How do you confirm that you want to pursue a career in healthcare and choose which healthcare career is best for you? Take steps to learn more by actively pursuing activities that will help you explore the multitude of healthcare careers. Some suggested activities include: shadowing*, utilizing online resources like explorehealthcareers.org or explorecenter.unl.edu, volunteering*, gaining clinical experience*, and/or joining pre-health related student organizations at UNL. Meet often with your pre-health advisor to discuss your progress in exploring healthcare careers and to determine next steps.
Gaining clinical experience is a great way to prepare for a career in healthcare. While it’s helpful for every pre-health student, some professions, such as physician assistant, require clinical and patient care experience for acceptance into professional health schools. Common clinical experiences include, but are not limited to, CNA, EMT, phlebotomy, first responders, pharmacy tech, physical therapy tech, medical scribing, and other jobs that provide hands-on patient care.

Pre-health students can major in anything and be accepted to a professional health school. When it comes to admission to a professional health school, both science and non-science majors are equally acceptable. Explore your interests – your major shows professional health school admissions committees something about your academic interests outside of healthcare. Your major can enhance your career in healthcare (e.g. majors in business or Spanish) or also provide you with career options outside of the health field.

Shadowing
Shadowing allows you to observe the day-to-day life of a healthcare professional and determine if this is the right career path for you. Shadowing in multiple practice settings can help you gain insight into the variety and breadth of opportunities in this field. Shadowing is required or strongly encouraged for most applications to professional health school.

Volunteering
Start developing the compassion and service-orientation you will need as a future healthcare professional through volunteer work. Volunteer for organizations you care about and help people you genuinely feel compassion for. Resist the urge to volunteer just to check boxes – rather, think about ways you can offer your time and talents to make the world a better place. Consider volunteering in medical or non-medical settings, or both.

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Note: The above illustrates the most common bachelor’s degree requirement for each profession, but specific professional health schools vary as to whether they require a bachelor’s degree or not.

What should I major in?
Pre-health students can major in anything and be accepted to a professional health school. When it comes to admission to a professional health school, both science and non-science majors are equally acceptable. Explore your interests – your major shows professional health school admissions committees something about your academic interests outside of healthcare. Your major can enhance your career in healthcare (e.g. majors in business or Spanish) or also provide you with career options outside of the health field.

How do I find a major?
Getting involved in the following activities early in your UNL career will help you find a major:
• Meet with academic advisors or faculty in majors of interest.
• Meet with a pre-health advisor in the Explore Center to discuss majors in relation to your desired health profession area.
• Meet with a career advisor in the Explore Center to discuss your strengths, interests, and how they relate to majors and your healthcare career.
• Attend workshops or events designed to help you find a major.

START EXPLORING HEALTHCARE MAJORS

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<tr>
<th>Bachelor's degree required; yes, you need a major.</th>
<th>Bachelor's degree may be preferred, but it's not always required</th>
<th>Bachelor's degree not required to apply; no major needed.</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Clinical Perfusion</td>
<td>• Chiropractic</td>
<td>• Dental Hygiene</td>
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<td>• Cytotechnology</td>
<td>• Dentistry</td>
<td>• Medical Lab Science</td>
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Healthcare Experiences - More Information

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Every student’s timeline will be unique to them. Below is a typical plan for preparing for professional health school. Your pre-health advisor will help customize this plan with you.

**Freshman/Sophomore Year**

**ACADEMICS**
- Take 13-16 credit hours each semester; try 17-18 credit hours Sophomore year
- Meet with your pre-health advisor each semester
- Focus on developing good study habits early

**CAREER**
- Shadow *
- Volunteer and/or get clinical experience *
- Build relationships with your professors (especially in science classes)
- Begin to research professional health schools you wish to apply to

**ENHANCE**
- Join a student organization and take a leadership role
- Get involved academically (research, teaching assistant, etc.)
- Think about applying to the Summer Health Professions Education Program, study abroad, internships, or summer research

**Junior Year**

**ACADEMICS**
- Take 17-18 credit hours first semester
- Meet with your pre-health advisor

**CAREER**
- Shadow *
- Volunteer and/or get clinical experience *
- Build relationships with your professors (especially in science classes)
- Start studying for entrance exam
- Participate in Mock Interviews
- Finalize the list of professional health schools you will apply to

**ENHANCE**
- Continue to be involved academically and outside the classroom
- Take a leadership role in a student organization or campus activity

**Application**

Most students submit their application to professional health school in the summer between their Junior and Senior year, in early fall of their Senior year (at the latest), or approximately 10-12 months before they intend to enroll at a health school. Before you start your application, check with your pre-health advisor to make sure you’re ready to apply and to plan the timing of your application and entrance exam (ask your advisor for the Health Application Timeline for more details).

**Senior Year**

**ACADEMICS**
- Continue to excell academically
- Meet with your pre-health advisor to discuss application details

**CAREER**
- Shadow *
- Volunteer and/or get clinical experience *
- Submit your applications
- Participate in Mock Interviews

**ENHANCE**
- Continue to be involved academically and outside the classroom
- Take a leadership role in a club or campus activity

* Learn more on page 2.
Pre-Health Advising
Meet with an advisor to create your customized 4-year plan, including all of the courses required by the professional health schools of your choice, the extracurricular activities you plan to pursue, and timelines for taking entrance exams and submitting your application. You can make an appointment in MyPLAN for pre-health advising. Continue to meet with a pre-health advisor each semester to update your plan, be informed of new or changed requirements, and reflect on your experiences and career goals.

Workshops and Events
The Explore Center presents multiple workshops each semester to give you an opportunity to learn more about being a pre-health student. Some workshops include: Pre-Health Orientations, Application Essays for Health Schools, MCAT, GRE, Interviewing Tips, and many more. Find the current schedule of pre-health events here: explorecenter.unl.edu/about/events.

Professional School Visitors
You can meet one-on-one with representatives from specific professional health schools in our office. This is a great opportunity to make connections with professional health schools, ask specific questions about their school and entrance requirements, and consult with them about your competitiveness for their program. To find out who will be here and sign up for an appointment, visit exploreregistration.unl.edu.

Personal Statement Review and Application Consultation
If you've been meeting with your pre-health advisors along the way, you will have a clear plan for when you will start working on your personal statement and application. When you're ready to apply, pre-health advisors at the Explore Center can help you brainstorm ideas for your personal essay, provide advice on navigating and constructing your application, and provide feedback on drafts of your personal statement and application before you submit them. You can make an appointment in MyPLAN for help with any of these components of your application.

Mock Interviews
Professional health schools commonly require applicants to complete an interview as a final step in the application process. The interview puts a face to your application and allows the school to evaluate your interpersonal skills. The Explore Center's mock interview days are an ideal way to practice a professional school interview and receive feedback. To find the next mock interview day and sign up for a mock interview, visit exploreregistration.unl.edu.