

Health Professions Advising

What We Do

Health professions advisors at The Career Center assist students in preparing to pursue health professions, typically defined as those involving direct patient care. Pursuing a health profession is a professional goal, not an academic major.

Who We Are

Health professions advisors at TCC are career coaches who complete additional training, including networking with admissions deans, visiting health professional schools, and attending professional conferences. Our health professions advisors are active members of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP).

Fast Facts

- 2018 applicants matriculated into 56 different medical schools, 11 dental schools, 15 physical therapy schools and 11 pharmacy schools*
- Illinois is the 23rd largest supplier of medical school applicants U.S. Allopathic Medical schools** and 16th U.S. Osteopathic Medical Schools***
- **83% of accepted medical school applicants utilized Health Professions Advising at The Career Center**

Number of Students Accepted (Acceptance Rate)*	
Medicine	198 (56%)
Physical Therapy	57 (54%)
Dentistry	46 (74%)
Pharmacy	42 (86%)
Physician Assistant	65 (50%)
Optometry	16 (84%)

Note: Acceptance data for health professions (Vet Med, Nursing, OT, etc.) has not been released to Health Professions Advisors

*Includes only applicants from the 2017-2018 application cycle who released data to Health Professions Advisors at Illinois

**Source: Table A-2: Undergraduate Institutions Supplying Applicants to U.S. Medical Schools by Applicant Race and Ethnicity, 2017-2018, AAMC

***Source: 2017 AACOMAS Applicant Pool Profile Summary Report

Core Services

Health Professions Advising

- Scheduled 30 minute appointments for current students and alumni who are exploring health professions, preparing to apply, or somewhere in between.
- Drop-in 10-15 minute visits for current students and alumni on Tuesdays and Fridays from 1:30-3:00pm

Health Careers Chronicle

- A weekly newsletter for students pursuing health professions who want to learn more about on-and-off campus opportunities, including visits from admissions representatives, volunteer opportunities, and special events. Students can subscribe at go.illinois.edu/chronicle.

Workshops and Events

- Information sessions for first year and transfer students during the first few weeks of each semester
- Health Professions RSO (Registered Student Organizations) Fair every September with around 20 RSOs.
- Graduate and Professional School Fair every October with 125 programs from across the country
- Health Professions Series addressing popular topics, including undergraduate research, volunteer and paid-work experiences, summer programs, gap year options, application prep, and more.

Admission Visits

- Admissions Deans Nights and Visits from representatives from schools that recruit Illinois students
- One-on-one drop-in sessions with admission deans

Application Process Assistance

- Application Preparation Month every April including workshops on the application process
- Personal statement reviews
- Mock interviews

Pre-Health Ambassadors

- Undergraduate pre-health students that represent The Career Center to discuss the Pre-Health at Illinois experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the best major?

Simply stated, there is no best major. Choose a major that you will enjoy, keeping in mind that you will need to complete required and/or recommended courses to prepare for admissions tests (MCAT, DAT, OAT, PCAT) and for the rigors of professional school. These courses can be completed while pursuing any major on campus. Some majors may allow for more flexibility while others may be more structured. In 2018, Illinois graduates who were accepted to medical schools represented 26 different primary majors. Admission committees are seeking academically diverse students and consistently express that preference is not given to specific majors.

What prerequisite courses do I need to take?

Prerequisite guides for most health professions are provided at www.careercenter.illinois.edu in the **Health Professions** section. These guides are based on common prerequisites as well as content covered on admissions tests. Individual school requirements vary and may change from year to year. Students are encouraged to check prerequisites at specific schools of interest regularly.

May I use AP credit for prerequisites?

Many professional programs will accept AP credit for lecture courses, though some programs will not. We strongly encourage discussing whether to take 100 level science courses with your academic advisor. Experience has taught us that Illinois students are more prepared for higher level courses if they have taken 100 level science courses on campus due to the pace, rigor, and volume of content covered. We want students to develop good study skills and earn strong grades in their first year at Illinois. That may mean forgoing AP credit.

What classes do I take next semester?

Students pursuing health professions typically take 1-3 science prerequisites per semester (on average). Your academic advisor will be able to assist you in choosing courses that align with your academic and professional goals. Be sure to mention which health profession you are pursuing (or considering) when you meet with your advisor.

May I take science prerequisites at a community college over the summer?

Most health professional programs expect you to take science prerequisite courses at your primary institution. Consult with a Health Professions Advisor if you have a compelling reason to take prerequisite courses at a community college.

What if I get a bad grade in a prerequisite course?

Admissions committees expect to see strong grades, particularly in prerequisite courses. However, health professional programs want students who are resilient and have demonstrated the ability to improve and persevere. Talk to a Health Professions Advisor about your situation. We'll assist you in brainstorming options and next steps.

How many hours of experience do I need?

While GPA and admission test scores are important, admissions committees expect candidates to *demonstrate* a commitment to the profession and the competencies necessary to become a capable healthcare professional. Instead of focusing on a number of hours, consider experiences that showcase your interests and passions, that allow you both to utilize your skills and develop new ones, and that provide you opportunities to interact with people from a variety of backgrounds. Some examples include part-time jobs, volunteering, leadership in student organizations, undergraduate research, and shadowing/observation. Competitive applicants have hundreds (sometimes thousands) of hours of experience outside the classroom that effectively demonstrate their readiness to begin training for their chosen health profession.

When should I apply?

Applicants should apply when they are most prepared, having demonstrated the competencies and knowledge necessary to be a successful health professional. For some professions, like Medicine (MD or DO) and Physician Assistant (PA), applying after graduation is more common. In fact 65% of our 2016 applicants to medical school applied after graduating from Illinois.

When should I start meeting with a Health Professions Advisor?

You can start meeting with a Health Professions Advisor during your first semester on campus. You do not need to have specific questions or prepare in advance for your appointment. We can assist you with exploring health careers, finding experiences and resources on and off-campus, understanding the application process to graduate and professional schools, and even identifying alternative career plans should you decide to pursue a career outside of healthcare. Our goal is to empower you to succeed at Illinois and beyond. We look forward to meeting you!

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Current students can schedule an appointment
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