

NJIT



New Jersey's Science &
Technology University

THE EDGE IN KNOWLEDGE

Leveraging Career Services to Improve Pre-health Applicant Outcomes

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What are health careers?

- MD-Allopathic Medicine
- DO-Osteopathic Medicine
- PA-Physician Assistant
- RN-MSN-DNP-PhD-Nursing
- DPM-Podiatry
- DC-Chiropractic
- DPT- Physical Therapy
- OT-Occupational Therapy
- Pharm-D
- OD-Optometry
- Clinical Laboratory Science
- Allied Health
 - MRI Ultrasound etc.
- DVM-Veterinary Medicine

Interdepartmental Pre-Health Advising

- The pre-health team consists of pre-health advisor, faculty, academic advisors and career counselors.
- It is important for academic advisors and career services to understand the basics of advising pre-health students.
 - Admissions testing.
 - Experience requirements.
 - Academic requirements.
 - Application requirements.
- Having a strong working pre-health team ensures that students get wrap around service. Synergy!

Building a Strong Applicant

- Academic Advising
 - Advise students to take the right courses for pre-health, while still completing departmental requirements.
 - Maintain honest communication about students competitiveness.
 - Discuss alternative careers. Send to career services
- Career Counseling
 - Discuss career options.
 - Job and internship search.
 - Co-Op processing.
 - Assist with document preparation.
 - Resumes and cover letters.
 - Interview preparation.

Building a Strong Applicant

- Pre-health Advising
 - Explain timeline of events.
 - Ensure the right courses are taken at the right time for pre-health. Must work closely with academic advisors.
 - Maintain honest communication about students competitiveness. Refer to career services.
 - Discuss alternative careers within pre-health. Refer to career services.
 - Encourage students to explore their chosen career through employment or service.
 - Explain application procedures.
 - Host events with admissions representatives.

Four-Year Plan

Year	Academic	Non-Academic
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with pre-health or academic advisor • If no pre-health advisor, go to biology department • The science GPA should be above 3.7 • Competitive MCAT is 510 (80th percentile) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve time management and study skills • Clinical Experiences (scribes, EMT etc.) • Participate in the pre-health activities (clubs, societies, and organizations) • Start looking for summer opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteer and paid work ○ Research opportunities ○ Summer medical and dental program
1 Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If behind in coursework, take summer courses to catch up or review (MOOC, Khan Academy) • Participate in research • Participate in summer medical and dental programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do volunteer and paid work • Explore various health care options

Source: Oyewole, S. H. (2001)

Four-Year Plan

Year	Academic	Non-Academic
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to work on maintaining high GPA• Meet with pre-health advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to do volunteer work• Gain meaningful experiences
2 Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participate in summer research, if interested• Begin preparing for admissions test (content review and practice exams)	

Source: Oyewole, S. H. (2001)

Four-Year Plan

Year	Academic	Non-Academic
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete pre-requisite coursework to sit for the test • Learn about application processes • Discuss which schools to apply to • Take admissions test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue building clinical experience and research experiences.
3 Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take admissions test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply!!
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock interviews • Attend interviews with school • If accepted, apply for the financial aid • Relax and have fun before going to professional schools

Co-Op and Internships

- Many pre-health students have volunteer employment , but are still eligible for Co-Op at NJIT.
 - Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedics
 - Volunteer at local hospitals and doctors' offices in meaningful roles with significant hours. Medical, dental and PT assistants.
- Paid positions
 - Emergency room scribe.
 - Clinical information manager.
 - Patient care technician
 - Pharmacy technician.
 - Medical transport.
 - Research (experimental and clinical).
 - Critical care technician

Application Process

- Application is between 3rd and 4th year if student wants to matriculate immediately after graduation.
 - Students are increasingly taking gap years.
 - Average age of a matriculant is 25.
- Admission tests best taken between March and May of application year.
- Advising just before and during application phase is critical
 - School selection
 - Review applications
 - Review personal statement
 - Timely submission of application
 - Mock interviews
 - Ensure letters are submitted

Application Process

- The application is essentially a CV
- Common applications for all schools
- Complete application consists of
 - Applicant data
 - Biographical, academic, experiences
 - Official transcripts
 - Personal statement
 - Exam scores
 - Letters of recommendation
- Supplemental applications
 - Will get from most schools
 - Not an indication of candidate advancement in process

Application Process

- Pre-health advisor receives sample application which includes personal statement. Conducts initial review and meets with students.
- Students who need specialized advising are referred to career services and/or their academic advisor.
 - Often students cannot articulate their career goals convincingly.
 - It is clear some students need help with interviewing well ahead of applying.
 - It is also clear that some need advise on other careers paths either due to academics or interests.
 - Real opportunities for career advising.

Committee Meeting

- Each meeting consists of three members of the university pre-health committee (faculty, career services, academic advisors) and the student.
- Entire application is reviewed and feedback is provided.
- At this stage it is still possible to discuss career options.
- Other committee members may point things out previously missed (or hidden).

Post Committee


- For NJIT this is where Career Services is most important
 - Mock interviews and resources
 - Gap year plans for students who are not accepted
 - Reapplication
 - Zero in on the students primary weakness
 - Most likely bad interviews if they were invited to schools
 - Aha moments!

NJIT Outcomes

- Fall 2018 – 92% (N=50)
 - Fall 2019 – 93% (N=40)
 - Fall 2020 – 93% (N=54)
 - Fall 2021 – 88%* (N=42)
 - Fall 2022 – 85%* (N=40)
 - Fall 2023 - 91% (Current)
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- National acceptance rate 2020-2021 through 2022-2023 - 41.2%¹

¹ -<https://www.aamc.org/media/6091/download>

How can Career Services help?

- If your campus has an established committee ask to join.
 - Offer assistance with reviewing resumes and applications, mock interviews, plan B and gap year planning, Co-Ops/internships.
- If there is no established committee, it's being done somewhere, most likely in biology department.
 - Reach out and 
- If it's not being done at all, reach out to relevant departments to discuss establishing an official committee.
 - May start out as unofficial, but as time goes by it will grow.

Closing Words

- “Just because your uncle's second cousin, twice removed on your mother's side, once knew a taxi cab driver whose youngest sister passed through... and talked to a Wal Mart clerk who met a customer who claimed to have applied to medical school and he said....! Don't believe it.”
- “...you strike me as arrogant and you rub me the wrong way. And as a medical school admissions advisor, it is my job to protect future patients from insensitive, arrogant physicians.”
- “...your lack of clinical experience concerns me and quite frankly makes me question your commitment.”
- “Please tell your students not to use the word passion. It's widely overused and extensively misused.”