Why study in a Pre-Professional Health program at Benedictine?

When you decide to prepare for a health-related career at Benedictine, you will be assisted by a faculty advisor and members of the Benedictine University Health Sciences Recommendations Committee. The committee is comprised of faculty members who are interested in pre-professional studies and have special knowledge of the academic subjects and qualifications needed for a career in allopathic or osteopathic medicine, chiropractics, dentistry, nursing, optometry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, veterinary medicine, pharmacy or podiatry.

A pre-professional program is a series of courses prescribed in addition to other requirements for your degree in a specific major. These courses satisfy the entrance requirements for most professional schools. You can choose any major. Most professional schools have no preference, so your choices should be based on your own interests. Your grades may be better if you are interested in your major, and grades are important in competing for admission to professional school. Your major can help you begin a satisfying career. While more students enter medical and dental schools as biology or chemistry majors, they are not given first priority by the professional schools. It is because more students in these disciplines apply than others. You can acquire a solid background in science at Benedictine without being a science major. No matter what your major, you will benefit from a well-balanced education that is strong in the humanities and social sciences because of the interdisciplinary core all students complete. Professional schools want students who know and understand themselves, society and the culture around them.

The director of Pre-Professional Health programs can assist you throughout your preparation for your professional career. The health care education office provides numerous resources such as video tapes, catalogs, testing packets (DAT, GRE, MCAT, PCAT, OAT), application information (AMCAS, ADAS, VMCAS, ACOMAS, AAPPMAS, CASPA, OTCAS, OptomCAS, PharmCAS) and general information representing many of the professional schools across the country.

Practicum/Clinical Experiences

Students pursuing a degree in Health Science may earn credit hours during their junior or senior years observing in a department of a hospital, medically oriented industry or private practice where they are assigned to clinical preceptors by the Benedictine University director of Pre-Professional Health Programs. Written reports of your experiences will be reviewed by the director at frequencies of mutual agreement. Through this, you may relate academic materials to your applications in the clinic and determine through immediate contact with your chosen field whether you want to continue in them. These practica do not ensure clinical certification.

Pre-Chiropractic

We strongly recommend that you complete the four-year bachelor’s degree program. You should follow programs for the major in Biochemistry, Health Science or Biology, since most of the chiropractic schools require credit hours in biology, chemistry, physics and at least 30 semester credits in humanities and social science. The mean cumulative GPA is 3.400 (on a 4-point scale). Admission requirements at individual chiropractic programs and institutions may exceed these minimums. Application is made to each individual chiropractic school.

You should arrange for interviews and a subsequent letter of recommendation from the Health Sciences Recommendation Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year.
Pre-Professional Health

Pre-Dental
If you are seeking a career in dentistry, you should plan to complete a four-year degree program. Most dental schools require one year of organic chemistry, one year of physics; and biology courses including genetics, anatomy, embryology and physiology. We recommend that your courses include genetics, anatomy, microbiology, physiology, biochemistry and calculus. The Dental Admission Test (DAT) is now computer-based testing and should be taken during the spring/summer of your junior year of college. The mean score of the DAT and the cumulative GPA of those students who are accepted to dental school is approximately 21 and 3.500, respectively.

You should arrange to be interviewed by members of the Health Sciences Recommendation Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year at Benedictine University. We recommend that you apply to dental schools through the ADEA Associated American Dental Schools Application Service during the summer before your senior year.

Pre-Medical
If you are seeking a career in medicine, you should plan to complete four years of college. To be a well-qualified candidate, you should have a strong foundation in basic science and mathematics with advanced science courses that emphasize biology or biochemistry. We offer a wide selection of appropriate advanced courses, including histology, immunology, endocrinology, cell biology, nutrition, microbiology, biochemistry and intermediary metabolism. Medical schools are now placing increased emphasis on humanities courses and volunteerism in the community and at the University.

The Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is now administered by computer and should be taken during the spring of your junior year. The mean MCAT score for students accepted to medical schools is approximately 125 or better in each section of the exam and the mean cumulative GPA is 3.500 or better (on a 4-point scale).

You should arrange for interviews from the Health Sciences Recommendations Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year at Benedictine University. We recommend that you apply to medical school through the American Medical College Application Service or to osteopathic medical school through the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) Application Service the summer prior to your senior year.

Pre-Occupational Therapy
You should plan to complete your Benedictine University degree as a Health Science or Psychology major with a concentration in Occupational Therapy and continue your education in an entry-level master’s degree program in occupational therapy. In addition to your set curriculum, you will be required to complete a medical terminology course, a first aid course, CPR certification and have a minimum of 50 clinical hours of observation. When applying to occupational therapy schools, we recommend submitting applications through the Occupational Therapist Centralized Application Service (OTCAS).

Pre-Optometry
Although it is possible to enter optometry school after three years, we recommend that you plan to complete four years of college. To be a well-qualified candidate, you should have a strong foundation in basic science and mathematics, including calculus with advanced science courses that emphasize biology or biochemistry. We recommend that you follow suggested programs of study for Biology, Health Science or Biochemistry/Molecular Biology majors and take the Optometry College Admission Test (OAT) during the spring semester of your junior year at Benedictine University. The mean OAT score for a student accepted into optometry school is in the 50th percentile or better, and the mean cumulative GPA is 3.500 (on a 4-point scale). When applying to optometry schools, we recommend submitting applications through the Optometry Centralized Application Service (OptomCAS).

You will arrange for interviews and a letter of recommendation from the Health Sciences Recommendation Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year at Benedictine University.
Pre-Professional Health

Pre-Pharmacy
To enter pharmacy school, you should complete the first two years in the pre-pharmacy program. We recommend that you take the Pharmacy College Admissions Test during fall semester of your sophomore year. To apply for pharmacy school, we recommend that you earn a minimum GPA of 3.300 (on a 4-point scale). You will be required to take the PCAT test, and should apply to pharmacy school between January 1 and May 1 of your sophomore year. When applying to pharmacy schools, we recommend submitting applications through the Pharmacy College Application Service (PharmCAS).

Dual Acceptance Program (Chicago College of Pharmacy and Benedictine University)
The Chicago College of Pharmacy (CCP) at Midwestern University and Benedictine University have an agreement for a Dual Acceptance Program. Under the provisions of the agreement, selected students who successfully complete the specified coursework at Benedictine University will be granted an early acceptance to CCP. The number of reserved seats is not predetermined and will vary year to year depending on the size and quality of the applicant pool. See the Pre-Pharmacy academic program plan for more information.

Pre-Physical Therapy
Students seeking a career in physical therapy should plan to complete a degree in Health Science or Psychology. You will then be eligible to apply to an accredited doctoral program in physical therapy. Upon completion of your degree, you would be eligible to apply for and complete the licensing examination in Illinois and other states in physical therapy. You will also be required to take the GRE.

You will arrange for interviews and a letter of recommendation from the Health Sciences Recommendation Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year. When applying to pre-physical therapy schools, we recommend submitting applications through the Physical Therapist Centralized Application Service (PTCAS).

Pre-Physician Assistant
If you are seeking a career as a physician assistant, you should plan to complete four years of college. You should have a strong foundation in basic sciences of biology, chemistry, physiology, anatomy and microbiology, and a balance of studies in the applied behavioral sciences. A minimum GPA of 3.400 (on a 4-point scale) and a graduate admissions exam may be required. You will also be required to take the GRE. Most physician assistant schools require prior health care experience (example, 2,000 work hours).

You should arrange for interviews with the Health Sciences Recommendations Committee during the spring or fall of your junior year. When applying to pre-physicians assistants schools, we recommend submitting applications through the Central Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA).
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Pre-Podiatry
Although it is possible to enter podiatry school after three years of college, we strongly recommend that you complete the four-year bachelor’s degree. We suggest that you follow programs for the major in Biochemistry/Molecular Biology, Health Science or Biology, since most podiatry schools require 8 semester credit hours in biology, 16 in chemistry, 8 in physics and at least 30 semester credit hours in humanities and social science studies. We also recommend that you take the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) during the spring semester of your junior year at Benedictine University. The mean MCAT score for students accepted in colleges of podiatric medicine is approximately 125, and the mean cumulative GPA is 3.400 (on a 4-point scale). Applications should be made through the American Association of Colleges of Podiatric Medicine Application Service (AACPMA).

You should arrange for interviews and a subsequent letter of recommendation from the Health Sciences Recommendation Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year.

Pre-Veterinary
Illinois residents may apply to the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine after completing three years of college, but the majority of students accepted have earned a bachelor’s degree. We suggest that you follow the program for a major in Biology, Health Science or Biochemistry/Molecular Biology. Minimum requirements for veterinary school are 8 semester credit hours in biology, 16 in chemistry, 8 in physics, 3 in animal science and at least 30 semester credit hours in humanities and social science studies. The University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine recommends that you complete courses in genetics and biochemistry. We strongly recommend that you take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE) during the spring of your junior year. Apply to the Veterinary School in July with a deadline of October 1 through the Veterinary Medical Colleges Application Service (VMCAS). The mean cumulative GPA is approximately 3.500 (on a 4-point scale).

You should arrange for interviews and a subsequent letter of recommendation from the Health Sciences Recommendation Committee during the fall of your junior year or fall of your senior year.