

# PRE-HEALTH PROFESSIONS ADVISING AND PROGRAMS

2300 Symons Hall  
Phone: 301-405-7805  
<http://prehealth.umd.edu>

**Assistant Dean and Director:** Wendy Loughlin

**Assistant Director:** Jeff Hall

**Advisors:** Peggy Wolf, Aaliyah Flores, Brittany Gonzalez

The Reed-Yorke Health Professions Advising Office (HPAO), part of the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences, serves University of Maryland students and alumni interested in pursuing careers in medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, and the allied health fields.

Advisors and staff in the HPAO provide students with pre-professional planning, including individual and group advising, career preparation workshops, admission information for pre-professional programs, a committee process to support their professional school applications, and much more. Pre-professional program advising provides the academic, and experiential foundations required for entrance into professional schools.

HPAO advising encompasses the fields of medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, and the allied health professions - which include nursing, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistant, and genetic counseling. The pre-health professional tracks at the University of Maryland are not degree-granting programs. They are recommended programs of study for students interested in each profession.

Students planning to pursue professional programs in medicine, dentistry, optometry, podiatry or the other allied health fields after graduation from University of Maryland must declare an academic major by 60 credits. Students who are undecided about which academic major they will declare may enter Letters and Sciences, where they will receive academic advising, but must adhere to the University of Maryland requirement that students declare a degree-granting major by the time they reach 60 credits. Pre-professional students who plan to earn a bachelor's degree should declare an academic major by 60 credits. Pre-professional students, including those interested in the allied health fields, may receive advising related to admission to professional school requirements through the Health Professions Advising Office, however the HPAO does not serve as a student's assigned academic advising unit.

Students interested in allied health professions can, and in some cases do, transfer to such programs before earning a bachelor's degree. Such students may enter Letters and Sciences, where they will receive academic advising. They should then consult with the HPAO for advising on transferring.

## Pre-Dental Hygiene

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The Pre-Dental Hygiene track prepares students for entrance into a professional curriculum for dental hygiene at institutions that offer a

Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene. Pre-Dental Hygiene is not a pre-dental major and is not a degree-granting program at the University of Maryland, College Park. A baccalaureate degree program for a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene (B.S.-D.H.) follows a 2+2 model. Students may complete two years of prerequisite courses at the University of Maryland, College Park, and then apply for admission into a professional school program which they will complete after an additional two years.

University of Maryland students also have the option of completing a four-year degree at College Park in a selected major, in addition to completing dental hygiene prerequisites, the 4+2 model. In this case, students will complete degree requirements in their chosen major, as well as the pre-dental hygiene prerequisites for entrance into a professional dental hygiene program. They will then apply for admission into a professional school where they will earn a Bachelor of Science in Dental Hygiene upon successful completion of the program.

Prerequisites may change; students are strongly encouraged to contact professional programs for the most current requirements. The American Dental Hygienists Association and the American Dental Association maintain information about individual B.S.-D.H. program prerequisites. See <http://adea.org>.

## Pre-Dentistry

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The pre-professional program for pre-dental students provides advising for students preparing to apply to dental school. The recommendations of American dental schools and the requirements for a baccalaureate degree at the University of Maryland form the basis for the advising.

## Four-Year Baccalaureate Program

Pre-dental students at the University of Maryland are encouraged to complete a four-year undergraduate degree, with a diversified curriculum, balancing humanities, social sciences and fine arts courses with science and mathematics courses, prior to entering dental school. Courses in which students work with their hands are also advised. Students in the four-year program must plan an undergraduate experience that satisfies the requirements of their selected major, as well as pre-dental admission requirements. Students should seek pre-dental advising early in order to create an appropriate four-year pre-dental plan. The national association ADEA (<http://adea.org>) provides current information for applicants.

Students who have completed AP or IB programs and received credit for courses in the sciences that are required for dental school admission are advised to read the AP/IB section of the HPAO website (<https://prehealth.umd.edu/prospective-students/ap-ib-credit/>) and review individual school websites for their specific policies toward this credit.

## Three-Year Arts-Dentistry Degree Program

For highly motivated and academically talented students, the University of Maryland, College Park and University of Maryland School of Dentistry offer the three-year Arts-Dentistry Program. This program gives students the opportunity to apply to the University of Maryland School of Dentistry one year early. This accelerated program requires students to complete their dental school admission requirements in three years, as they apply to dental school at the end of the second year and the beginning of their third year. Competitive students must apply and be accepted by the University of Maryland Dental School. Students accepted in the combined

arts-dentistry program, receive the B.S. degree (Arts-Dentistry) after satisfactory completion of the first year at the dental school and upon the recommendation of the Dean of the School of Dentistry and approval of the University of Maryland, College Park. Participation in the combined-degree program at the University of Maryland, College Park does not guarantee admission to the University of Maryland School of Dentistry.

The HPAO strongly urges incoming students interested in this combined-degree program to identify their interest and consult with the Pre-Health advisor very early in their academic career. Please visit the website for specific details and instruction. This is a highly competitive program for top students with broad exposure to the dental field.

## Pre-Medicine (Allopathic, Osteopathic, Optometry, Podiatry)

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### Four-Year Baccalaureate Program

It is recommended that students planning to apply to medical school complete a four-year undergraduate degree prior to entrance into medical school. Students should choose an undergraduate degree program that matches their interests, and should plan how to satisfy their degree requirements and the general education requirements along with the courses in the natural and social sciences required for medical school admission. Students should seek pre-medical advising early in order to create an appropriate four-year academic plan. The HPAO website provides specific information on each of the medical programs. The national associations: AAMC (<http://aamc.org>) and AACOM (<http://aacom.org>) provide current information for applicants.

Students who have completed AP or IB programs and received credit for courses in the sciences that are required for medical school admission are advised to read the AP/IB section of the HPAO website (<https://prehealth.umd.edu/prospective-students/ap-ib-credit/>) and review individual school websites for their specific policies toward this credit.

## Pre-Nursing

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The Pre-Nursing track prepares students for entrance into a professional curriculum for nursing at institutions that offer Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) programs. Pre-Nursing is not a degree-granting program at the University of Maryland, College Park. A baccalaureate degree program for a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (B.S.N.) follows a 2+2 model also known as a traditional baccalaureate program. Students may complete two years of prerequisite courses at the University of Maryland, College Park, and then apply for admission into a professional school to complete two years of professional course work, which includes classroom, laboratory, and clinical education. Prerequisite courses are not limited to two years and can be completed in three years.

University of Maryland students also have the option of completing a four-year degree at College Park in their selected major, in addition to completing approximately 20 to 25 credits of nursing prerequisites. This is the Second Degree or Accelerated Second Degree model. In this model,

students complete degree requirements in their chosen major, as well as the nursing prerequisites for entrance into an accelerated B.S.N. or C.N.L. program. The institution offering the program confers a Bachelor of Science in Nursing or Clinical Nurse Leader (Masters of Science) upon completion of the program.

Prerequisites may change; students are strongly encouraged to contact professional programs for the most current requirements. The American Association of Colleges of Nursing maintains specific information about individual nursing program prerequisites.

**University of Maryland, College Park/University of Maryland School of Nursing Guaranteed Admission Pathway for highly motivated and academically talented students:** Admitted students to the University of Maryland, College Park are eligible to participate in a guaranteed admission pathway with the University of Maryland School of Nursing. Students may be admitted through a competitive admissions process directly into the pathway upon admission to University of Maryland, College Park or may enter the pathway after matriculation after requesting an evaluation. Students must complete prerequisite coursework maintaining a 3.25 overall GPA and a 3.0 science GPA in order to be eligible for guaranteed admission. Students may apply 16 or fewer credits to pathway prerequisite requirements earned at outside institutions, one of which can be a science course. An unlimited number of credits earned through Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate testing can be applied to the prerequisite requirements for the nursing pathway. For more information on this program and eligibility, visit <http://prehealth.umd.edu/nursing/>.

## Pre-Occupational Therapy

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The Pre-Occupational Therapy track prepares students for entrance into a professional curriculum for occupational therapy at institutions that offer professional advanced degrees, including master or doctoral degrees. Pre-occupational therapy is not a degree-granting program at the University of Maryland, College Park. Community colleges and technical schools offer associate degrees or certificates to students who wish to become occupational therapy assistants. Some colleges offer bachelor degrees in occupational therapy, while others offer combined bachelor's and master's degree programs.

Students who wish to enter the occupational therapy profession may choose from several educational paths; they should thoroughly research the different options to determine the best path to their career goals. University of Maryland students have the option of completing a four-year degree at College Park, in their selected major, in addition to completing occupational therapy prerequisites. They may then choose to complete a post-bachelor certificate, Master of Science or doctoral degree in occupational therapy offered by professional schools. Some states require a degree in occupational therapy prior to approving licensure to work as an occupational therapist in that state. The certificate cannot substitute for a degree. Students should become familiar with the laws of the state(s) in which they wish to work if they choose to pursue a certificate rather than a master's or doctoral degree. Most occupational therapy programs require some health-care experience in the occupational therapy field.

Prerequisites may change and can vary from school to school; students are strongly encouraged to contact professional programs for the most

current requirements. The American Occupational Therapy Association maintains specific information about individual program prerequisites. See <http://aota.org>.

## Pre-Pharmacy

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The Pre-Pharmacy track prepares students for entrance into a professional curriculum for pharmacy at institutions that offer a Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.) degree program. Pre-Pharmacy is not a degree-granting program at the University of Maryland, College Park. A Pharm.D. degree program follows a 2+4 model in which students complete two years of prerequisite courses at the University of Maryland, College Park and then apply for admission into a professional pharmacy school to complete four years of professional coursework, which includes classroom, laboratory, and clinical education. Prerequisite courses are not limited to two years and can be completed in three years.

University of Maryland students also have the option of completing a four-year degree at College Park in their selected major, in addition to completing pharmacy school prerequisites, a 4+4 model. In this model, students complete degree requirements in their chosen major, as well as the Pre-Pharmacy prerequisites for entrance into a professional pharmacy program. The institution offering the program confers a Pharm.D. degree upon completion of the program.

Prerequisites may change and can vary from school to school; students are strongly encouraged to contact professional programs for the most current requirements. The American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy maintains information about individual Pharm.D. program prerequisites. See <http://aacp.org>.

## Pre-Physical Therapy

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[preprof@umd.edu](mailto:preprof@umd.edu)  
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The Pre-Physical Therapy track prepares students for entrance into a professional curriculum for physical therapy at institutions that offer a doctoral degree. Pre-Physical Therapy is not a degree-granting program at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Most physical therapy schools now confer only doctoral degrees, Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.). Currently, the accepted, entry-level clinical degree to practice as a physical therapist is the D.P.T. The length of time to complete the D.P.T. coursework is usually three years. University of Maryland students interested in attending a D.P.T. program need to complete a four-year degree in their selected major in addition to completing physical therapy prerequisites. The coursework required to enter a Doctor of Physical Therapy (D.P.T.) degree program varies depending on the professional schools to which the student intends to apply and the expected year of matriculation into the professional phase of physical therapy. Most physical therapy schools also require some health-care experience in the physical therapy field.

Several educational paths exist for students who wish to enter the physical therapy field. Students are encouraged to thoroughly research

this profession and determine which educational path best leads to their particular career goals.

Prerequisites may change; students are strongly encouraged to contact professional programs for the most current requirements. The American Physical Therapy Association as well as the Physical Therapy Centralized Application Service maintains information about individual program prerequisites. See <http://apta.org> and/or <http://ptcas.org>.

## Pre-Physician Assistant

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[preprof@umd.edu](mailto:preprof@umd.edu)  
<http://prehealth.umd.edu>

The Pre-Physician Assistant (P.A.) program prepares students for entrance into a professional curriculum for physician assistant at institutions that offer a Master's degree in this field. Pre-Physician Assistant is not a degree-granting program at the University of Maryland, College Park. At the University of Maryland, students may complete the necessary prerequisite courses required by the professional physician assistant programs to which they will be applying. Pre-Physician Assistant typically follows a 4+2 model (though some professional programs may exceed 2 years). Students complete a four-year degree at College Park in their selected major, in addition to completing physician assistant prerequisites in areas including but not limited to science, psychology, and statistics. Most physician assistant schools also require health-care experience, many preferring applicants to have worked directly with patients. The institution offering the program confers a master's degree upon completion of the physician assistant program.

Due to differing prerequisite requirements amongst P.A. programs, students are encouraged to thoroughly research this profession and determine which educational path best leads to their particular career goals. Students should check the particular prerequisites of the P.A. educational programs that interest them.

Prerequisites may change; students are strongly encouraged to contact professional programs for the most current requirements. The American Academy of Physician Assistants as well as Physician Assistant Education Association maintains information about individual program prerequisites. See <http://aapa.org> and/or <http://paeonline.org>.