

Pre-Professional Health

at Benedictine University

Why study in a pre-professional health program at Benedictine?

When you decide to study at Benedictine for a health-related career, you will be assisted by a faculty advisor and members of the Benedictine University health sciences recommendations committee. The committee is made up of faculty members who are interested in pre-professional studies and have special knowledge of the academic subjects and other qualifications you need if your goal is a career in allopathic or osteopathic medicine, chiropractic, 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 at Benedictine University could also become the beginning of a satisfying career if you choose not to go on to professional school. It is true that more students entering medical and dental schools are biology or chemistry majors, but that is because more students in these disciplines apply, not because these majors are given first priority by the professional schools. 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, 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 of which they are a part.

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 (MCAT, DAT, PCAT, OAT), application information (AMCAS, ADAS, VMCAS, AACOMAS) and general information representing many of the professional schools across the country.

Practicum/Clinical Experiences

Students pursuing a health science major may earn credit hours in their junior or senior years observing in a department of a hospital, medically-oriented industry or private practices, 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 practical do not ensure clinical certification.

Pre-Chiropractic

We strongly recommend that you complete the four-year bachelor's degree. You should follow programs for the major in biochemistry, health science or biology, since most of the chiropractic schools require six semester hours in biology, 12 in chemistry, six in physics and at least 30 semester credits in humanities and social science. The mean cumulative grade point average is 3.3 (A=4.0). 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 Science Recommendation Committee during the spring of your junior year or fall of your senior year.

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Pre-Dentistry

If you are seeking a career in dentistry, you should plan to complete a four-year degree program. Most dental schools require one year each of general chemistry, organic chemistry, physics and biology. We recommend that your courses include genetics, anatomy, microbiology, physiology, biochemistry and calculus. The Dental Aptitude 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 grade point average of those students who are accepted to dental school is approximately 19 and 3.5, respectively.

You should arrange to be interviewed by members of the Health Science 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 American Association of Dental Schools Application Service during the summer before your senior year.

Pre-Medicine

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 Admissions Test (MCAT) is now computer-based testing and should be taken during the spring/summer of your junior year. The mean MCAT score for students accepted to medical schools is approximately 10.0 and the mean cumulative grade point average is 3.5 (A=4.0).

You should arrange for interviews from the Health Science 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 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 and a minimum of 50 clinical-hours of observation.

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 the biology, health science or biochemistry majors and take the Optometry College Admissions 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 an average of 50th percentile or above, and the mean cumulative grade point average is 3.5 (A=4.0).

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

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Pre-Pharmacy

To enter pharmacy school, you should complete the first two years in the pre-pharmacy curriculum. We recommend that you take the Pharmacy College Admissions Test during October of your sophomore year. To apply for pharmacy school, we recommend that you earn a minimum grade point average of 3.3 (A=4.0). You should apply to the pharmacy school between January 1 and May 1 of your sophomore year.

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 major sheet for more information.

Pre-Physical Therapy

You should plan to complete a degree in health science or psychology. You will then be eligible to apply to an accredited doctorate program in physical therapy. Upon completion of your degree, you would be eligible to take the professional registry and the state licensing examination in physical therapy.

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

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, health science or biology, since most podiatry schools require eight semester credits in biology, 16 in chemistry, eight in physics and at least 30 semester credits in humanities and social science studies. We also recommend that you take the Medical College Admissions 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 8.0, and the mean cumulative grade point average is 3.4 (A=4.0). Applications should be made through the American Association of College of Podiatric Medicine Application Service.

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

Pre-Veterinary Medicine

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 or biochemistry. Minimum requirements for veterinary school are eight semester credits in biology, 16 in chemistry, eight in physics and at least 30 semester credits 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 grade point average is approximately 3.5 (A=4.0).

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