Pre-Health Starter Kit

Inside this Starter Kit:
- Required coursework
- AAMC competencies
- How to handle AP credits
- A sample 4-Year Plan
- MCAT and DAT exam info
- ...and more

This starter kit is intended to answer some questions and help identify others to discuss with a pre-health advisor.

Book your video advising appointment today: utd.link/HPAC_appointment

HPAC on the web: pre-health.utdallas.edu

Request information: prehealth@utdallas.edu
# UTD Pre-Health Starter Kit

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Frequently Asked Questions 19-20
Section 1

Becoming “Pre-Health” at UT Dallas

• 1, 2, 3, ...Health Career
• Using AP Credits
• 4-Year Plan Template
1, 2, 3 ... Health Career

before Semester 1

**Step 1**

1. Apply to UT Dallas [enroll.utdallas.edu](http://enroll.utdallas.edu)
2. Select a major. There is no best major; choose one that you love. You can change it later if necessary.
3. Join Collegium V Honors if eligible. [honors.utdallas.edu/cv](http://honors.utdallas.edu/cv)
4. Join a Living and Learning Community if eligible. [livinglearning.utdallas.edu](http://livinglearning.utdallas.edu)
5. Choose classes:
   a. See pg. 5: Using AP Credits
   b. See pg. 6: 4-Year Plan Template
   c. View available classes on Coursebook [coursebook.utdallas.edu](http://coursebook.utdallas.edu)
   d. Register for classes with your Academic Advisor

**START**

during Semester 1

**Step 2**

1. Join the HPAC Mailing List using your UTD email [pre-health.utdallas.edu](http://pre-health.utdallas.edu)
2. Locate campus support services:
   - Student Success Center [studentsuccess.utdallas.edu](http://studentsuccess.utdallas.edu)
   - Health Professions Advising Center [pre-health.utdallas.edu](http://pre-health.utdallas.edu)
   - Your Academic Advisor – varies by major
   - Career Center [career.utdallas.edu](http://career.utdallas.edu)
   - Counseling Center [counseling.utdallas.edu](http://counseling.utdallas.edu)
3. Join student groups: [pre-health.utdallas.edu/experience/organizations](http://pre-health.utdallas.edu/experience/organizations)
4. Meet with HPAC to customize your 4-Year Plan

from semester 2 through graduation

**Step 3**

1. Embrace the joy of *helping others*  
   - Volunteer in your community
   - Volunteer with healthcare providers and patients
2. Embrace the joy of *learning*  
   - Seek mastery in your coursework, not merely “A’s”
   - Solve unknown problems through research
   - Apply for growth opportunities: summer programs, jobs, study abroad, independent studies, etc.
3. Maintain your *ethics*
4. Explore new communities, cultures, and hobbies: *new understanding*

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You want to help people for a living? Don’t wait!

- Doyen Rainey, Director of HPAC
Using AP Credits

Can I safely apply all my AP credits?
YES!

Should I take the UTD course even though I have AP credits?
MAYBE.

Use this diagram and ask yourself, "Is my AP credit for..."

- **Biology I**
- **Chem I or II, Phys I or Phys II, Biology II, Biology Lab**
- **Calculus or Statistics**
- **English or Rhetoric**
- **Any other non-science**

---

**HPAC recommends taking this class at UT Dallas unless you have a compelling reason not to.**

**Are you in a science major? Have you mastered the material? Did you get a 5 on the AP test?**

- **NO**
- **YES, to all three**

**Move on toward STAT 2332 Statistics for Life Sciences, which by itself meets the math requirement for most professional schools.**

"Can I use STAT 1342 or my major’s statistics course instead?" See HPAC.

**Nearly all UT Dallas students fulfill professional schools’ English requirements by taking writing-intensive core courses.**

**Rather than take this class at UT Dallas, move on to advanced classes or an interesting elective.**
# Pre-Health 4-Year Plan Template

**THIS IS NOT YOUR 4-YEAR PLAN.**

You will create a *unique, customized* plan with your HPAC advisor, taking into account your pre-college credits, college major, target health profession, goals within that profession, and life circumstances.

Your answers to these and other questions affect your plan.

**How much do you enjoy teaching? Leadership? Pure science? Activism? What classes do you find most easy and most challenging? Are there particular healthcare tasks or populations that you find rewarding?**

## Pre-College:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 1</th>
<th>14-16 credits</th>
<th>Spring 1</th>
<th>15-18 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Chem I</td>
<td>-Chem II</td>
<td>-STAT</td>
<td>Study abroad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-MATH (by major)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Volunteer? Work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Participate in summer programs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Meet new friends and faculty*  
*Perfect your college study skills*  
*Develop healthy life habits*  
*Apply to special programs: JAMP, SHPEP, Emerge, Collegium V, and others.*

### 15-18 credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 2</th>
<th>15-18 credits</th>
<th>Spring 2</th>
<th>14-20 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Bio I</td>
<td>-Phys I</td>
<td>-Phys II</td>
<td>Study abroad?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Volunteer? Work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Participate in summer programs?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Diversify healthcare experiences through volunteering, observation, or work in multiple venues.*  
*On campus, gain experience with teaching, research, and/or leadership.*  
*Focus on building your Competencies (pg 9-10).*  
*Apply to summer programs*  

### 15-18 credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 3</th>
<th>15-18 credits</th>
<th>Spring 3</th>
<th>15-18 credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Biochem I</td>
<td>-Advanced Bioscience</td>
<td>-Advanced Bioscience</td>
<td>May-June: take entry exam (i.e. MCAT) if you haven’t yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Advanced Bioscience</td>
<td>-Advanced Bioscience</td>
<td>-Advanced Bioscience</td>
<td>May-June: apply to professional schools</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Take on new responsibilities in your current positions, or try new positions.*  
*Oct 1: initiate HPAC support services for applicants (pg 14)*

### 15-18 credits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall 4</th>
<th>15-18 credits</th>
<th>Spring 4</th>
<th>-Honors thesis? 😊</th>
<th>Graduate from UT Dallas. Whoosh!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>May-June: re-apply to professional schools if necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Strengthen your Competencies (p. 9-10) in case you need to re-apply to professional schools.*  
*Plan toward a post-graduation “growth year” if necessary.*

**Note the large number of open spaces. Use these to complete your major and pursue elective interests.**
Section 2

Your Pre-Health Journey at UTD

- Minimum Classes, by Profession
- Preparing for Admissions Tests
- Building your Competencies
- Resources at and near UT Dallas
- Journal of Experiences
# Pre-Health Classes

This chart reflects MINIMUM and RECOMMENDED classes for several health professions.

*you can register for this class as early as your first semester

**required at some schools but not all

## Medical

**Required**
- *Chemistry I
- Chemistry II
- Biology I
- Biology II, Bio Lab
- Organic Chemistry I
- Organic Chemistry II, O.Chem Lab
- Biochemistry I
- *Physics I
- Physics II
- Statistics
- at least 2 upper-division BIOL or NSC

**Recommended**
- 2-6 additional advanced biosciences
- *Intro to Neuroscience
- *Intro to Psychology
- *Intro to Sociology

*Classes that support your personal medical interests*

## Dental

**Required**
- *Chemistry I
- Chemistry II
- Biology I
- Biology II, Bio Lab
- Organic Chemistry I
- Organic Chemistry II, O.Chem Lab
- Biochemistry I
- *Physics I
- Physics II
- Statistics
- Microbiology (with or without lab)
- at least 2 upper-division BIOL or NSC
- **A&P I
- **A&P II

**Recommended**
- Oral Histology
- 2-6 additional advanced biosciences

*Classes that support your personal dental interests*

## Physician Assistant

**Required**
- *Chemistry I
- *Intro to Psychology
- Biology I
- Biology II, Bio Lab
- Organic Chemistry I, O.Chem Lab
- Statistics
- Intro to Microbiology
- Intro to Microbiology lab
- A&P I
- A&P II
- **Chemistry II
- **Biochemistry I
- **Genetics
- **Human Nutrition
- **Medical Terminology

**Recommended**
- 2-6 additional advanced biosciences

*PA schools also require significant patient care experience*

## Pharmacy

**Required**
- *Chemistry I
- Chemistry II
- Biology I
- Biology II, Bio Lab
- Organic Chemistry I
- Organic Chemistry II, O.Chem Lab
- Biochemistry I
- Intro to Microbiology
- Intro to Microbiology Lab
- *Physics I
- Statistics
- Calculus
- **Genetics
- **Molecular Biology
- **A&P I
- **A&P II
- **Speech Communications
- **Macroeconomics
- **Computer Science

## Physical Therapy

**Required**
- *Chemistry I
- *Intro to Psychology
- Chemistry II
- Biology I
- Biology II, Bio Lab
- A&P I
- A&P II
- *Physics I
- Physics II
- Statistics
- **Developmental Psychology
- **Medical Terminology
- **Advanced Physiology

## Optometry

**Required**
- *Chemistry I
- *Intro to Psychology
- Chemistry II
- Biology I
- Biology II, Bio Lab
- Organic Chemistry I, O.Chem Lab
- *Physics I
- Physics II
- Statistics
- Intro to Microbiology
- Intro to Microbiology lab
- **A&P I
- **A&P II
- **Biochemistry I
Preparing for Admission Tests

When should I start preparing?

- You are already preparing!
- In UTD years 1 and 2: **master basic sciences and learn to apply them.**
- In the year before your professional school application, **learn the test**: the format, the timing, and how the right and wrong answers are phrased. Take **practice tests**. You may choose a **prep course**. Discounted prep courses are available.

**Recommended Test Preparation (by Year)**

**Year 1**  **Master basic sciences and labs.** *Tutor and teach others if you can. Apply your lessons by doing projects.* Read some technical journals to stoke your curiosity and practice detailed comprehension.

**Year 2**  **Master basic sciences and labs.** *Tutor and teach others if you can. Apply your lessons by doing projects.* Read some technical journals to stoke your curiosity and practice detailed comprehension.

**Year 3**  **Master advanced sciences.** *Tutor and teach others if you can. Apply science through research or ind. study.*

**FOCUSED PREP TIME!**
- Study the test content and format. Plan your studies. – usually 1 week
- Review basic material – usually 4-6 weeks
- Work LOTS of practice passages and **read the answer explanations** – usually 8-10 weeks

**Take the test.**
In early summer, **apply** to profession schools.

**Year 4**  Take extension sciences to apply your basics.
Synthesize your understanding through **applied research** or by creating an **honors thesis**. If necessary, re-approach prep using new methods, then **re-test** to support a **re-application**.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Admission Test</th>
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<td>Medicine</td>
<td>MCAT – Medical College Admission Test</td>
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<td>Podiatry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>PCAT – Pharmacy College Admission Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optometry</td>
<td>OAT – Optometry Admission Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Masters and Doctoral Programs</td>
<td>GRE – Graduate Record Exam</td>
</tr>
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AAMC’s Essential Competencies for Entering Health Professional Students

The American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) curates this list of competencies to highlight crucial knowledge, abilities, and skills that are valued by medical schools and evaluated by admissions staff as part of a holistic application review. UTD HPAC finds these competencies are particularly generalizable to all health professions and recommends seeking to acquire and demonstrate them in your academic and non-academic pursuits. These competencies were updated in 2023 to reflect the changing needs of medical students and society.  

[https://utd.link/AAMC_competencies](https://utd.link/AAMC_competencies)

**PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES**

### Commitment to Learning and Growth
Practices continuous personal and professional growth for improvement, including setting and communicating goals for learning and development; reflects on successes, challenges, and mistakes; pursues opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding; and asks for and incorporates feedback to learn and grow.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**
- Seek the joy of rising to challenges.
- Set and meet goals and deadlines.

### Cultural Awareness
Appreciates how historical, sociocultural, political, and economic factors affect others’ interactions, behaviors, and well-being; values diversity; and demonstrates a desire to learn about different cultures, beliefs, and values.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**
- Learn about other cultures, especially influential figures in art, music, dance, philosophy, history, and literature.
- Study abroad

### Cultural Humility
Seeks out and engages diverse and divergent perspectives with a desire to understand and willingness to adjust one’s mindset; understands a situation or idea from alternative viewpoints; reflects on one’s values, beliefs, and identities and how they may affect others; reflects on and addresses bias in oneself and others; and fosters a supportive environment that values inclusivity.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**
- Listen to and learn from people with diverse cultural heritage and lived experiences.

### Empathy and Compassion
Recognizes, understands, and acknowledges others’ experiences, feelings, perspectives, and reactions to situations; is sensitive to others’ needs and feelings; and demonstrates a desire to help others and alleviate others’ distress.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**
- Volunteer at hospice centers, shelters, and community kitchens.
- Make a habit to carefully consider multiple perspectives and seek to understand views with which you may not agree.

### Ethical Responsibility to Self and Others
Behaves with honesty and integrity; considers multiple and/or conflicting principles and values to inform decisions; adheres to ethical principles when carrying out professional obligations; resists pressure to engage in unethical behavior; and encourages others to behave honestly and ethically.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**
- Carefully attend to rules and guidelines and encourage others to do likewise.

### Interpersonal Skills
Demonstrates an awareness of how social and behavioral cues affect people’s interactions and behaviors; adjusts behaviors appropriately in response to these cues; recognizes and manages one’s emotions and understands how emotions impact others or a situation; and treats others with dignity, courtesy, and respect.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**
- Attend seminars for leadership, professional development, and crisis prevention.
### Oral Communication
Effectively conveys information to others using spoken words and sentences; actively listens to understand the meaning and intent behind what others say; recognizes potential communication barriers and adjusts approach or clarifies information as needed.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Develop confidence and speaking skills through Toastmasters.
- Learn active listening in the Last Writers program or as a medical scribe.

### Reliability and Dependability
Demonstrates accountability for performance and responsibilities to self and others; prioritizes and fulfills obligations in a timely and satisfactory manner; and understands the consequences of not fulfilling one's responsibilities to self and others.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Set priorities and honor them; make to-do lists and finish them.
- Honor your word and be accountable to yourself and others for your actions.

### Resilience and Adaptability
Perseveres in challenging, stressful, or ambiguous environments or situations by adjusting behavior or approach in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles, and recognizes and seeks help and support when needed; recovers from and reflects on setbacks; and balances personal well-being with responsibilities.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Take active steps to maintain your physical and mental health.
- Cultivate a balance between work and play, and develop habits to preserve and restore your well-being.

### Service Orientation
Shows a commitment to something larger than oneself; demonstrates dedication to service and a commitment to making meaningful contributions that meet the needs of communities.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Certify in First Aid/CPR
- Engage with locally underserved communities through volunteering and advocacy.

### Teamwork and Collaboration
Collaborates with others to achieve shared goals and prioritizes shared goals; adjusts role between team member and leader based on one's own and others' expertise and experience; shares information with team members and encourages this behavior in others; and gives and accepts feedback to improve team performance.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Participate in service-oriented student groups and cultural events.

### SCIENCE COMPETENCIES

#### Human Behavior
Applies knowledge of the self, others, and social systems to solve problems related to the psychological, sociocultural, and biological factors that influence health and well-being.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Pre-health track non-sciences: Intro Sociology, Intro/Dev/Abnormal Psych, Public Health, Global Health, Nutrition, Medical Ethics, Health Disparities in Neuroscience, etc.

#### 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.

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES
- Expand your subject mastery through tutoring, teaching, and research
### THOUGHT AND REASONING COMPETENCIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Suggested Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Uses logic and reasoning to identify the strengths and weaknesses of alternative solutions, conclusions, or approaches to problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete an independent study or honors thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend presentations and conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative Reasoning</strong></td>
<td>Applies quantitative reasoning and appropriate mathematics to describe or explain phenomena in the natural world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take Statistics, Research Design, Laboratory Methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete an independent study or honors thesis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attend presentations and conferences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Work at a UTD research lab for 2+ semesters for the chance to present a poster or contribute to a manuscript.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Written Communication</strong></td>
<td>Effectively conveys information to others by using written words and sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• READ primary and secondary source science publications to stay current also books for pleasure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BONUS COMPETENCIES recommended by HPAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Suggested Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Study Skills</strong></td>
<td>Thrives under heavy loads of challenging science classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Prep Skills</strong></td>
<td>Prepares effectively for tests like MCAT, DAT, and GRE (and later, Certification, Licensure and Board Exams).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep your notes from sciences, statistics, and social science courses, and review them each term to keep your memory fresh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet with an HPAC advisor to devise a test-prep study schedule, and honor it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Repetition is important! In the months before your first exam, take several timed, full-length practice tests. Go over your answers carefully to be sure you understand what you missed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Schedule your first test early enough in your application year that you have time to retake it if needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interest in Healthcare</strong></td>
<td>Understands the rewards and challenges of a health career through quality experiences with patients and healthcare providers. May have deep understanding of particular tasks or populations. Develops mature ideas of how they want to practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check the HPAC Weekly Digest for healthcare experiences and job opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use your certification! If you certify as an EMT, seek work with UEMR, EMS, or local hospitals and clinics. If you are a CNA, seek work with local long-term care, hospice facilities, or hospitals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shadow different specialties and types of healthcare facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Student Resources at UT Dallas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Professions Advising Center</th>
<th>FO 2.210; <a href="http://pre-health.utdallas.edu">pre-health.utdallas.edu</a></th>
<th>Pre-professional guidance and services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource Room</td>
<td>FO 2.204</td>
<td>Study area, med journals, computers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Health Student Organizations</td>
<td><a href="http://pre-health.utdallas.edu/experience/organizations">pre-health.utdallas.edu/experience/organizations</a></td>
<td>Explore professions, connect with peers, volunteer, enjoy guest speakers and events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Student Organizations</th>
<th>soc.utdallas.edu</th>
<th>Dedicated study group, including a paid expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Success Center</td>
<td><a href="http://studentsuccess.utdallas.edu">studentsuccess.utdallas.edu</a></td>
<td>Science lectures re-taught by student instructors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Led Team Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-on-1 help with difficult subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-on-1 coaching for time mgmt., test anxiety, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Tutoring</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve oral and group presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Skills Coaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve your writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CommLab</td>
<td></td>
<td>Connect with the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center</td>
<td></td>
<td>Create a Study Abroad opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Student Volunteerism</td>
<td>volunteer.utdallas.edu</td>
<td>Career counseling and aptitude tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Abroad</td>
<td><a href="http://ie.utdallas.edu/go-abroad">ie.utdallas.edu/go-abroad</a></td>
<td>Address concerns of student veterans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Center</td>
<td>career.utdallas.edu</td>
<td>Primary and preventative care and immunizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Services Center</td>
<td>veterans.utdallas.edu</td>
<td>Promote fitness, nutrition, and wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Health Center</td>
<td>studenthealthcenter.utdallas.edu</td>
<td>Achieve emotional well-being and manage life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Wellness Center</td>
<td>studentwellness.utdallas.edu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Counseling Center</td>
<td>counseling.utdallas.edu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Students in Recovery</td>
<td><a href="http://972-UTD-TALK">972-UTD-TALK</a></td>
<td>Thrive socially &amp; academically while living in recovery</td>
</tr>
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<td><a href="http://recovery.utdallas.edu">recovery.utdallas.edu</a></td>
<td>Promoting academic success through alleviating food insecurity challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comet Cupboard</td>
<td><a href="http://cometcupboard.utdallas.edu">cometcupboard.utdallas.edu</a></td>
<td>Register for classes, plan your degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>&lt;by major&gt;</td>
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# Pre-Health Resources Near UT Dallas

- More than 16 Dallas-area hospitals
- Dozens of clinics and therapy centers
- Hundreds of health professions offices
- Countless venues for hands-on experience, including long-term care, veterans, teen health, public health, home care, and many others.
Based on your experiences, your healthcare interests will naturally become more focused over time.

When you apply to health profession schools, they ask, “What have you learned from your experiences?”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Notes to Remember (what you did, what you learned)</th>
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Section 3

Evaluating your Candidacy

- HPAC Applicant Support
- Sample Acceptance Rubric
Beginning in October the year before you apply to professional schools, follow these steps in order:

1. **Register Online** to receive:
   - An assigned HPAC advisor
   - Mock Application and access to Personal Statement Workshops
   - Inclusion in the HPAC Applicant Support online portal
   - Free professional portraits
   - Clearinghouse services for medical and dental applicants:
     - HPAC compiles a “letter packet” of up to 5 recommendation letters
     - Why only medical and dental? Other professions only accept letters directly from the writers

2. Submit a **completed DRAFT Mock Application** to receive
   - Professional revisions of your Mock Application and essays
   - Professional assessment of your candidacy
   - Guidance on selecting recommendation letter writers
   - Guidance on optimizing your candidacy

3. Submit a **fully REVISED Mock Application** to receive
   - Interview Practice
   - **Committee Evaluation** (aka “committee letter”)
     *A committee evaluation helps professional schools evaluate you by adding UT Dallas context and multiple viewpoints on your candidacy. Nearly all medical schools prefer a committee evaluation when available. However, not all students benefit equally from the lengthy process. Ask your advisor if committee evaluation or earlier application could benefit you more.*

Practice Interviews and Committee Evaluations have **limited seats and rolling admissions** – just like health professional schools! Early submitters will fill available seats quickly, so submit your materials as soon as you can!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exceptionally Qualified</th>
<th>Strongly Qualified</th>
<th>Probably Qualified</th>
<th>Possibly Not Qualified</th>
<th>Not Qualified</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal</strong></td>
<td>A “bonus” category.</td>
<td>Candidates in this category are strong bets for success in health professions. They have shown clear readiness for professional school and practice, based on clearly demonstrated AAMC Competencies and experience in healthcare.</td>
<td>There isn’t sufficient evidence to predict whether candidates in this category will do well in health professions. If a candidate in this category isn’t admitted, they’ll usually improve weak areas and re-apply in a stronger category.</td>
<td>Evidence suggests a deficiency in at least one AAMC Competency area. These candidates might struggle in health professions school or practice</td>
<td>Candidates in this category have shown unsuitability for professional school or practice.</td>
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<td>Oral communication skills are <strong>exceptional</strong>.</td>
<td>Shows professionalism, empathy, answering/listening skills, and self-confidence. Occasionally shows professionalism, empathy, answering/listening skills, and self-confidence. Successful interpersonal skills in a professional setting. Inconsistent evidence of leadership or exposure to unfamiliar cultures or groups.</td>
<td>Establishes a clear rapport with the interviewer but lacks evidence of professionalism, empathy, answering/listening skills, or self-confidence. Satisfactory interpersonal skills. Minimal evidence of initiative, leadership, or exposure to unfamiliar cultures or groups.</td>
<td>Limited rapport with the interviewer. May have difficulty communicating in English. Minimal empathy or interpersonal skills.</td>
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<td><strong>Intrapersonal</strong></td>
<td>Exceptionally mature, professional, responsible, and moral. Accepts criticism, frustration, or failure maturely, and exhibits self-confidence. Recognizes self-controllable deficiencies and successfully addresses them.</td>
<td>Mature, professional, responsible, and moral. Accepts criticism, frustration, or failure while exhibiting some self-confidence. Recognizes self-controllable deficiencies and can present a realistic, logical plan to address them. Somewhat mature and professional. Lacks the ability to self-reflect and self-analyze. Recognizes self-controllable deficiencies but does not present remedies.</td>
<td>Strong character but lacks the ability to self-reflect and self-analyze. Recognizes self-controllable deficiencies but does not present remedies. Record suggests emotional or personal instability. Inconsistent ability to self-reflect. Some questionable ethical or moral positions. Lacks ability to accept responsibility.</td>
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<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td>Exceptional, mature knowledge of the profession, as shown by extensive experience and research.</td>
<td>Realistic, professional, and confident about professional future, as shown by quality experience and research. Confident in abilities as a professional based on occasional quality experience. May not have researched all options.</td>
<td>General understanding of the profession. Some healthcare exposure but minimal research or clinical exposure.</td>
<td>Idealistic understanding of the profession. Minimal healthcare experience; has not considered other health professional options.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Study Skills</strong></td>
<td>GPA &gt; 3.8 including heavy course loads. Evidence of seeking challenge and personal interests. Test scores indicate mastery in all sections.</td>
<td>GPA &gt; 3.65 or a very strong recent trend at full course loads. Significant depth in bioscience OR breadth across disciplines. Test scores indicate strength in all sections. GPA &gt; 3.5 or a positive recent trend. Some education beyond prerequisites. Record lacks strong performance under heavy loads. Test scores above average, possibly weak in sections. GPA &lt; 3.5. Record may include weak periods, multiple drops/repeats, or consistent light loads. Test scores weak overall or critically weak in sections. GPA &lt; 3.2 with no strong performance at full loads. Low overall scores suggest inability to prepare effectively for licensure exams.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Committee’s Recommendation Level</strong></td>
<td>“Recommended with Enthusiasm”</td>
<td>“Recommended with Confidence”</td>
<td>“Recommended”</td>
<td>“Recommended with Reservations”</td>
<td>“Not Recommended.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% accepted to medical schools</td>
<td>~100% admitted</td>
<td>~85% admitted</td>
<td>~65% admitted</td>
<td>~35% admitted</td>
<td>~0% admitted</td>
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Evidence for each category is gathered from the candidate’s:
- **Academic Record**: classes, grades, loads, trends, choice of classes, and test scores.
- **Activities since college**: healthcare, research, teaching, community service, and extracurricular
- **Essays**: describing their background and motivations
- **3-5 Recommendation Letters**
- **Practice Interviews**
Frequently Asked Questions

What do medical schools look for?
The AAMC Essential Competencies (pg. 10-12). Individual schools will emphasize different competencies.

What do dentistry, physician assistant, pharmacy, and other health professions look for?
The Competencies (pg. 10-12) apply to all health professions, with some important differences. For example, dental applicants also need to show perceptual ability and fine motor dexterity. Ask an HPAC advisor for details.

Where do I find reliable information about getting into professional school?
NOT from internet forums: the information is often wrong or overly simplified.
NOT from individual doctors: a small sample is never a reliable source.
UT Dallas provides free pre-health advising for its students and alumni at HPAC: a team of full-time professional advisors who are constantly in touch with professional schools, have resources not available to students, and provide customized, individual advising. Students who use HPAC advising and applicant support services gain admittance to medical schools at more than double the rate of students who self-advice.
Current, accurate information can also be found on national health professions education sites like TXHES.com, AAMC.org, ADEA.org, or AAPA.org.

Can I take community college courses?
Yes, though HPAC recommends taking university sciences if possible. Ask a pre-health advisor for details. Students beginning at a community college should take advantage of the Comet Connection program. [https://enroll.utdallas.edu/transfer/comet-connection/](https://enroll.utdallas.edu/transfer/comet-connection/)

What's the best major?
Seeking your personal interests is important preparation for your future career. Professional schools regularly accept students from all majors.
If the major you’re most passionate about doesn’t require you to take all the classes required for your chosen health profession, use electives to take those classes.
Note: dental schools often ask for a substantial number of biology classes beyond their minimum requirements, making Biology an especially popular major for pre-dental.

Should I get a minor? A dual-major? A double major?
Minors and double majors do not especially qualify you for professional school admission, but they may be appropriate if your interests are split between multiple fields.

What is HPAC?
The Health Professions Advising Center helps students prepare to enter health professions. HPAC is many students’ first contact at UT Dallas and supports students throughout their training for and application to professional schools. HPAC advisors teach classes and help students explore their interests, select classes and experiential learning, find summer experiences and internships, and revise professional school applications.

What is JAMP?
A state program to help high-performing socioeconomically disadvantaged pre-med students. Interested students should inquire during their freshman year at UT Dallas and apply for JAMP at the beginning of their sophomore year.
How do I gain healthcare experience?
Usually by donating your time in hospitals, clinics, and community settings. You can supplement that experience by observing practitioners (shadowing) or by working in healthcare—as a pharmacy tech, EMT, Physician Scribe, clinical research assistant, etc.
“Virtual” experiences count too, for the same reason that “telemedicine” counts as “medicine.”

How do I gain research experience?
Research opportunities may be available on a volunteer basis, as course credit, or as paid employment. Identify research projects to which you’d like to contribute, then approach the professor or researcher respectfully to discuss your interests and how many hours you want to commit.

When should I take an MCAT/DAT/PCAT/OAT/GRE?
"As soon as you’re ready, but not until." Preparation begins from semester 1 (see pg. 9), though most students take their admissions exam after 2 or 3 years of college.

When do I apply for professional school?
Traditional students apply after their junior year. Non-traditional students should ask an advisor. Since 2021, over 60% of students admitted to medical schools have been non-traditional.

How can I pay for professional school?
Everyone can afford professional school! Start by completing your FAFSA. Financial aid is widely available, mostly in the form of federal education loans. The Military Health Professions Scholarship Program may pay for your professional school in exchange for military service after graduation. The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) has scholarships and loan repayment programs available for qualifying candidates who fulfill a service term after graduation in medically underserved areas.