential work, such as Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Medical Assistant (MA), Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) jobs or other healthcare-related opportunities. The prerequisites for experiential hours vary from program to program. Some programs require full-time CNA or PCT work prior to the admissions process.
- Collaborate with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to plan your application timing including the pursuit of the GRE and insights to application resources.

TIPS FOR FUTURE PHYSICAL THERAPISTS

According to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) website, physical therapists (DPTs) are highly-educated, licensed health care professionals that can help patients reduce pain and improve or restore mobility – in many cases without surgery.

This treatment also tends to reduce the need for long-term medications and their side effects. Because of this, physical therapists are key members of today's healthcare team. Physical therapists work in hospitals, offices, therapy centers and in many specialty areas.

To learn more about careers as a physical therapist (DPT), visit [Explore Health Careers \(www.explorehealthcareers.org\)](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org) or the [Prospective Student](http://www.apta.org/ProspectiveStudents) section of the APTA website at www.apta.org/ProspectiveStudents.

What major and courses should I study at Dickinson?

You can **choose any major** during your student years as long as you study the Pre-Health courses noted. Studying in a major that is interesting to you will allow you to be well-rounded and prepared to interact professionally with a variety of colleagues and patients. It is important that you explore course options early so that you can make a good career decision as well as appropriate progress towards the prerequisites for physical therapy programs following Dickinson.

Research program prerequisites early, after you have made your decision, so that you will choose appropriate courses for your schedule. This will help you to be prepared whenever you apply for programs, as the prerequisites will vary. Some courses may not be available at Dickinson, such as Human Anatomy and Human Physiology, Nutrition, or Medical Terminology.

Meet with your assigned Faculty Pre-Health Advisor or the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to discuss major and course options.

How will I apply to DPT programs?

- Seek internships, jobs or other volunteer opportunities in physical therapy offices, significant shadowing programs, athletic training or other groups requiring paraprofessionals. A form noting the hours that you have shadowed/worked in a physical therapy office is a part of the application process and requires a signature from each DPT recorded.
- Collaborate with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to plan your application timing including the pursuit of the GRE and insights to application resources.

TIPS FOR FUTURE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

Think of occupational therapy as work that helps patients to recover or enhance their fine motor skills. Their work can help patients to improve or master everyday skills in order to live independent, productive, and satisfying lives. Occupational therapists work in a variety of settings from schools to hospitals to nursing homes and others. It is a growing profession in the US, and we have seen a small increase in the number of Dickinson students entering with the intent to pursue this career as well as a small number of those that find the career field during their time on campus.

To learn more about careers as an Occupational Therapist, visit [Explore Health Careers](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org) at www.explorehealthcareers.org or [The American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc.](http://www.aota.org) for their [About Occupational Therapy](http://www.aota.org) page.

What major and courses should I study at Dickinson?

You can **choose any major** during your student years as long as you study the courses noted. Studying a program that is interesting to you will allow you to be well-rounded and prepared to interact professionally with a variety of colleagues and patients. It is important that you explore courses early so that you can make good decisions as well as progress towards the prerequisites for occupational therapy programs following Dickinson.

Special course notes:

- Dickinson may not offer some of the other courses that may be required, such as Human Anatomy, Medical Terminology (take at a community college or on-line) or Nutrition Science. Some specific Psychology courses may not be available at Dickinson either.

As you are exploring careers including occupational therapists, please review the prerequisites from various programs of interest to make certain that you are planning the appropriate course load.

Meet with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor or the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to discuss academic options and questions.

How will I apply to Occupational Therapy programs?

- Complete informational interviews and then progressively build more significant internships or experiential opportunities with Occupational Therapy offices or other sites. Sometimes it will be necessary to apply and serve in transferable types of opportunities for this field (i.e., camps for children with disabilities or other health conditions).
- Meet with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to plan your application process, including how the GRE testing will fit into the cycle based on your goals.

TIPS FOR OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS

For the following programs, please contact the Pre-Health Professions Advisor for current course requirements, career growth potential, alumni experiences, and application information.

- Pharmacy
- Podiatric Medicine
- Optometry
- Chiropractic Medicine
- Public Health
- Genetic Counseling
- Audiology
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Anesthesiology Assistant
- Health Administration
- Registered Dietician or M.S. in Nutrition
- Art, Music or Dance Therapy

YOUR PRE-HEALTH TIMELINE

You will spend the first year planning your four years in the program and getting started in the required science courses. Attend the meetings this fall to explore options and develop your class schedule plan. Be frank with yourself about your strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Your advisors will partner with you to ensure that you meet both college and professional school requirements. *In the final analysis, however, you will have to decide each semester what courses will help you to complete your goals and plan the schedule that is best for you.* It is **your responsibility** to monitor your progress in your coursework based on consultations with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor.

FIRST YEAR ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Your **GPA** for applications in junior or senior year builds from the first semester. Using faculty office hours and available study resources including tutors and resource spaces will help you to succeed from the start. Study appropriately and complete assignments effectively in your first year. It is important that you learn how you can study for at least six to nine hours outside of class for each course. If faced with a challenging semester, hard work on your part is required to recover and rebuild your GPA.

Study abroad consideration and planning should begin now. Discuss a four-year course plan with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor in the spring.

For medical school specifically, it will be important to complete all MCAT-related courses prior to your study abroad, when possible. Your plan can change in consultation with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor over the upcoming semesters.

Begin your experiential opportunities by the summer after your first year.

With the introduction of competencies for professional school applications, you will need to seek, complete, and document your experiences, including dates and hours. Be diligent in pursuing this part of your education and maintaining experiential information since these experiences will be required prior to the application process for professional school. This timing may be as early as the end of your junior year or as late as the date that you choose following graduation. If you wait to begin building experiences, you may also need to delay your application to professional school. Record supervisor contact information and journal about your experiences consistently.

SOPHOMORE AND JUNIOR YEARS

You will spend the bulk of the first three years at Dickinson taking general college requirements, completing major requirements, and finishing the pre-requisite courses necessary for professional or graduate school. An important goal during this period is to **maintain an exceptional academic record, based on the national averages for your program or programs of interest.**

You must perform well in the required science courses. This means earning grades of B+ or better. You should do equally well in your other courses. As mentioned previously, we have found that students with an overall GPA of 3.6 or better stand the best chance of getting into professional school. Because of current levels of competition, academic success is even more important to your future application status and support of the committee.

An academically bad term or year does not necessarily mean the end of your dreams. At some time during your college years, personal, family, financial or health-related problems may affect your studies. These situations are not permanent barriers if you prove that you can surmount your problems and improve your record. Admission committees want to observe either a consistently strong or an upward trend in your academic performance report. However, one strong semester will not counteract several years of mediocre work.

YOUR PRE-HEALTH TIMELINE (CONTINUED)

Choose your campus activities and leadership opportunities wisely.

Consider selecting opportunities related to healthcare careers or leadership roles that will benefit your application. Professional schools recommend that you limit your involvement in activities to a smaller number, such as one or two, where you can demonstrate growth.

When managing your time effectively, selective involvement of campus organizations can benefit your own professional development. Seeking leadership roles will help you to develop personally and to cultivate your professional, intrapersonal, and interpersonal competencies.

THE JUNIOR (MAYBE) AND SENIOR YEARS

If you have planned appropriately and completed all required academic courses for matriculation to professional school by the end of the junior year, you will be able to apply during the summer following your junior or senior years. In order to accomplish this, you will need to prepare for your appropriate exam during your junior or senior years. (See information earlier in the booklet.) Some students will also choose to wait until after graduation to apply to professional school. It is important that you apply whenever you are ready to begin the next phase of your education. We will share updated information in the mandatory Application Series meetings during the fall and spring of your junior year (or senior year if applying to begin just one year after graduation).

If you are one of a mature, focused, and well-rounded rising-senior students who pursues this course of action, you will spend most of the early part of the senior year wrapping up **secondary or supplemental applications**. As a senior, you should complete application and interview preparation along with **mock interviews** offered by the Pre-Health Professions Advisor in preparation for professional and graduate school **interviews**. Interview invitations may begin arriving in late summer or early fall and continue throughout most of the year. Schools schedule most interviews in advance; however, nearing the end of the process, you may receive invitations at the last minute.

In recent years, some applicants have chosen not to apply until the end of their senior year—or even years after graduation. If you plan to work for a year or two and then attend your program, you can choose whether you want to prepare for the test during senior year. You can also decide to wait if you're planning to build your experiential or exploratory portfolio following graduation. Whenever you choose to apply, you will plan to study for at

least 400-500 hours. Be sure to include mock testing for the appropriate test. Think about the preparation like an extra class to schedule your time appropriately for professional school test studies and mock testing.

As stated, choosing the latter option means that you will need to take a year of exploratory work as a part of your education (potentially) in order to prepare for professional school. For many of our alums, this turns into two years of exploration or work and preparation for professional school due to employment contracts. Our alums spend the time preparing in these various ways to enter the professional school setting of choice:

- Academic medical or clinical research lab assistant or a pharmaceutical company technician or sales role
- Allied Health jobs like Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA); Patient Care Technician (PCT); Medical Assistant (MA); Emergency Medical Technician (EMT); Emergency Technician in an emergency department; Phlebotomist; etc.
- Public Health types of jobs or working for organizations like HealthCorps
- Post-baccalaureate academic enhancer (or “career changer” programs for those with no science background)
- Volunteering
- Taking individual courses on a non-degree basis at another institution to boost the undergraduate grade point average
- Other types of individually selected opportunities may enhance medical careers too.

You are welcome to schedule an appointment with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor to discuss career options prior to professional school but following graduation.

APPLYING TO PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL

Applying to graduate or professional schools is a complex process and one that changes annually. In fact, we have been experiencing a major change in professional education that will continue for a few years to come. You should plan to devote substantial time and energy in order to explore and to maximize your possibilities for acceptance. While it may sound overly simplified, some of the most important factors in preparing a successful application are to be accurate, follow all directions, and submit your effectively developed application as early as possible in the application cycle. Waiting may be the right choice for you, but it is important that you can articulate why you are delaying the application and making that decision for yourself.

APPLYING TO PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL (CONTINUED)

Admissions committees care about the academic skills, testing results, personal development, experiential learning, and character of applicants. They devote a great deal of time and effort to the admissions process. The following factors indicate areas considered by admissions committees within the application process:

- Overall GPA
- Test Scores
- Science Grades
- Letters of Evaluation
- Interview
- Multiple experiences showing growth within Volunteering/Interning/Researching/Working roles
- Professional competencies
- Interpersonal competencies
- Intrapersonal competencies
- Personal Statement
- Application

The Pre-Health Professions Advisor maintains current graduate and professional school resource information. You can utilize these resources and consult on questions regarding the process as well as specific schools in your application year, even if you are an alumnus whenever you are applying to professional schools.

An ideal candidate shows strengths in all areas, but schools have realistic expectations appropriate for their own applicant pools. It is the function of an admission committee to evaluate a candidate's strengths and weaknesses. For example, when a student whose grades and test scores are excellent supplies poor references and shows arrogant behavior at the interview, the medical schools often reject him or her. Equally, no amount of extracurricular activity or personal charm can compensate for weak academic skills.

A growing part of candidacy is also your personal responsibility as a student and a citizen. Medical and other professional schools are now evaluating personal judgment and ethics as part of the process. In fact, a background check is part of the application process for most professional schools. This can include consideration of felony crimes or even campus incidents. *While Dickinson may expunge campus records after seven years, the professional organizations still require that you disclose incidents that occurred during your student years.*

The reason for this consideration is that professional students see patients sooner now than in the past. Would you want to see certain aspects of your doctor's personal life on YouTube or Facebook? If you did, what would concern you about your level of care? As you are reading this soon after your arrival at Dickinson, remember that you must act responsibly both on and off campus. If you don't want your grandparents to see it on the news or on Facebook, make wise choices from day one as a Dickinsonian.

This guideline extends to your financial decisions as well. Your spending habits during college can follow you into your career too and may prevent future certifications. Remember that as you begin management of your checking account and ensure that you have proper funds to cover expenses before creating them. Additionally, avoid spending too much and increasing your debt. While developing some level of personal loans can be useful during your college years, discuss options with your family members so that debt doesn't impede your future.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Real world experience in patient care and interaction is a critical component of career discernment. It's one thing to enjoy the intellectual challenge of problem solving in the abstract, but quite another to deal with it in real time when it involves another person's well-being. Immersion in the sights, sounds, smells, and emotional landscape of health care will help you quickly decide whether a career spent in service of others matches your goals. Additionally, because professional and graduate schools often require students to see patients within their first semester, gaining hands-on experience during college has become more important now than in the past. While there may not be a specific hour requirement for many professions, with the exception of veterinary applicants and DPT applicants, individual admissions committees in various programs have questioned applicants about how they gained their minimum 500 hours of experiential work.

Planning significant service or clinical hours into your schedule is important. While you may not be able to achieve work hours within your first year as you are adapting to college, you should know that later semesters must include some type of significant work experience within the health care field. Seek and plan experiences early to find an available opportunity

Resources

- [Explore Health Careers](http://www.explorehealthcareers.org) website at www.explorehealthcareers.org
- [Pre-Health Program website](#) (summer research list will be posted from November-May)
- Check out hospitals or physicians in your local community for summer opportunities too.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING (CONTINUED)

Examples of potential experiential learning:

- Volunteer at UPMC Central PA hospital facilities such as Harrisburg, West Shore, and Carlisle or at a facility near home over weekends and breaks.
- Research with faculty on Dickinson's campus or at a Summer Undergraduate Research Program.
- Train and work as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Certified Nursing Technician (CNA)/Patient Care Technician or Certified Phlebotomist. (These positions may require training and certifications. See your state's health department for programs or preview the educational options in the continuing education section of your local community college website.)
- Train and work as a medical assistant.
- Volunteer at the Sadler Center or another health clinic in another city.
- Train and serve as a Red Cross, hospice, or crisis center volunteer.
- Apply for an opportunity on campus as a Student Athletic Trainer.
- Following graduation, earn your master's degree in a complementary medical field or a science. You can also apply and enter a Pre-Health post-baccalaureate program.
- After graduation, pursuing any one of these jobs on a full-time basis can be the best way to gain the experiences necessary for the application in today's competitive professional education environment, depending on preferences at professional schools.

Connect directly with a hiring representative at one of the facilities mentioned or practices in other regions for more options. *Your outreach helps to show initiative for professional school applications.* Information is available on the Pre-Health Program website and in handshake.

PRE-HEALTH PROGRAM

We designed the Pre-Health Program to prepare Dickinson College students to enter graduate or professional study for the health professions. The foundation of the program is the Committee for the Health Professions (CHP) with Faculty Pre-Health Advisors supporting the Pre-Health Program students through science and pre-health education and advising. It is jointly managed with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor from the Center for Internships, Advising & Lifelong Career Development. The CHP members have two main functions: to set policies for the Pre-Health Program and to act as advisors to the Pre-Health students.

COMMITTEE FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS (CHP) POLICIES

For the Committee for the Health Professions (CHP) to write a letter of evaluation/recommendation, students pursuing careers as physicians, dentists, veterinarians, physician assistants or physical therapists while at Dickinson must:

1. Take 7 of the 9 lab-science courses required by professional schools in at least 2 departments from Biology, Chemistry and Physics.
2. Contact your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor plus keep regular contact with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor during each of your four years at Dickinson College.
3. In order to request a letter of recommendation, waive your right to see the evaluation and the contents of your Pre-Health Program file. You will submit the waiver upon official entry to the Pre-Health Program. You do not need to resubmit a college form in application season.
4. The CHP will attempt to establish a broad basis for evaluation that will reflect your work at Dickinson College. Seek evaluations from eight to ten faculty members, coaches or administrators whenever prompted each semester by the Pre-Health Program Assistant. These evaluations will support your committee or individual letter development in your application year.
5. Attend required Application Series meetings and request a letter via the current Pre-Health Program process in the spring or summer prior to the year in which you are applying to professional school or before you graduate (if you plan to attend professional school following a one- or two-year exploratory years of research, work, etc.). Should you choose to apply within a few years following graduation, you will need to meet individually with the Pre-Health Professions Advisor for updated application information at that time.
6. The Committee will meet after the submission of final spring semester grades in requesting students' junior, if applying then, or senior years to consider the potential applicants who seek evaluations and determine whether the Committee can write a letter. Each candidate must complete all required courses for their professional school application before we can write a letter. The committee will notify students of the decision whenever they have submitted their Committee Letter Request Form. The committee does not consider MCAT or other test scores in this process at this time; however, that is subject to change with limited advance notice.

COMMITTEE FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS (CHP) POLICIES (CONTINUED)

7. Although your academic record represents a significant factor in the ranking process, the Committee recommendation also considers a number of additional interrelated factors such as Pre-Health Society participation, initiative, motivation, interest, personality, clinical experiences and the quality of classroom and laboratory work. We will also utilize application services' competency guidelines.
8. **Transfer Courses:** Some students choose to take prerequisite courses at other institutions in the summer. Before doing so, check with your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor, the Department Chair of the discipline in question, and the College Registrar to ensure that any course you wish to take at another institution is right for Pre-Health and Dickinson requirements. It is also important that you receive approval to transfer the course prior to taking it. This ensures that the course will transfer to Dickinson, serve as one of your credits counting toward graduation, and count towards potential acceptance by professional schools to which you apply. For details, see the most recent College Bulletin.

YOUR PRE-HEALTH ADVISORS

We will assign each first-year student to a Faculty Pre-Health Advisor in the spring following your completion of fall group advising meetings and program registration in January, or when joining the program at a later point in your academic career. Your Faculty Pre-Health Advisor can assist you in the following ways:

- Collaborating with you to plan your schedule including incorporating activities
- Offering advice if you get into academic difficulty
- Helping you find research or summer program opportunities
- Serving as a sounding board when you're considering future academic plans
- Advocating for you and writing the committee letter of evaluation, when approved.

The *Pre-Health Professions Advisor* also assists you to plan and to verify your overall preparation for professional school in the following ways.

- Maintaining Pre-Health Professions files including application service information
- Mentoring and supporting the Pre-Health Society by connecting speakers and alumni to current students
- Discussing external program information like shadowing, research, volunteer opportunities and work roles
- Sharing resources when received from various health and career associations
- Supporting the professional school application process for candidates by:
 - o providing information from the national application services,
 - o reviewing applications, personal statements, supplemental applications, and other documents,
 - o counseling for healthcare career and application processes as well as advocacy.

YOUR PRE-HEALTH FILE CONTENTS

If you have an interest in any health career, you are strongly encouraged to enter the Pre-Health Program, even if you have not fully clarified your career plans. A major part of the Program is to **develop a file** of faculty evaluations for you, and this file will be stronger to benefit your applications if the process begins in the first year. We build awarded committee letters from both academic and co-curricular content acquired during your four years at Dickinson and study abroad locations.

Faculty Evaluations

The Pre-Health Assistant will send an email to you so that you can request an on-line evaluation from your professors each semester. When completed by the faculty, we will maintain these in your file for use in committee letters during your application year. Professors in any discipline could complete these as long as you have formed a productive, working relationship with them around their discipline. Coaches, mentors, or other campus work supervisors may also complete them.

It is your responsibility to check in your on-line Pre-Health Student Information System in Gateway and with the Pre-Health team, for alumni, to verify which faculty members have submitted evaluations. If faculty members have not submitted the evaluations, you need to remind faculty courteously and periodically until the evaluations appear as received in the system.

Committee Letters

Attend the Application Series meeting in the year of your application to gain updates and specific instructions regardless of your professional preference.

We will maintain the following information through Pre-Health files and office tools: the evaluations submitted by faculty members, committee letter request forms, documentation of experiential work opportunities or internships that either you or your experiential supervisors submit, and other relevant materials as submitted.

Application related Experiences

Participation with the student-run **Pre-Health Society** will also benefit your application, healthcare connections and career preparation for healthcare and public health industries. You will learn about physician/healthcare providers' specialties, work and techniques from speakers presenting to this organization. They will help students interested in any health-related career (even health-care administration) to explore their interests and confirm their future goals. Attending is also a great way to connect with professionals who can help you in your career. We will note active participation in your file. Leadership roles held as a member of the Pre-Health Society will also benefit both your application and interviews to professional or graduate school.

The Dickinson **MAPS (Minority Association of Pre-Medical Students)** chapter is focused on creating a space where underrepresented individuals can receive advice, resources, and mentors on their path to their respective health career. The chapter hosts events on internships, service in the community, finding mentors, and other beneficial opportunities to better prepare underrepresented students for their health careers. Dickinson's MAPS chapter is part of a larger organization called Student National Medical Association (SNMA) that hosts multiple conferences for their MAPS chapters in efforts to provide a network and even more resources to our members.

Professional and graduate schools seek well-rounded candidates who have completed coursework and research as well as gained **experiential learning and exploratory service and/or patient care**. Notation of these experiences in your file will indicate that you have begun to clarify your interest and developed experiences that help to make you a viable candidate. Documenting these experiences in your student file will help you to track and demonstrate your interpersonal, intrapersonal, and professional competencies needed for the application to professional school. It can also help you to track hours and dates in your Pre-Health File for use during your application cycle.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH STUDENTS

The Pre-Health Program will provide information to students via email frequently. Please **check your email daily** as we provide new announcements and postings. Please **respond to emails when requested** and do not just scroll by or delete them. We will also post information in the Pre-Health Program Moodle.

We will post information (such as program information, experiential opportunities, job postings and information from professional school admissions directors) on the Center for Advising, Internships & Lifelong Career Development Pre-Health Program website under the Students section/Pre-Health Program, in handshake, and in the Pre-Health Program Moodle.

Ways to communicate with the Pre-Health Program:

- **Email:** Pre-Health@dickinson.edu
- **Moodle:** Pre-Health Program
- **Individual emails:** See the contact list on the last page

ADVICE FROM ALUMNI

Alumni have commented that they wish they had known the following items from the start so that they could have acted:

"At several interviews, I was told that the medical schools look for at least 500 hours of clinical work. They wanted to know what I had been doing to accomplish this. My greatest wish is that I would have listened and started these efforts within my first summer at Dickinson."

"Trust me; starting the work in your first year will help you to accomplish your goal by the time you begin interviews in the fall of your senior year (if applying for admission immediately following graduation). Combining work locally during the academic year with research, clinical or volunteer experiences during the summer will help your students to accumulate these hours."

"At interviews, students are really expected to have a great knowledge of what is going on in the medical field (including new research, deep interaction with healthcare issues, politics pertaining to healthcare and the business of running a practice). Connecting with speakers about these topics at Pre-Health Society meetings will help students to be prepared for the admissions process."

"Being balanced at Dickinson includes doing well in classes, spending time with your faculty and advisors, giving back to the community and gaining your experiential hours. This will help you to succeed in your application and in professional school."

DICKINSON ALUMNI

Dickinson alumni tend to choose to attend professional schools on the east coast of the US. Institutions attended by our alumni include:

Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University

Arcadia University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program

Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine

Columbia University School of Medicine

Drexel University College of Medicine, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, and Accelerated MS in Nursing programs

George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences (for MD, PA, and Accelerated Nursing programs)

Georgetown University School of Medicine

Glasgow University School of Veterinary Medicine

Harvard University School of Medicine

Illinois College of Optometry

Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health

Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine

Mount Sinai School of Medicine

New York Medical College

Rutgers University RWJS and NJMS Schools of Medicine

Stanford University School of Medicine and MS in Physician Assistant studies

SUNY Colleges of Medicine including University of Buffalo, Downstate and Stony Brook plus SUNY College of Optometry

Temple University Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine, Podiatric Medicine, and Doctor of Physical Therapy programs

The Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine, Physician Assistant Program and Master of Public Health Program

The Sidney M. Kimmel Medical College as well as Physician Assistant & Nursing programs at Thomas Jefferson University

Tufts University Schools of Medicine and Dental Medicine

University of Maryland Schools of Medicine, Dentistry and Physical Therapy

University of Massachusetts College of Medicine (including MD/PhD program)

University of North Carolina Schools of Medicine and Pharmacy (including MD/PhD program)

University of Pennsylvania Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

University of Pittsburgh Schools of Medicine, Dental Medicine and Pharmacy

University of Southern California Doctor of Occupational Therapy program

Yale University Accelerated MS in Nursing and Physician Assistant programs

and see the Pre-Health Program website for the [complete list of other programs](#) attended by Dickinson alumni

ALUMNI SERVICES

(for alumni applying to programs of the health professions following graduation)

Alumni are welcome to utilize the Pre-Health Program application services for a lifetime. Whenever you plan to apply to schools of the health professions, please contact either the Pre-Health Program Assistant or the Pre-Health Professions Advisor. We assist with services including:

- Test preparation information for professional school preparation
- Application information and preparation
- Committee letter, *within five years of graduation only due to relevance*
- Interview preparation and guidance
- Career changing guidance within the health professions
- Others upon request whenever it is possible to accommodate

Faculty Pre-Health Advisors

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* Stuart and James Halls are a part of the Rector Complex

^ Tome Scientific Building connects to Rector Complex via an indoor walkway.

Center for Advising, Internships & Lifelong Career Development

Biddle House

(Pre-Health Program, Career Interest Groups, Pre-Health Society Club, Minority Association of Pre-Health Students MAPS Chapter Club)

Debi Swarner

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YEARS OF SUPPORT

We're here for *you*.
And we **always** will be.

Dickinson

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PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS PROGRAM