FAQs for Pre-Health Professional Students

Do health professional schools prefer a science major?

No. The pre-requisites for the professional school can be completed with the degree plan for any major. You should choose a major that interests and motivates you to academically excel.

What is the average GPA required to be accepted into a professional health school?

There are several factors the admissions committee uses to determine acceptance and this will vary by school. However, most students matriculating have GPAs from 3.4-3.8 with dental and medical schools being on the higher end. It is also important to keep your Science GPA (BCMP: Biology, Chemistry, Math, and Physics) high and have a high standardized test score (MCAT, PCAT, etc.) in order to be a competitive applicant. Always check with the specific professional school for additional data and information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2017-2018 Average GPAs for Medical School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>APPLICANTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science GPA</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Science GPA</td>
<td>3.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total GPA</td>
<td>3.56</td>
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SOURCE: Association of American Medical Colleges

*Mатriculates to Texas Medical Schools typically have a higher GPA

If I maintain a high GPA and score high on my entrance test (MCAT, DAT, PCAT, GRE, OAT, etc.) am I guaranteed acceptance?

No. While a high GPA and test score do strengthen your chances of acceptance, most schools expect numerous hours of clinical experience. Volunteering, leadership skills, and research are highly considered. Other factors include, your personal statement, letters of evaluation, and interview results. JAMP students are the exception. JAMP students that meet and maintain the programs’ criteria are guaranteed admission into a Texas medical school.
What courses are recommended in addition to the pre-requisites required?

Most professional schools encourage a well rounded curriculum. Behavioral and upper level sciences such as Psychology, Sociology, Human Anatomy/Physiology, Genetics, Microbiology, Cell Physiology, Immunology, and Virology are typically highly recommended if not already required. Humanities courses such as economics, ethics, foreign languages, history, philosophy, and public speaking are also valuable. Always check with the specific professional school for the specific requirements and recommended courses.

How can I gain clinical experience?

Most professional schools highly recommend (if not expect) hands-on patient care experiences. Examples include: emergency medical technician (EMT), paramedic, nurse, scribe, medical assistant, certified nursing assistant (CNA), emergency room technician (ER tech), physical therapist assistant, phlebotomist, pharmacy technician, dental assisting, clinical research assistant, and athletic trainer. Most require certification, therefore getting an early start is essential! Shadowing working professionals in the field is also highly recommended. Be sure to add a range of different healthcare setting experiences (breath) including expertise in one (depth).

Where and when do I apply to a Health Profession School?

This will be based on your unique situation. Typically, most students apply near the end of their junior year after taking the required entrance test or the year prior to expected admission. For more details on the application process, click on the underlined link(s) corresponding to your health interest:

- Texas Medical, Dental and Veterinary Schools (except Baylor & UIW) - TMDSAS
- US Medical Schools (excluding Texas) & Baylor College of Medicine - AMCAS
- US Dental Schools (excluding Texas) - AADSAS
- US Osteopathic Schools (excluding Texas) & UIW - AACOMAS
- Physician Assistant Schools - CASPA
- Pharmacy Schools - PharmCAS
- Optometry School - OptomCAS
- US Veterinary Schools - VMCAS
- Orthotics & Prosthetics - OPCAS
- Public Health Schools - SOPHAS
- Occupational Therapy & Occupational Therapy Assistant Schools - OTCAS & OTACAS
- Physical Therapy Schools - PTCAS

When should I take my MCAT, PCAT, DAT, GRE, OAT, etc.?

There are several factors that must be considered before choosing a test date. You must take into account the year you plan on entering the professional school, application deadlines, dates the test is offered, and, most important, your level of preparedness. For example, most pre-med and pre-dental students are recommended take the MCAT/DAT in the spring of the year they are applying to medical/dental school. (1 year prior to entry year) It is also highly recommended to have all the test pre-requisites completed in addition to ample preparation. Please visit the
professional schools’ website for application deadlines and suggested timelines. Contact your health professions advisor if you are unsure when you should schedule your test.

What is the best way to prepare for my MCAT, PCAT, DAT, GRE, OAT, etc.?

This will depend on your learning style. However, data shows taking and reviewing 8-10 practice tests is very advantageous. There are test prep courses offered by several companies such as Kaplan and Princeton Review. Do your research to choose the best one for you. It is always beneficial to start early and spread your preparation over several months. Do NOT “cram”.

Am I required to apply to the Health Professions Advisor Committee (HPAC)?

No. However, an HPAC endorsement may be beneficial to your Health Professional School Application. Students typically apply the same year they are applying to the professional school. Applications open in December and close in February. This cover sheet must accompany all evaluations submitted to the HPAC: [HPAC Letter of Evaluation Form](#).

I already have a baccalaureate degree. Am I required to obtain another degree to be accepted into a professional school?

No. The pre-requisites can be completed as a non-degree seeking student, sometimes also referred to as a transient student. You do have the option of obtaining a second degree. The best choice will depend on your unique situation. Students seeking a second degree may be eligible for some forms of financial aid if taking at least a half-time course load (6 credit hours per semester).

- If you are a graduate of UTA and you want to come back to UTA, please follow the directions for a Returning Student on the [UTA Returning Student Admissions](#) web site.
- If you are a graduate of another university and you want to come to UTA as a post-bacc seeking a second undergraduate degree, please follow the directions for a Transfer Student on the [UTA Transfer Admissions](#) web site.
- If you are a graduate of another university and you want to come to UTA as a post-bacc non-degree seeking student, please follow the directions for a Visiting Student on the [UTA Visiting Student Admissions](#) web site.
Do your RESEARCH! Additional Resources:

**Professional Health Organizations: (Note: this is not an inclusive list)**

Dentistry:  
www.ada.org, www.adea.org

Medicine:  

Medicine, Chiro:  
www.chirocolleges.org

Medicine, Osteo:  
www.aacom.org

Optometry:  
www.opted.org

Pharmacy:  
www.aacp.org

Physician Assistant:  

Veterinary Medicine:  

**Allied Health Programs:**

Clinical Dietetics:  
UT Southwestern

Dental Hygiene:  
All Texas Programs

Medical Technology:  
UT Arlington

Occupational Therapy:  
All US Programs

Physical Therapy:  
All Texas Programs

Prosthetics and Orthotics:  
UT Southwestern Medical Center - Dallas

Public Health:  
UNT Health Science Center – Fort Worth

Careers in Healthcare:  
Explore Numerous Healthcare Careers

**Scholarships:**

UTA  
www.uta.edu/fao/scholarships

Next Step  
https://www.nextstepu.com

**Experience, Research and Volunteering Opportunities:**

UTA  
Careers  
Research  
Volunteer

Association of American Medical Colleges  
Summer Programs

National Science Foundation  
Research Opportunities

UT Southwestern  
Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship

**On-Campus Pre-Health Professional Organizations** (Visit mavorgs.edu for a complete list)

American Dental Association, Global Medical Training, Health Occupations Students of America, Medical and Dental Preparatory Association, Pre-Dental Society, Pre-Optometry Professional Society, Pre-Pharmacy Association, Pre-Physician Assistant Organization, Minority Association of Premedical Students