

Department of Biology

General Requirements for a Career in the Health Professions

There are 4 factors that are necessary to be a successful applicant:

1) **High GPA.** This varies depending on the type of professional school. For most medical schools, the mean GPA is at least 3.6

2) **High Scores on Standardized Exams** (MCAT, DAT, OAT, PCAT, GRE)

3) **Volunteer/Work Experience/Leadership Activities**

4) **Great Letters of Evaluation.** Most schools would prefer a recommendation letter from a committee. UT Tyler has a committee (Health Professions Advisory Committee) who writes letters of recommendation for premedical, dental, veterinary, optometry, podiatry, and pharmacy students. This letter is based partially on evaluation forms submitted by your professors, so it is of great importance to get to know your professors. It is absolutely critical that the student give individual evaluators their credentials, activities, experiences, their personal circumstances and their accomplishments.

What are admissions committees looking for in Letters of Evaluation?

- Candid and honest information
- Social skills
- Classroom didactics (approach to coursework, teaching of peers, grades)
- Personal characteristics (reliability, empathy, altruism, leadership, motivation, professionalism)
- Exposure to medicine
 - Shadowing (quantity, quality and vanishing opportunity)
 - Volunteering
 - Medical Missions

Common Requirements for Pre-Dentistry, Medicine (Allopathic, Osteopathic, Chiropractic), Veterinary Medicine, Optometry, Podiatry, Pharmacy

BIOL 1306/1106 (General Biology I & Lab)

BIOL 1307/1107 (General Biology II & Lab)

BIOL 3334/3134 (Cell Biology & Lab)

BIOL 4300/4101 (Microbiology & Lab)

BIOL 3343/3144 (Physiology & Lab)

CHEM 1311/1111 (Gen. Chem. I & Lab)

CHEM 1312/1112 (Gen. Chem. II & Lab)

CHEM 3342/3143 (Org. Chem. I & Lab)

CHEM 3344/3145 (Org. Chem. II & Lab)

*CHEM 4334/4135 (Biochemistry)

PHYS 1301/1101 (College Physics I without Calculus)

OR

PHYS 2325/2125 (University Physics I with Calculus)

PHYS 1302/1102 (College Physics II without Calculus)

OR

PHYS 2326/2126 (University Physics II with Calculus)

**MATH 1342 (Statistics)

**MATH 2413 (Calculus)

**CHE 4332/4135 is required for Dentistry, Optometry, Veterinary, Pharmacy and Medicine

** MATH 1342 or 2413 is required for Medicine or Veterinary Medicine, MATH 1342 AND 2413 for Pharmacy or Optometry

Some schools require specific courses and hours in Humanities or Social Sciences. Consult individual schools for information on requirements. In particular, many pharmacy schools have very specific requirements, which include courses in economics.

Although most professional schools will accept AP credit in lieu of these courses, not all will. Contact the school(s) you are interested in, or look online, to find out if they will accept AP credits. In the case of some schools, if they accept AP credits they will want to see additional courses taken in that subject area. For most professional schools your GPA will be calculated as *Overall GPA* as well as *Science & Math GPA*. Courses taken for AP credit do not have a grade averaged into your GPA. NOTE: Professional schools will take some AP credit but they also would like to see upper-level course work in those areas that AP credit was given.

Admission Tests Required for Professional Schools

Almost all professional schools require an admissions test which is taken after all science prerequisites have been completed and about one year prior the date you intend to start professional school. For most students the appropriate test(s) should be taken the spring of their junior year.

- DAT - Required for Dental Schools
- GRE - Required for P.A. and Veterinary Schools
- MCAT - Required for M.D., D.O., and Podiatry Schools
- OAT - Required for Schools of Optometry
- PCAT - Required for most Pharmacy Schools

GPA Requirements

Professional schools calculate at least two GPA's. They all will calculate an overall GPA. Many also will calculate a Math & Science GPA. They will calculate these GPAs based on ALL the post-secondary classes that you have ever taken. If you did Dual Enrollment with a college while in high school, all those courses will count in your overall GPA. If you have repeated a course and used the "Forgiveness Policy" to replace the grade in your GPA, many of the professional schools (such as medical schools) will now use all the grades---there is no such thing as "forgiveness." For those of you who have transferred to UT Tyler, although your UT Tyler GPA does not include these courses, these transfer courses will now be used when your new GPA is computed. Therefore, it is very important that you realize that the grade for every class you take, and have taken, will impact your GPA.

Similarly, professional schools will see if you have dropped or withdrawn from classes. Many students have the habit of signing up for 15 or 18 credits with the intent of dropping one of the classes prior to the drop date. However, the grade of W is then recorded on the transcript. Students should avoid excessive W grades. Professional schools also need to see that you are capable of carrying a full-time load. Therefore, you should avoid taking only 1-3 courses per semester.

For students who are working on a second degree, medical schools will calculate your GPA's separately for undergraduate and graduate degrees. All post-baccalaureate courses will appear on a separate line on the application, but if they are undergraduate courses, they will be included with the undergraduate GPA. If they are post-baccalaureate graduate courses in a graduate program, they will have their own GPA.

Gaining Experience and Exposure to Your Chosen Profession

All professional schools expect that you know what the profession is all about. This experience may be obtained through volunteer or paid positions, and should involve patient contact. It is not sufficient to work in the billing office of a hospital, for example. Many students shadow physicians, work in Emergency Rooms, etc.

This volunteer/work experience should be as long as possible, certainly more than a single day or a few weeks. In the case of Veterinary Medicine, experience with all types of animals (small, large, and exotic) is expected. Many otherwise well-qualified applicants do not get accepted because they do not have sufficient experience in their chosen profession.