

Pre-Med (MD/DO) Preparatory Activities Health Professions Advisory Committee

Freshman Year

Fall:

1. **Coursework:** To allow flexibility in career options, take BIO 110 & 111 this year and CHM 125 & 126. Look ahead to the courses you'll need before taking your MCAT (usually summer after Junior year). Try to plan ahead to keep the course load the spring semester of your junior year 3 credits lower for test prep.
2. **GPA:** You will need a minimum GPA of a 3.0 to apply to medical school. The average GPA of those accepted is 3.7, so you should aim to be above a 3.5 *at minimum*.
3. **Shadowing:** No later than the summer before your junior year, you should begin shadowing. Begin to think of where you would like to do this. Aim for diversity and get in as many hours as you can.
4. **Research:** Start research early, if possible. This will be an important opportunity for you to show your critical thinking, teamwork, problem solving and communication skills. It is also an opportunity to show your dedication to learning and how you respond to crucial feedback. It doesn't matter what you do your research on (it doesn't need to be medically related), but it is crucial that you can explain what you did. This is usually easier if you are doing something you are interested in.
5. **Portfolio:** Start accumulating evidence of your performance in academics, service, research, etc. By your sophomore year, you will assemble these items into a portfolio. Your portfolio will make the application process easier and will be utilized by the Health Professions Advisory Committee in writing a committee letter.
6. **Extracurriculars:** Choose clubs and extracurricular activities wisely. Perhaps choose one club to get more involved in as a leader and a second club to participate in as a member. Keep up a hobby and develop good stress-relief techniques. It's better to choose less and do more with it than be involved in 10 activities but don't do much with any one of them.

Spring:

1. **Shadowing:** Set up a shadowing or internship experience with a doctor for the summer. As a suggestion, start with your family doctor or someone in their hometown. Aim to shadow broadly by your junior year.
2. **Academics:** Examine the year and ask whether you are on track with your GPA and extracurricular activities. Determine what changes need to be made in discussion with your advisor and HPAC.

Summer:

Start shadowing (doesn't have to be a huge number of hours at this point). Keep good records and reflections; this will go into your portfolio, and can serve as material (perhaps) for your personal statement or interview.

Sophomore Year

Fall:

1. **Coursework:** Take CHM 205 & 206 and BIO 112/348 this year. Also consider taking SOC 109 and PSY 117. Revisit the coursework that should be completed before taking the MCAT.
2. **Shadowing:** Consider options for additional shadowing experience. Try to make this experience different from what you did last summer – if you shadowed a rural practice, try to find a more urban experience. Or if you followed a family doc, try to set something up with a specialist and vice versa.
3. **MCAT Prep:** Consider purchasing an MCAT review book to supplement your MCAT prep coursework starting this semester.
4. **Extracurriculars:** Review your extracurricular activities. Are you getting some leadership experience, but also something that's fun? Another thing to consider is whether you are developing opportunities to interact with others. This can be in a medical or non-medical setting, but it is important since you will want to be able to illustrate your demeanor with others in your application.
5. **Academics:** Examine your academic progress. If it is not on track, seriously consider other career options. You may need to make serious adjustments to your schedule to allow more time for study to stay on this path. Also consider making serious changes to your study habits and soliciting academic support.

Spring:

1. **Summer plans:** Consider conducting research, working toward a CNA or developing an internship experience for this summer. Review/share summer experiences with your advisor and other students to start generating ideas for your activities this summer.
2. **MCAT Prep:** Continue to use an MCAT review book in tandem with coursework. Think ahead to summer and plan time to review what you've learned this year. Consider volunteering to tutor MCAT prep courses next year.
3. **Portfolio:** Develop your portfolio and identify areas that need improvement. Consider starting a personal statement. Think about who you want to be able to write letters for you and think of ways to foster positive relationships with those individuals.

Summer:

Do additional shadowing (in areas you have not yet explored and possibly in areas you have particular interest in). Complete a draft of your personal statement. Possibly start research or work in a medical environment (e.g. CNA, EMT).

Junior Year

Fall:

1. **Summer plans:** Take CHM 330. Consider starting your research by this summer to ensure your project is successful and meaningful. Work on research ideas in BIO/CHM/RSC 351.
2. **Portfolio:** Share your personal statement with your advisor or a member of HPAC. Begin to revise.
3. **MCAT Prep:** Continue to use MCAT review materials in parallel with preparatory coursework. Find time this year (e.g. at semester break and at the beginning of summer) to study in a more focused manner.

Spring:

1. **Extracurriculars:** If you haven't already done so, prepare for research opportunities or clinical experience this summer. Some students work as EMTs or CNAs. Additional shadowing is also appropriate.
2. **MCAT Prep:** Continue studying in preparatory courses. If possible, register for no more than 15 credits this semester so that MCAT prep can be treated as its own 3 credit course.
3. **Application:** Contact references before the end of the academic year. Ask letter writers if they can give you a strong reference. Request a committee letter late semester/early summer.

Summer:

1. **Application:** Get started early on the AMCAS application process.
 - a. AMCAS is usually available in late May or June. Students should have it filled out and submitted by September at the latest. AMCAS will hold applications for a couple of weeks after submission until transcripts can be verified. Once the AMCAS is submitted, it may take several weeks or a month until med schools receive the AMCAS.
 - b. AMCAS will need official transcripts from **all** post-secondary schools attended (virtually or in person).
 - c. The personal statement should be revised and ready.
 - d. Once med schools receive the AMCAS application, they may send out a secondary application, and then request an interview.
 - e. For committee letters, the student is asked to come to campus to meet with the committee over the summer. After the interview, the committee will determine whether a committee letter is appropriate. Letters are composed and sent in September unless otherwise requested. For a good committee letter, the student should have taken classes from a majority of the committee members. The portfolio will be requested, as that is a valuable item for the committee to review.

Senior Year

Fall

1. **Application:** Complete AMCAS application.
2. **Mock Interviews:** If invited, complete a mock interview in October.
3. **Interviews:** If invited, attend medical school interviews.

Spring

1. **Feedback:** Provide the Health Professions Advisory Committee feedback about the pre-med process here at Doane College.

Short version:

Freshmen: good GPA; locate 1-2 appropriate activities or groups; work on writing skills; get to know the faculty; think about where/who you would like to shadow.

Sophomores: continue the good GPA. Start planning or continue shadowing experiences; add to portfolio

Juniors: continue good GPA; study for MCAT; continue with shadowing/volunteer/activities; start thinking about reference letters. Get to know faculty. Think about beneficial summer activities. Take MCAT in summer. Start application process in early summer.

Seniors: complete application. Request letters. Prepare for interview. Develop back-up plan. Don't let up on coursework, maintain good GPA.

MCAT Prep Schedule (take exam summer after Junior year)

| | Fall | Spring |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Freshman | BIO 110 CHM 125 | BIO 111 CHM 126 |
| Sophomore | BIO 112 CHM 205 PSY 117 | BIO 295 BIO 348 CHM 206 |
| Junior | CHM 330 PHY 107 SOC 109 | PHY 108 BIO 356 |

MCAT/UNMC application tip: You at least a 506 to be a competitive applicant. Take the MCAT early enough in the summer to allow you to retake it if necessary and still apply that year. Apply Early Decision if possible.