Pre-med/health career preparation at Oberlin College

One step at a time.

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Outline

• Introduction
• Course planning
• Non-academic preparations
A wide variety of careers are included in the health professions:

Human Health:

Direct patient care
- Physician/surgeon
- Nurse
- Physician Assistant
- Physical Therapist
- Dentistry
- Podiatry

- Pharmacy
- Genetic counselor
- Optometry
Other health careers

Animal Health:
- Veterinarian

Public Health/Global Heath: local, regional, national or international.

- [https://www.apha.org/what-is-public-health](https://www.apha.org/what-is-public-health)
- [https://sophas.org/](https://sophas.org/)
What sorts of skills, experiences and traits are desired in these careers?

- Knowledge of specific academic areas: content learning
- Knowledge of the field and related experiences
- Communications and interpersonal skills
- Understanding of social determinants of health and compassion
- Leadership/service/teamwork
- Resilience/adaptability/integrity
- Ethical understanding/respect for differing viewpoints/values
Oberlin’s liberal arts training is perfectly suited to pre-health careers

- Combination of science training, communication skills, understanding of how humans act as individuals and in groups
- Winter terms, co-curricular and summer experiences are great ways to develop non-academic skills
- Learning environment is supportive and team oriented
- Faculty and staff teach with an interdisciplinary mindset
Knowledge of specific academic areas: content learning

• The starting years are very similar for all these careers.
• All require at least a year of chemistry and introductory biology.
• Physics and English are VERY common.
You can be any major and be pre-health

• Fulfilling pre-health requirements can also be part of your major if you choose one that overlaps with required classes, but this is not necessary.

• The course requirements are a substantial number of courses, so leave room in your schedule, about 2 in most semesters some years.
There is not just one path

- Your journey should evolve as you grow and explore

- Be open to learning, challenge and growth
Course selection
Where to start

• Do NOT overwhelm yourself right away! Slow and steady works better for almost all.

• Everyone should take a First Year Seminar (FYS).

• There is no need to enroll in multiple science and/or math classes your first semester.

• Starting with Chemistry has some advantages.
  – Chemistry requirements are vertical and you must start sequence in the fall.
Chemistry path is vertical and must be begun in the fall

• 1 year of Chemistry: Chem 101 in Fall and *then* 102 in Spring
Another uncommon but possible option: Chem. 103

- For those who have exceptionally strong science backgrounds, perhaps high AP in both Bio. and Chem.

- Review this option with your individual advisor and proceed with caution.
First semester options

FALL: recommended

Free choices:

First Year Seminar

Chem 101

Or for a few

Chem 103
(req. calc. pre-or co-req.)
Additional **STEM** pre-med science requirements for later years

- At least one more year of chemistry: including organic and bioorganic
- At least 2 biology courses: including a 200-level molecular, cellular biology & biochemistry class (requires one year of chemistry and biology 100)
- One year of physics
Biology does not allow you to use AP credit to replace the introductory class.

- Everyone starts with Biology 100
- Offered in every semester
First year suggestions

IF Fall’s good

FALL

First Year Seminar

Chem 101

??

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SPRING

Chem 102

Biol 100
“Requirements”

• Pre-medical requirements are less common than you might think; recommendations are more common. The entrance exam assesses your understanding of desired content, but many classes help you prepare.

• Other patient directed careers: nursing, PA, Vet, PT require longer and more detailed set of classes

• For public health: quite variable but stats is highly desirable.
What are non-science “requirements”*?

• For many pre-health professions you need an “English” class but that can include some non-English department classes
  – Rhetoric - Comp. Lit (in English)
  – Creative Writing

• Math: 1-2 semesters (somewhat variable depending on school): STATS! (and maybe Calculus)
  • Psychology research methods counts as Stats

Pre-med students:
• Introductory level Psychology (& maybe Sociology)
* there is variation among medical schools, many schools recommend a “behavioral” class: psychology, sociology, anthropology
Explore how to develop the essential “non-academic” skills

• See https://www.aamc.org/services/admissions-lifecycle/competencies-entering-medical-students

• Think and reflect on these

• How can you develop them in a manner that is fulfilling and genuine for you?
Contact me via email
to be on my email list

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