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# Introduction to the Health Professions Office

The Pre-Health Professions program at Wheaton College, desires to provide a distinctive educational opportunity for students interested in the health professions. Healthcare practitioners are needed in the United States and throughout the world to address the needs of those suffering from illness and disease and promote health and wellness to all individuals.

The Health Professions Program provides personalized advising and support services, encouraging students to be intentional and strategic toward the pursuit of a career in the health professions. Such practices help aid the development of character traits and demonstrate the compassionate heart of Christ to others enabling students to become leaders within healthcare fields, building the church and benefitting society worldwide. Ultimately, we aim to enhance your overall development and future success in a healthcare career.

All students regardless of their major are welcome and encouraged to meet with the director and utilize the department resources. Students of any major can attend a health profession graduate program. Some students prefer majors that have the most overlap in required major courses and the pre-requisite courses for the intended health field. Others prefer to study an area outside of the sciences to provide diversity to their understanding of individuals, the general society and the determinants of health.

The Health Professions program offers opportunities for students to discuss current topics within the healthcare field and interact with healthcare professionals, hearing first-hand stories of the challenges and joys of serving others in a variety of healthcare careers. Courses are taught providing unique experiences for students to engage, explore and personally reflect upon various issues within the healthcare environment.

## CANDICE EISENHAUER HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIRECTOR



Candice Eisenhauer, M.Ed., Director, Health Professions, is a member of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP). This is her seventh year at Wheaton College and 17th year advising and counseling college students.

As director, she helps navigate the intricate processes of prerequisites and professional school applications for undergraduates preparing for careers in healthcare. Her conversations with students aim to encourage exploration of not only healthcare careers and issues but also personal strengths and abilities. Ultimately, she works with students allowing them to see the process clearly and take wise next steps.

The Health Professions office seeks to build community and alumni partnerships to aid students in exploring the many options in healthcare –not just medicine and nursing—and foster awareness of global health issues. Her goal is to walk alongside students through the process of exploring, choosing and applying to a graduate health profession program. She does this by listening, celebrating successes, sitting with disappointments and providing counsel and helpful information.

Outside of the office, she enjoys volunteering with Discipleship Ministries on campus leading a small group of female coach and cabinet members for the organization. When not in the Chicagoland area, you will find her in Minnesota or Delaware taking her nieces and nephews out for ice cream before dinner!

## CAROL GETZ OFFICE COORDINATOR

Carol directs students to healthcare resources and upcoming opportunities. She enjoys welcoming the students who pass through the Health Professions Office with a friendly smile, encouraging words, and home baked goodies.



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# Choosing a Major

All students regardless of their major are welcome and encouraged to meet with the director and utilize the department resources. Students of any major can attend a health profession graduate program. Some students prefer majors that have the most overlap in required major courses and the pre-requisite courses for the intended health field. Others prefer to study an area outside of the sciences to provide diversity to their understanding of individuals, the general society and the determinant of health.

Very few schools, Wheaton College included, offer pre-med/pre-health majors. Students are encouraged to pursue a major in an area of study that is of personal interest to them.

There is the perception that pre-health students must concentrate their studies in math and science and that humanities and social science concentrators are less competitive candidates for health professional school. A strong academic record in math and science will be necessary but you are not required to major in a math or science discipline and there is significant value in embracing a well-rounded liberal arts academic experience. Selecting a major is not required until fall semester of your second year. You should choose a major based on questions like:

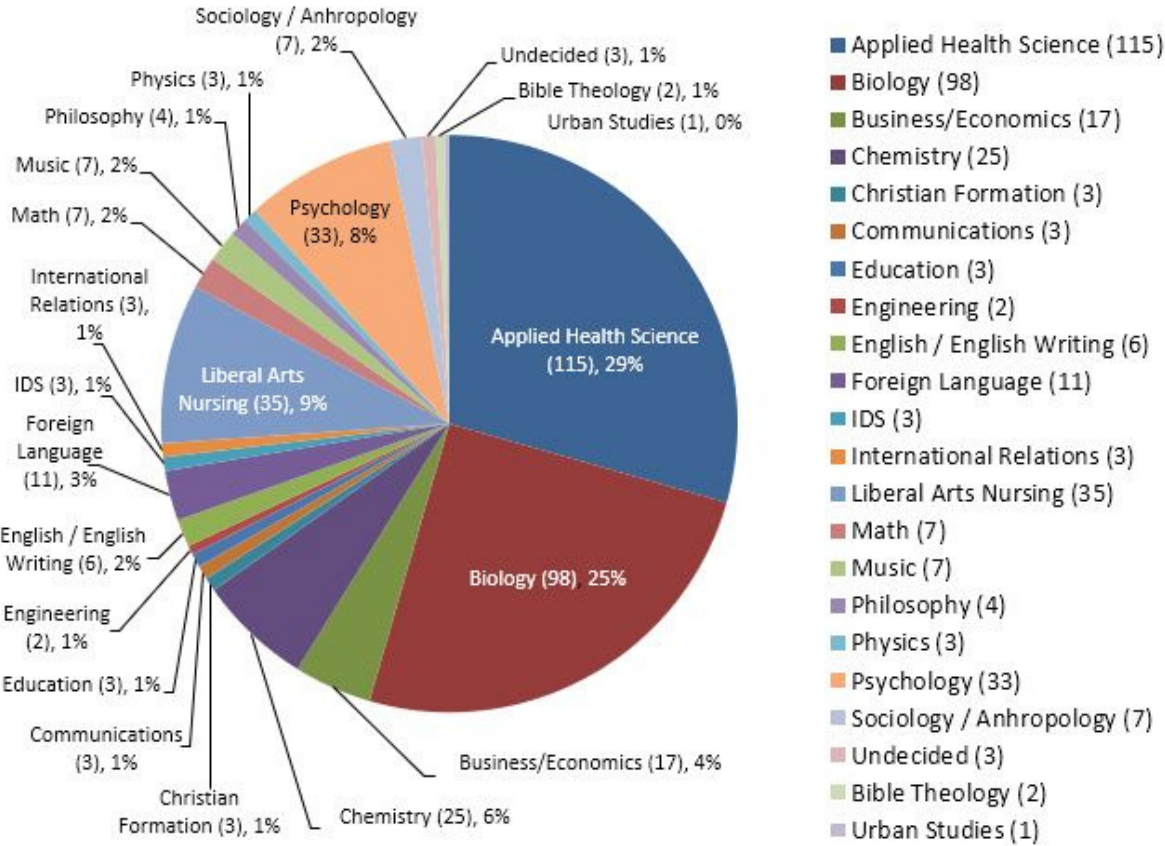
- What discipline is most interesting to you?
- Which field will best draw on your talents and abilities?
- What do you want to study in your independent work?

Although, Applied Health Science and Biology are the most popular majors for pre-health students, it is important to choose the best major for your specific interests and goals. The chart on the following page shares the majors of pre-health students for the past academic year.

# 2021-2022 Health Professions Student Roster by Major

377 students

Note: 14 students have double majors



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# Course Planning

One of the primary questions asked by first-year students is what classes do I take? The answer to this is a combination of your future goals and thoughts about a major, prior academic preparation and what responsibilities you have this first semester.

Lab courses are time consuming. Consider well if you take one lab course or two in the first year. Typically students begin with Biology (BIOL 241) however, you could adapt this based upon your major choice. Often the question becomes do you also take Chemistry. If you believe your preparation in at least one of these areas was strong prior to college, you may take both. Taking only one lab course allows time to adjust to the college workload. Spreading out the science courses also increases the likelihood of doing well in these courses. Though, many students feel well prepared based upon their high school education to take two sciences lab courses. Students planning to major in Biology, Chemistry, or Physics, taking two science lab courses in the first semester can be beneficial. Students should consult the Major Academic Plan (MAP) for their intended major. If you find the course too much early on, talk to your professor, TA or the Health Professions office about strategies and options.

Along with the major courses, students will also take pre-requisite courses to apply to the professional area (Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, etc.) of their choosing. In many cases, there is a common core of pre-requisite courses. Additional courses may be required in addition to those listed. Students are responsible to ensure they take all the necessary courses to apply and demonstrate readiness for the program and entrance exams (MCAT, DAT, GRE etc.). Specific information about various programs, core requirements and resources follow.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER ON CAMPUS

- Meet with your faculty advisor and pre-health advisor – understand your major requirements and how they may overlap with pre-requisite course requirements.
- Utilize the many resources available to you.
- Remember that your introductory science classes often are content in future entrance exams (MCAT, DAT, etc.). Study for content understanding, not just the upcoming exam.
- Talk to your family and friends about your strengths and abilities.
- Talk with others, potentially those who are interested in similar areas.

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# Health Professions Courses

Courses offered at Wheaton to explore various health professions, provide practical experiential learning opportunities, and enhance your understanding of pertinent healthcare topics include:

## SCI 201: Health Professions and Society

This course is designed to help students gain a deeper understanding of the variety of professions impacting the healthcare environment today. Emphasis is placed upon the skills and attributes needed to effectively prepare for entry into the professions. Students will explore health care history, health disparities, healthcare delivery, and culture as it relates to healthcare practice, inter-professional collaboration and professionalism. This course is intended for first year students.

## SCI 291: Health Professions Colloquium

This course provides a variety of topical discussions on issues relevant to work in the healthcare profession today. Dialogue and reflection upon the impact of the Christian faith and issues of medical ethics and care of various patient populations included. Discussions and assignments will prepare students for application to health profession programs. This course is open to students in their junior and senior year.

# Exploring Health Professions

The Health Professions office is available to help students investigate their healthcare interests. Also, the [Explore Health Careers](#) site is a free, multi-disciplinary, interactive health careers website designed to explain the array of health professions and provide easy access to students seeking information about health careers.

# Schoology - Learning Management System

Available to all Health Professions students, includes the following resources:

- Experiential Learning Opportunities
- Upcoming Online and Virtual Events
- Health Professions YouTube channel highlighting clips from virtual meetings, alumni panels, and healthcare specialties
- Summer Experience and Gap Year Opportunities
- Graduate School Test Prep Resources and Information
- Wheaton in Network - Connecting with Alumni



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **I'm an entering freshman, what classes should I take and in what order for my course of study?**

During the summer orientation /advising process, you will receive information from the Academic Advising office regarding the major you listed on your application. The choice of classes is a blending of college and major requirements and those needed for graduate professional health study. In many cases, some classes will be requirements for both the college major and health professional school pre-requisites.

## **How do I get an appointment with a Pre-Health Advisor?**

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment with Candice Eisenhauer, Health Professions Director, please email [health.professions@wheaton.edu](mailto:health.professions@wheaton.edu) or stop into the office in Meyer Science Center, 104 to setup a meeting.

## **What professional connections and support are available through the Wheaton College Health Professions office?**

The Health Professions office provides an array of support services and opportunities to enhance and facilitate the students' formation of a pathway to the health profession of their choosing. One-on-one advising, small group workshops, and events are aimed to help explore and understand the healthcare environment. We also host a mock interview evening with local alumni to help hone interviewing skills. When it comes time to apply to health professions schools, we will be there to help.

We regularly bring in Wheaton alumni from healthcare fields to share their experience, and resources are provided to help students find volunteer opportunities in the community.

The Pre-Health Club is a student ministry, which connects students with ways to serve in health professions environments (clinics, etc.) and prepare for professional school and other scientific fields. The club offers students unique opportunities through mentoring, volunteer opportunities within the surrounding community, and events each year designed to provide students with the resources and skills necessary to succeed in their chosen field of study.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What kinds of skills and experiences are professional schools looking for in a competitive candidate?**

Students may begin as early as freshman or sophomore year volunteering and/or shadowing professionals in their field of interest. Professional programs will be looking for students with good problem solving and critical thinking skills, and effective oral and written communication. Working in healthcare is very collaborative, therefore it is essential to have experience working successfully together with others. It is important to demonstrate you have the intellectual (or academic) ability to handle the demands of a graduate level health program AND personal qualities that enable you to interact well with patients, their families and other healthcare professionals.

## **When should I apply to professional school?**

Wheaton College provides four full years of undergraduate support to prepare students for applying to professional school. Strong applicants can apply between the junior and senior year of undergraduate study. However, many students choose to take a GAP year (or more) for a variety of reasons. Your application timeline can be discussed with your pre-health advisor. Alumni are welcome to utilize the Health Professions office as well.

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# Aspects of the Application

## Academics

Many schools will report the average GPA and test scores of their admitted students. If your scores suggest that you may not be competitive for that particular program you may want to schedule some time with your pre-health advisor to discuss options and/or other programs. Your academic profile is only part of the whole picture when it comes to being a competitive candidate. Most programs are looking for well-rounded individuals who have a strong personal motivation for the profession, meaningful service practices, experience interacting with others – specifically those from a variety of backgrounds and engagement with the healthcare field.

## Service

Working in the Healthcare field requires a service orientation and mindset. Demonstrating that you care about others, specifically those outside of family and friends is important. You will have many opportunities throughout your undergraduate education to participate in service initiatives. The Health Professions office lists opportunities on their Schoology site. Some of these opportunities are on-campus, some are off-campus and some are virtual. Take some time to review the opportunities, seek out experiences that align with your values and interests and look for opportunities that will broaden your awareness of social and cultural factors that can influence health and/or access to healthcare.

## Health-Related Experience

Because you are considering a career in healthcare you should have experiences demonstrating your commitment to helping those in medical need. Admissions committees are looking for students who have a genuine interest in the field of study they are applying to and the best way to demonstrate that interest is through volunteering and/or shadowing in that field. Some programs require hands-on experience and direct patient contact, some programs require only observation. Please review the healthcare experience requirements carefully for your program of choice and get an early start on looking for opportunities to fulfill your experiential learning hours. The Health Professions office has a comprehensive list of summer shadowing and internship opportunities for your review. Summer is a great time to concentrate on service and observation experiences as you likely have more time to invest in such efforts. These opportunities can be found on the Health Professions Schoology site.

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# Aspects of the Application

## Research

Research is another way you can deepen your personal and professional experience. Many Natural Sciences faculty members offer research opportunities for students. You can reach out to faculty directly to inquire about opportunities and express interest in working with them in field research. This may feel intimidating at first, but this action can demonstrate you are a mature student who takes initiative and seeks out new challenges. Think about ways you can prepare before the conversation as well. Take some time to review the faculty web pages to learn about the type of research conducted. You are welcome to seek out non-science faculty and those outside of Wheaton College as well. There are several opportunities each summer for students to engage in research outside of Wheaton. Some programs seek students with more experience and others are designed for first- and second-year students. The Schoology site will share updated opportunities in December each year for the upcoming summer. Research is about understanding what is known and thinking about what is unknown. What can be discovered? What questions do we want to ask about what we know and do not know yet?

## Transcripts

Professional schools utilize undergraduate transcripts to verify your degree and GPA and to ensure you have completed all prerequisite coursework. Transcripts can be ordered through the registrar's office. Most (if not all) programs require transcripts from all institutes of Higher Education you have attended or have credit from (dual enrollment classes in high school).

## Application Fees

Application fees vary by application and institution. In most cases, there is a fee for each program you apply to in the central service. At times, the individual programs will also apply a fee. Prepare early for the cost of the application process. For students who demonstrate financial need many application services and some programs waive or reduce the cost of application fees.

## Admission Exams

Almost all health professional schools require entrance exams as part of the application process. In some cases, there is a limited number of test dates so watch dates carefully and be sure to schedule your test date with enough time to prepare and retake if necessary. However, best practice is to prepare well and take the exam once. Each attempt is tracked and programs see each attempt score.

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# Aspects of the Application

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN THINKING ABOUT APPLYING

- Can you academically and intellectually demonstrate you can handle the rigor of a professional program?
- Can you clearly articulate why you want to be a health care professional and have meaningful experiences that demonstrate your interest in healthcare and serving others?
- Can you identify individuals who know you well enough to speak positively on your behalf —advocating for your abilities? Can they provide examples of your skills, talents and character?

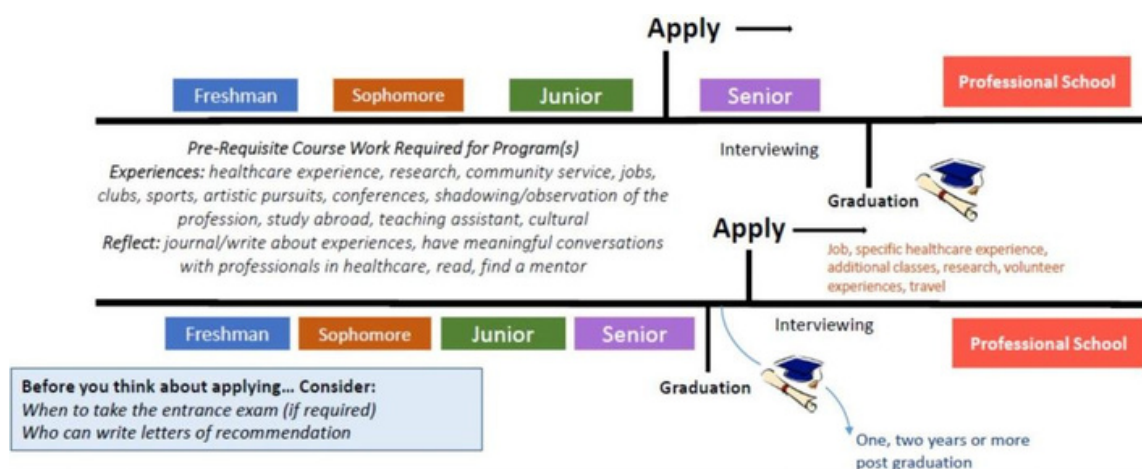
# Application Process and Requirements

Most professional programs utilize an application service to facilitate the initial process to apply to their program. These systems are similar to the Common Application for college admissions.

- AACOMAS: American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine Application Service
- AACPMAS: American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine Application Service
- AADSAS: Associated American Dental School Application Service
- AMCAS: American Medical College Application Service
- CASPA: Central Application Service for Physician Assistants
- OptomCAS: Optometry Central Application Service
- OTCAS: Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service
- PTCAS: Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service
- SOPHAS: Schools and Programs of Public Health Application Service
- TMSAS: Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service
- VMCAS: Veterinary Medical College Application Service

Each application will request information regarding your academic performance, service/volunteer experience and experiential learning/shadowing experience. Specific requirements and timelines are detailed on the Central Application site and/or program website. It is your responsibility to pay close attention to application requirements and timelines. It's never too early to start keeping track of your own meaningful experiences and thinking about how these experiences have prepared you well for a career in healthcare so you can articulate them well when you apply to your program of choice.

## Professional School Application Timelines



# Closing

Additional information about the Health Professions office can be found at <https://www.wheaton.edu//healthprofessions/>

We look forward to meeting and working alongside you as you explore health professions.

**Meyer Science Center - 104**  
**health.professions@wheaton.edu**  
**630.752.5193**

