

PRE-HEALTH AT ILLINOIS

What is Pre-Health?



Choosing pre-health is a professional goal, not a major. Illinois students major in a variety of areas and pursue a health profession. Important factors in being pre-health are completing the necessary courses required or recommended for admission, plus showing admission committees why they want to be a physician, dentist, pharmacist, physical therapist, veterinarian, etc.

About Pre-Health Advising

The Career Center provides trained, professional advisors to meet individually with pre-health students. Our advisors are active members of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions and regularly network with admission deans, visit health profession schools, plus attend and present at conferences.

Core Services & Resources

- **Health Professions Advising-** Current students and alumni can schedule individual 30 minute appointments or visit us during our designated drop-in advising hours with quick questions.
- **Pre-Health Ambassadors-** Undergraduate students that represent The Career Center to discuss the pre-health experience at Illinois.
- **Workshop & Events-** The Career Center provides a variety of information sessions addressing how to prepare for and be competitive for health profession programs. The Graduate & Professional School Fair is also held annually in October, with over 120 programs attending to recruit Illinois students.
- **Admission Visits-** Each semester admission deans or representatives visit campus to share what their programs look for in applicants. This is a great opportunity for Illinois students to network with admission offices!
- **Application Assistance-** The Pre-Health Advisors conduct sessions on applying to health profession programs, plus provide personal statement reviews & mock interviews.



Illinois Success

- Illinois is the 28th largest feeder institution to allopathic medical schools and the 18th largest feeder to osteopathic medical schools.
- Sixty percent of accepted medical school applicants utilized pre-health advising at The Career Center

Acceptance Numbers & Rates

Medicine- 197 (57%)
Physical Therapy- 55 (53%)
Dentistry- 52 (73%)
Pharmacy- 32 (94%)
Physician Assistant- 43 (40%)
Optometry- 8 (100%)
Vet Med- 34 (68%)

Note : Acceptance data for health professions is released by the applicants to the pre-health advisors. Application services for some areas do not provide information

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I start meeting with a Pre-Health Advisor?

You can start meeting with a Pre-Health 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/off campus, understanding the application process and even identify alternative career plans. Our goal is to empower you to succeed at Illinois and beyond. We look forward to meeting you!

What prerequisite courses do I take?

Prerequisite guides for most health professions are provided on The Career Center website. These guides are based on common admission requirements, as well as content covered on admission exams. It is the responsibility of the students to research individual programs to know what specific coursework is required for admission.

May I use AP credit for pre-reqs?

Many professional programs will accept AP credit, however some will not. It is strongly encouraged to discuss with your academic advisor whether completing 100 level science courses at Illinois is in your best interest. Experience has taught us that Illinois students are more prepared for higher level courses if they complete the 100 level courses on campus. We want students to develop good study skills and earn strong grades, which may mean forgoing AP credit.

What classes do I take next semester?

Pre-health students typically take 1-3 science courses per semester. Your academic advisor will be able to assist you in choosing the courses that align with your academic and professional goals. Be sure to mention which health profession you are pursuing when you attend registration.

What if I get a bad grade in a pre-req?

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

How many hours of experience do I need?

While GPA and admission exam scores are important, admission 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 to both utilize your skills and develop new ones, and that provide you the opportunity to interact with people from a variety of backgrounds. 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 health field.

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/DO) and Physician Assistant (PA), applying after graduation is more common. Significantly more medical school applicants take one or more gap years than do not, and applicants that do not take a gap year have higher GPA and MCAT scores.