



Missouri Western State University

Pre-Health Professions Preparation

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This four year plan is intended to help guide pre-health professions students in preparation for professional school admission. This plan is designed for students who complete a bachelors degree prior to advancing to professional school. If your discipline requires only 60 or 90 credit hours prior to admission, the pace of advancement through this plan will simply accelerate. (Revised 9-05)

Freshman Year

Academic Development and Preparation:

- Meet with a health professions academic advisor and discuss plans and requirements
- Begin taking 100 level Biology and Chemistry courses
- Explore academic majors (certain science courses are required for health profession school admission but you do not necessarily need to declare a science major. However, you should choose and maintain a health professions advisor from Biology or Chemistry)
- Monitor your academic progress and obtain necessary academic support as needed (tutors, Academic Support Center, professors, peers, etc.)
- Develop good study skills (Academic Support Center can provide valuable tips)
- Sign up for relevant e-mail listservs** (Biology, PrePro, etc.) Lots of information is provided on listserv e-mails. See your academic advisor or any science faculty for information on how to sign up

Personal/Professional/Career Development Preparation:

- Develop a balance between academic, professional, and personal life
- Develop good personal and professional attributes such as integrity, honesty, respect, teamwork, responsibility, reliability, and time management
- Develop and pursue interests outside your formal education setting
- Join and get involved in the Pre-Professional Club and other clubs on campus**
- Research and understand your chosen health profession
- Explore opportunities for shadowing or job opportunities in your health profession field (summer is a great time to make contacts and/or get started)
- Explore volunteer and community service activities (Habitat for Humanity, Red Cross, Special Olympics, nursing homes, etc.)

Entrance Exam and Professional School Application Preparation:

- Meet with your academic/health professions advisor to discuss applications and admission tests; no surprises later!
- Attend Pre-Professional Club meetings for information and guest speakers
- Attend conferences or workshops you feel may help your decision and/or preparation
- Begin developing an informal resume or list of activities, offices held, shadowings, etc. Keep it updated. This will be invaluable when you begin the application process

Sophomore Year

Academic Development and Preparation:

- Continue to meet regularly with your academic/health professions advisor
- Continue with your science courses (200 level biology courses, organic chemistry, physics, etc.)
- Continue to monitor your academic pace and progress
- Declare a college major by signing a major/minor form
- Consider any minors which may be attainable and useful
- Begin considering a backup plan in case the health profession school does not work out
- Establish a health profession advisory committee**; see your academic advisor for details (Many, but not all, health profession fields require a recommendation letter from such a committee. This committee will also be a valuable information and preparation tool for you.)
- Hold an initial meeting of your health professions advisory committee**

Personal/Professional/Career Development Preparation:

- Maintain a balance between academic, professional, and personal life
- Continue to develop good personal and professional attributes
- Establish shadowing and/or job opportunities in your health profession field (keep a journal of the experiences for future reference)
- Establish volunteer and community service activities
- Work to gain an understanding of various specialties and options available in your health profession area
- Continue involvement in the Pre-Professional Club and other campus organizations

Entrance Exam and Professional School Application Preparation:

- Continue dialogue with your academic/health professions advisor
- Make sure you are taking the specific courses to meet the admission requirements for your chosen health profession school
- Investigate specific professional schools you may be interested in attending and visit them (many schools have open house days or you can make separate arrangements. Speak with the current students at these schools, they will give you the best feel for the school)
- Begin to identify off-campus professionals who can write recommendation letters for you, most often individuals you have shadowed or worked with. Many professional schools require one or more letters from current practicing health care providers
- Begin informal preparation for your health profession entrance exam. Get familiar with the format and investigate available study guides and reviews (exam is next year!)
- Update informal resume

Junior Year

Academic Development and Preparation:

- Continue to meet regularly with your academic/health profession advisor
- Take upper level science courses and other requirements for your degree and professional school entrance requirements (minimum 30 credit hours required for graduation)
- To reinforce knowledge, serve as a tutor for a science department or science club or work as a laboratory teaching assistant
- Take time to make a realistic evaluation of your academic record and personal interests. Make sure you are preparing well to be a competitive applicant for the health professions school. Have a back-up plan

Personal/Professional/Career Development Preparation:

- Maintain a balance between academic, professional, and personal life
- Continue to develop good personal and professional attributes
- Continue shadowing and/or job opportunities in your health profession field
- Continue volunteer and community service activities
- Develop a financial plan for completing the professional school
- Read and understand relevant health care issues. Be an educated and informed citizen
- Consider involvement in a research project during the regular semester or summer
- Continue involvement in the Pre-Professional Club and other campus organizations

Entrance Exam and Professional School Application Preparation:

- Continue dialogue with your academic advisor and health profession advisory committee members
- Obtain information from professional schools you are interested in and make a visit if possible. Programs will have web sites to help you get started. Know their individual application deadlines and preferences
- Investigate and obtain entrance exam review material or preparation courses. Your academic advisor and/or health professions committee can help and advise in this matter
- Develop a test preparation plan. Don't wait until the last minute and DO NOT attempt the entrance exam without some meaningful review first
- Know the entrance exam dates for your discipline and plan ahead to meet all applicable deadlines
- Complete your entrance exam and application material in a timely manner.** Many programs have a rolling admission so early application is beneficial
- If applicable, begin preparing a personal statement to accompany the application. Many health profession schools require a personal statement so spend time on it and have others review and give suggestions
- Update informal resume
- Hold a meeting of your health profession advisory committee in order to create the necessary evaluation and recommendation letter required by most health profession schools.** Bring to this meeting any application material, entrance exam scores, transcripts, and your resume. (Please plan ahead and hold this meeting some time late in the junior year. If you procrastinate until your senior year it may be difficult for you and the committee to meet your deadlines)

Senior Year

Academic Development and Preparation:

- Continue to meet regularly with your academic/health profession advisor
- Take upper level science courses and other requirements for your degree and professional school entrance requirements (minimum 30 credit hours required for graduation)
- To reinforce knowledge, serve as a tutor for a science department or science club or work as a laboratory teaching assistant

Personal/Professional/Career Development Preparation:

- Continue all the things that got you to this point: strong academics, shadowing, volunteering, etc.
- Continue to learn more about relevant health care issues
- Continue or consider involvement in a research project

Entrance Exam and Professional School Application Preparation:

- Be aware of any remaining deadlines** for entrance exams and/or applications and get them in on time
- Formalize your resume to help with the application process and in case you are rejected and must pursue your backup plan
- If you have not done so, hold a meeting with your health profession advisory committee to complete evaluation material and recommendation letter** (but remember, committee members are busy too so holding this meeting one week before a deadline is NOT acceptable)
- Advise your committee on where and when to send evaluation material and recommendation letters
- Participate in a “mock” interview with the PreProfessional Club or with your academic advisor
- If you receive a secondary application, complete it promptly, having letters sent as needed
- If admitted, advise your academic advisor and return an acceptance/deposit quickly.
- If admitted, make sure finances are in order and contact the financial aid office in a timely manner
- If rejected, meet with your academic advisor or advisory committee to discuss weaknesses and make plans to re-apply