



College of  
Arts & Sciences  
Office of Health Professions Advising

## Supporting your Student-Applicant

Parents often wonder how they can best support their prehealth students while they are navigating through prerequisites, extracurricular involvement, and the application process. The Health Professions Advising Office at The University of Alabama has come up with a year-by-year guide to help you support your student.

Our objective is simple. We want to provide guidance to your student as they matriculate through The University of Alabama and support their goals of attending the professional school program of their choosing. Your student will be entrusted with the lives of others one day, and it is imperative that they develop not only the academic preparation but the interpersonal competencies as well. We reinforce the importance of a well-rounded application that supports the professional school's goal of a holistic admissions process. The Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) has a list of [15 Core Competencies for Entering Medical Students](#) that outlines what admissions committees look for when assessing their applicants. At The University of Alabama, advisors will challenge and motivate your student to become independent and self-seeking problem solvers. While your child may not be a pre-medical student, the competencies and qualities are overarching with what admissions committees want to see in future healthcare providers.

- [Physician's Assistant Core Competencies](#)
- [Veterinary Medicine Admissions 101](#)
- [Dental Medicine Core Competencies](#)
- [Physical Therapy Core Values](#)
- [Is Pharmacy Right for You?](#)

Below is a chart that highlights student expectations, how our office supports your student, and things that you can do as a parent to support your student applicant.

## Freshmen and Sophomore Years

Students Expectations	Advisor Support and Services	Parental Support and Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review and follow</b> the prehealth guide for your prehealth discipline.</li> <li>• <b>Explore</b> how your major contributes to your professional goals.</li> <li>• <b>Describe and enroll</b> the basic course prerequisites and non-academic expectations of the professional program that you are interested in.</li> <li>• Be able to <b>utilize</b> DegreeWorks.</li> <li>• <b>Identify</b> campus resources and support (Career Center, Writing Center, Center for Academic Success, etc.).</li> <li>• <b>Explore</b> career alternatives (i.e. “Is this a good fit for me?”).</li> <li>• <b>Establish</b> a professional demeanor (email, telephone, social media, face-to-face, web presence).</li> <li>• <b>Distinguish</b> between membership, active participation, and leadership.</li> <li>• <b>Develop and implement</b> a plan that prepares you to be a competitive applicant.</li> <li>• Attend a sophomore workshop either fall or spring semester. The sooner the better!</li> <li>• <b>Recognize</b> relevant university policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Go to office hours with professors if you have questions about course content.</li> <li>• Seek out co-curricular activities that interest you!</li> <li>• <b>Sign up</b> for our monthly newsletter by subscribing to our <b>prehealth listserv</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We meet with every first-year Arts and Sciences student every semester for course registration. During these appointments we discuss future class schedules and discuss how your student is getting involved on our campus.</li> <li>• For students who are not in the College of Arts and Sciences, we meet with students every semester. Students can make appointments with their advisors at <a href="http://www.as.ua.edu/appointment">www.as.ua.edu/appointment</a></li> <li>• We talk with your students about adjusting to college, seeking out shadowing opportunities locally and in their home city, and other co-curricular related discussions.</li> <li>• We <b>teach</b> a freshmen seminar course for prehealth students every semester called AS 101: Prescription for Success. This class is taught every fall semester.</li> <li>• We offer <b>Sophomore Workshops</b> every semester in small group settings. Students have small group discussions with other prehealth students and an advisor, discussing campus involvement, a competitiveness check, and planning for your application year.</li> <li>• Your student will be <b>encouraged</b> to be able to identify resources, ask critical and reflective questions about individual progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Empower</b> your student to seek shadowing and volunteer opportunities during breaks and holidays.</li> <li>• <b>Encourage</b> students to get to know professors and attend office hours.</li> <li>• <b>Encourage</b> students to get to know advisors and attend appointments.</li> <li>• <b>Enable</b> students to be problem-solvers.</li> <li>• <b>Support</b> students if they need additional academic support (i.e. tutoring, major change, career track change, etc.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Freshmen Year Red Flags:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student is overwhelmed or unhappy</li> <li>• Failing science courses</li> <li>• Disengaged</li> <li>• Has poor time management</li> </ul> <p><b>Sophomore Year Red Flags:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low overall and science GPA</li> <li>• Student is not involved in any activities.</li> <li>• Student is involved in too many social activities</li> <li>• Student has changed majors multiple times</li> <li>• Student is still undecided on a major</li> </ul>

## Junior Year

Junior year is considered a very busy time for prehealth students as it is the year before they apply to professional school. The Health Professions Advising Office works very closely with all prehealth students, making them aware of deadlines and updates as they become available. Professional schools are looking for meaningful ways that your student-applicant has DEMONSTRATED the 15 Core Competencies. It is VERY important that your student is aware and MEETS deadlines for our advising office AND professional schools.

Students Expectations	Advisor Support and Services	Parental Support and Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review and follow</b> the prehealth guide for your prehealth discipline.</li> <li>• <b>Assess</b> your competitiveness. How do you personally rank as an applicant holistically compared to your peers? The national average?</li> <li>• <b>Research</b> programs that you want to apply to. Factor in cost, metrics standards, location, and curriculum.</li> <li>• Outline and compose your personal statement.</li> <li>• <b>Prepare</b> for your standardized test via self-study or a test prep company.</li> <li>• Attend one of the three applicant information meetings (Junior Mandatory Meetings).</li> <li>• Start requesting letters of recommendation from professors, doctors that you shadowed, and community-based service/work activities. (November through March)</li> <li>• <b>Meet deadlines</b> set by the Health Professions Advising Office. See the Applicant Tab of our website for more details.</li> <li>• Be able to <b>articulate</b> the activities that you have engaged in and provide meaningful explanations about your involvement. Document when required.</li> <li>• Produce a timely, strong application to your professional school program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We host three applicant information meetings for pre-medical, pre-dental, and pre-optometry students. This meeting outlines the application year and lays out the student applicant expectations and office deadlines.</li> <li>• We <b>teach</b> a junior seminar class for applying juniors called AS 299: Prehealth Application Year. This course reviews all things related to applying to medical, dental, and optometry school. This class is taught in the fall and spring.</li> <li>• We <b>collect</b> letters of recommendation from your student’s recommenders and compile them into ONE packet, sending them off to the appropriate application system (AMCAS, ADEA AADSAS, AACOMAS, OPTOMCAS, and TMDSAS).</li> <li>• During the summer, we <b>compose</b> individualized letters of recommendation for each applicant from our university who has met our requirements (see Applicant Tab of Prehealth website). For all other prehealth disciplines, we also write letters of recommendation. Please see your prehealth advisor for details and requirements.</li> <li>• We still <b>meet</b> with students every semester. We are trained to help students to navigate this process. Let us help!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become familiar with the general timeline of your student applying to professional school.</li> <li>• Make sure that your student is aware of deadlines.</li> <li>• Familiarize yourself with the cost of <b>APPLYING</b> to professional school (i.e. standardized test, primary application, secondary applications, interview attire, interview accommodations).</li> <li>• Make sure that you and your student are familiar with the cost of <b>ATTENDING</b> professional school (loans vs. scholarships).</li> <li>• Trust your student to lead out when engaging with professors and advisors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Junior Year Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low overall and science GPA</li> <li>• Student is taking the standardized test without completing foundational coursework (pre-medical, pre-dental, pre-pharmacy, pre-optometry).</li> <li>• Student is avoidant or vague when discussing steps that they have taken to prepare for the application process.</li> <li>• Student is hesitant to take personal responsibility for personal challenges (weak grades, no shadowing, missed deadlines).</li> </ul>

## Senior Year

Students Expectations	Advisor Support and Services	Parental Support and Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review and follow</b> the prehealth guide for your prehealth discipline.</li> <li>• Do a practice interview at our Career Center.</li> <li>• <b>TURN IN SECONDARY APPLICATIONS ON TIME!</b></li> <li>• Once you receive an admissions decision (acceptance, denial, wait-list), schedule a meeting with a prehealth advisor to discuss your options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We meet with seniors to discuss last-minute interview tips, choosing between schools, and planning for a gap year.</li> <li>• We celebrate with your student and help provide support when plans change (denials, gap year, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be supportive but <b>let your student lead</b> when seeking support from professors and advisors.</li> <li>• Encourage your student throughout the year. Check in and motivate them regularly. Interviews happen on a rolling bases, from late summer to mid-spring.</li> <li>• Celebrate every victory (i.e. Dean’s list, interview invitations, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior Year Red Flags</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has not heard from professional school for an interview by mid-spring.</li> <li>• Metrics are below national average.</li> </ul>