

How and Why Students Work with Health Professions Advisors

A FAQ for Aspiring Health Professionals

Who are health professions advisors?

Students exploring or planning a career in medicine or in any other health profession should seek out the health professions advisor on their campus to assist them. Most US colleges and universities designate individuals who specialize in health professions advising. Common places to find advisors:

- Science departments, where faculty members may advise as well as teach and participate in research.
- Academic dean's offices or advising offices.
- Career centers

No matter where they are situated at a school, the common denominator is that health professions advisors are knowledgeable, supportive individuals whose role is to provide information and guidance to students as they prepare for their desired professions.

How can a health professions advisor help you?

Your advisor can help you determine which courses satisfy premedical or other health professions requirements, how to best sequence them, and how to find tutoring or other academic support if you are having difficulty. An advisor can guide you in incorporating study abroad, a double major, or a senior honors thesis into your course of study and still prepare well for health professions school. Your advisor will encourage you to seek experience in the health care field as a way of informing yourself about the profession as well as strengthening your application. They will also support you as you try to determine the right career path for yourself, by assessing your own strengths and weaknesses, values and life goals. Although it may be possible to choose the proper courses, find meaningful health-related experience, explore your own personal strengths and weaknesses, and negotiate the complexities of the admissions process independently, seeking the advice of your health professions advisor will greatly ease your burden.

Who do health professions advisors work with?

All health professions advisors meet with students individually at their campuses. Increasingly, advisors also work with older individuals who have graduated from their institution or who have come to the school to pursue postbaccalaureate course work. All prehealth students, regardless of age or status, should seek out the health professions advisor where they are currently studying or at their alma mater. Policies differ from school to school, but some students with access to health professions advising are unaware of this valuable resource.

Locating your advisor

Many health professions advisors are members of the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions (NAAHP) or its regional affiliates. By supporting and informing health professions advisors, the association helps ensure that students receive accurate, up-to-date

information and skilled counseling from their advisors. The association maintains close working relationships with health profession groups such as the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Dental Education Association to keep advisors informed and to plan collaborative efforts to benefit students. In addition, NAAHP offers several official publications to aid students in their preparation for medical school.

A significant service that NAAHP provides to students is a mechanism for identifying a health professions advisor. We believe that all students should be able to find affordable, quality health professions advising.

If you are currently a college student:

- Consult with the NAAHP list of participating schools to locate your undergraduate institution / alma mater. If your school is listed, you can be assured that there is an informed individual who benefits from our association's resources and passes up to date information along to their advisees.
- You are encouraged to contact the appropriate individuals on your campus for information and advice. If you are uncertain about who to contact, you may first want to contact your Academic Dean to determine who provides health professions advising on your campus.

If you are a college graduate:

- You should begin your quest for health professions advice by making contact with the health professions advising resources at your alma mater.

If your college does not have a health professions advisor or it cannot provide advising to alumni, NAAHP members have volunteered to be available to help those individuals who have no other access to advising.

To contact the NAAHP to ask for help from a volunteer advisor, please send an email message to volunteer.advisor@naahp.org and include the following information:

- Your full name
- Your detailed question
- The undergraduate school that you are attending or from which you have graduated, and when you graduated
- Your state (or country if international) of residence
- If you would like to attach your resume, you are welcome to do so.

Your inquiry will be forwarded to one of our volunteer advisors and that individual will respond to you directly.

Additional Resources

- [Partnering with your advisor: Tips for students from a prehealth advisor](#)
- [The value of working with a prehealth advisor](#)

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