



Going to the next level: health professions programs

So you're in college now. And you've chosen a health career field that requires specialized training, like nursing, physician assistant, physical therapy, or medicine—just to name a few. **IF** you aren't already in your health professions degree program, then you most likely will have to complete an application to be accepted into the program. Health care training programs can be very competitive, so your work to prepare is not over, even though you've reached college. Here are some things you need to do.

Academic Preparation

 Meet with your academic advisor regularly to make sure that you are on schedule to take all the courses you need to get into your desired health care training program.

 Check the admissions requirements for the health care degree program at each college or university that you are interested in applying to. Make sure that you've taken all the college courses that they require.

 Concentrate on excellence your first few semesters. It can be hard to raise a GPA if you've goofed around and gotten very poor grades your first year. Not impossible, but can be really challenging! So **STUDY, STUDY, STUDY!**

Retake any classes with poor grades.

 Select a major based on your skills and interests. You do not have to major in science, but you do need a strong science foundation. For most health careers, especially ones that are direct patient care or research oriented, you need to develop a strong background in natural sciences.

 Prepare in advance for entrance exams like the MCAT (medical school), PCAT (pharmacy school), GRE or GMAT (general graduate school), etc. There are review courses available to help you.

 Consider taking foreign language classes, like Spanish, so that you are better able to communicate with the people you will be serving.

College Lingo

Professor- view this person like you would your teachers in high school.

Syllabus- outline of each class, determined by the professor.

Advisor- this person helps you plan out your class schedule *You will have to register for your own classes; they will not be selected and given to you. For most colleges, you register for your classes online.

Course number- each class has a course number so you register for the appropriate level of class, freshmen or senior.

Prerequisite- lower level course that must be taken in order to get into advanced courses.

Major- your selected main course of study *With pre-med, pre-nursing, or any pre-health professions track you cannot graduate with a degree in "pre-"med; sometimes students may jump from their undergraduate program into the next level without getting a Bachelor's degree. But most of the time, even though you are pre-Med or pre-Pharmacy or pre-PT, you will need to select a course of study like Biology, Biochemistry, Exercise Sports Science, etc. to earn your Bachelor's degree first.

Minor- your second main course of study; you can have double minors or even double majors. You are not required to have a minor.

Commencement- graduation ceremony.

Academic probation-you can be put on this if your GPA falls below the college's standards.