

# MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY

## Timeline for Application/Admission to Health Professional Programs

Chiropractic, Dental, Medical, Optometry, Pharmacy, Physician Assistant, Physical & Occupational Therapy, Veterinary

### College Year 1 – Focus on academics

- Focus on course work – establish successful study habits and maintain a high GPA
- Develop relationships with faculty and mentors on campus
- Schedule a meeting with the Pre-Health Advisor to introduce yourself and get acquainted with campus resources
- Join Pre-Health Club, attend pre-health meetings/events on campus, and make sure you are on email lists to get relevant updates and information
- Explore various health professions – keep all options open!
- Seek opportunities to gain clinical experience through shadowing, volunteering, or working in a professional health setting
- Consider applying to summer enrichment and/or research programs. Such as through:  
AAMC – [www.aamc.org/members/great/61052/great\\_summerlinks.html](http://www.aamc.org/members/great/61052/great_summerlinks.html)  
NSF – [www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/](http://www.nsf.gov/crssprgm/reu/)
- Complete first year coursework and other degree requirements

### Summer following college year 1

- Work or volunteer for a position in the medical/health field; consider internships and leadership opportunities on campus or in your local community
- If you are eligible, participate in summer enrichment or research programs
- Begin to explore health professional programs and graduate schools of interest. Familiarize yourself with pre-requisite coursework, standardized test and clinical experience requirements, and the application process

### College Year 2 – Building your resume

- Check-in with the Pre-Health Advisor and attend all pre-health meetings/events and ensure you are on all email lists to receive relevant updates and information
- Continue to maintain a strong academic record and high GPA
- Continue to develop relationships with faculty and mentors on campus
- Pursue meaningful clinical experience, medically/health-related activities, and/or leadership roles
- Consider engaging in faculty-mentored research
- Consider applying to summer enrichment and/or research programs (see above)
- Complete second year coursework and other degree requirements

### Summer following college year 2

- Continue to gain clinical experience by working or volunteering for a position in the medical/health field; consider internships and leadership opportunities on campus or in your local community
- If you are eligible, participate in summer enrichment or research programs
- Explore health professional programs and graduate schools of interest in a directed manner. Familiarize yourself with pre-requisite coursework, standardized test and clinical experience requirements, and the application process
- Begin standardized test preparation

### College Year 3 – Toward the application

- By this time, you should have a well-established relationship with the Pre-Health Advisor and be actively participating in pre-health activities; consider taking on leadership roles in pre-health organizations on campus
- Continue to maintain a strong academic record and high GPA
- Continue to participate in meaningful clinical experiences, other medically/health-related activities, research, and/or leadership roles on campus; if possible, consider taking on a more substantial role
- Attend open-house events and visit programs/institutions to which you are planning to apply
- Consider which faculty, advisors, and mentors on campus, with whom you've developed relationships, you'll approach to write letters of recommendation for your applications
  - If seeking Pre-Health Committee Letter (for med school applicants), completed request form due to Pre-Health Advisor by March 1. Pre-Health Committee Interviews (for med school applicants) scheduled late-March to early-April
- Continue rigorous standardized test preparation and attend faculty-led test prep review sessions during Spring Semester
- Register for and take standardized test(s) during Spring Semester
- Complete third year coursework and other degree requirements

## Summer following college year 3

- Continue involvement with meaningful paid, volunteer, internship, medically-related, research, and leadership experiences
- If you have not already done so, or if you are re-testing, sign up to take the required standardized test(s) during early-summer
- Complete and submit application materials; most health professional programs use centralized applications services. Each application service maintains different application windows with due dates varying by institution. Be sure to check deadlines for each program/institution to which you will apply!

The open application window for common services are:

AMCAS – allopathic medical schools	May/June – Dec.
AACOMAS – osteopathic medical schools	May/June – April
CASPA – physician assistant	April – March
PharmCAS – pharmacy	June – April
OptomCAS – optometry	July – June
ADEA AADSAS – dental	June – Feb.
PTCAS – physical therapy	July – April
OTCAS – occupational therapy	July – April
VMCAS – veterinary	June – Oct.

\*It is strongly recommended to apply early within the application window!

## College Year 4 – Interviews and acceptances

- Consult with your academic advisor and the Pre-Health Advisor regarding the status of your applications and admission process for schools to which you've applied
- Complete supplemental applications – if required
- Continue to maintain a strong academic record and high GPA – admission is only granted pending review of final transcripts!
- Continue with meaningful clinical experiences, other medically/health-related activities, volunteer work, research, and/or leadership experiences
- Prepare for interviews and campus visits
- Receive acceptances!
  - make interim and final decisions about program/school of choice
  - notify schools that you will not be attending on or before the deadline given
- Complete degree requirements and prerequisite coursework, and graduate!

## Gap/Bridge year(s) – recognize and overcome your weaknesses

- Didn't get accepted to the program/institution of your choice? Don't let the need to take a gap year stop you from pursuing your dream of a career in the health professions!
- Take time to critically self evaluate; what are your strengths and weakness?
  - Consider completing a Post-Bac program to boost GPA and add additional scientific/medical knowledge
  - Consider completing a thesis-based masters degree program to gain needed research experience
  - Continue to engage in medically/health-related activities to gain needed clinical experience.
  - Consider retaking necessary standardized test(s)
- Complete your materials for next application cycle

For more information, please visit:

American Academy of Physician Assistants (AAPA) – [www.aapa.org](http://www.aapa.org)

American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) – [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)

American Association of College of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM) – [www.aacom.org](http://www.aacom.org)

American Chiropractic Association (ACA) – [www.acatoday.org](http://www.acatoday.org)

American Dental Education Association (ADEA) – [www.adea.org](http://www.adea.org)

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) – [www.aota.org](http://www.aota.org)

American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) – [www.apta.org](http://www.apta.org)

Association of American Veterinary Medical College (AAVMC) – [www.aavmc.org](http://www.aavmc.org)

Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry (ASCO) – [www.opted.org](http://www.opted.org)

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