

# Preparing for Professional Programs in Healthcare

While every healthcare profession is known for its unique purpose and approach to patient care, many healthcare professions look for similar qualities and experiences in qualified applicants.

[Dimensions: The Center for the Science and Culture of Healthcare](#) helps students become competitive applicants for graduate and professional programs in healthcare. Programs include medical school, physical therapy programs, physician assistant programs, dental school, schools of veterinary medicine, and more.

The activities and support from Dimensions allows students to integrate their studies in the liberal arts with their interests in the healthcare and health sciences fields. While at Cornell, students come to understand the importance of empathy and communication, of discipline and creativity, and of individual initiative and teamwork associated with any successful healthcare career.

Dimensions supports a wide range of opportunities in and beyond the classroom, including interdisciplinary courses, [research opportunities and internships](#) at leading institutions, [workshops and seminars](#), assistance with [MCAT](#) and [graduate school preparation](#), and more. The program is supported by a full-time associate director and a faculty director.

Cornell College students pursuing healthcare regularly meet with the [Associate Director of Dimensions](#) to discuss courses to take, internship and research opportunities, co-curricular activities, admission exam scores, schools of interest, and more throughout their time at Cornell College and even as Cornell alumni.

## ***Professional Resources***

The following resources offer extensive, reliable information on preparing for the healthcare field, in addition to those found throughout this overview:

- [Dimensions: The Center for the Science and Culture of Healthcare](#)
- [ExploreHealthCareers.org](#)
- [Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)

## ***Guide to Preparing for Professional Programs in Healthcare Outline***

Pre-Professional Programs in Healthcare at Cornell College .....	Page 2
Prerequisite Coursework .....	Page 2
Co-Curricular Experiences .....	Page 3
Admission Examinations .....	Page 3
Application Process .....	Page 3
Health Professions Committee .....	Page 4

## ***Pre-Professional Programs in Healthcare at Cornell College***

Cornell College offers the following pre-professional programs in healthcare:

- [Pre-Medicine](#)
- [Medical Lab Science & Medical Technology](#)
- [Pre-Dentistry](#)
- [Pre-Health Administration/Management](#)
- [Pre-Occupational Therapy](#)
- [Pre-Pharmacy](#)
- [Pre-Physical Therapy](#)
- [Pre-Physician Assistant](#)
- [Pre-Public Health](#)
- [Pre-Veterinary Medicine](#)

Dimensions can also help you design pre-professional programs for other healthcare fields as well, including nursing and optometry.

### ***Prerequisite Coursework***

Graduate and professional programs in healthcare look for students with a well-rounded education - exactly the liberal arts education Cornell offers. Meeting with the [Associate Director of Dimensions](#) regularly can not only help you connect with professionals in healthcare fields you're interested in, but help you explore program-specific courses required for admission.

All applicants applying to healthcare programs must satisfy the prerequisites for each profession and school *and* have enough background in the social and natural sciences to do well on the admission examination.

### ***Choosing a Major***

Graduate and professional programs in healthcare do not require a specific major for admission. You can major in anything from music, to religion studies, to the social sciences to apply to graduate and professional programs in healthcare.

Choose a major that interests you, but remember that admission committees will examine the difficulty of your academic program, evidence of academic achievement beyond regular coursework, and evidence of your intellectual growth.

Choose your second major with a parallel plan in mind. Consider what you will do if you are not accepted into a graduate or professional program in healthcare or if you choose not to apply at the end of four years. There are many health-related careers, and Dimensions can help you explore them!

## ***Co-Curricular Experiences***

What you're involved in says a lot about who you are as an individual. Admission committees will review your experiences as closely as they do your grades.

- Did you demonstrate leadership, an ability to work with others, or self-discipline?
- Did you volunteer to work in your community?
- Did you spend a summer working with a local physician, at a hospital, or in a research laboratory?
- Have you worked with, volunteered with, or job shadowed a variety of professionals both in the healthcare field and the profession you are pursuing?

### **Dimensions can help connect you to each of these experiences.**

You need a realistic, not romanticized, view of what the life of a healthcare provider is like today. Internships or summer jobs in health care facilities like hospitals, clinics, or laboratories will expose you to the more practical side of health professions and allow you to judge your potential in different healthcare professions.

Admission committees also like to see students with research experience. Conducting research outside of the classroom allows students to learn about the scientific process, learn about real world applications of research, and get accustomed to reading and critiquing scientific journal articles.

Dimensions can help you identify internships, research opportunities, job shadowing experiences, and other opportunities in healthcare and the health sciences. Dimensions also coordinates and funds several [internship and research opportunities](#).

Students can apply for Dimensions [funding](#) to help offset costs of credit-bearing opportunities in healthcare they find on their own.

## ***Admission Examinations***

Each type of professional program in healthcare requires a unique admission examination for admission. For example, medical school applicants must earn high scores on the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) to be competitive for admission to medical school.

Dimensions provides resources for students preparing for graduate and professional admission examinations. Students can meet with the Associate Director of Dimensions to discuss strategies for studying, resources, exam registration, exam timing, and more.

## ***Application Process***

The application process for graduate and professional programs in healthcare begins over 1 calendar year before the student hopes to enroll. For example, students hoping to start medical school in the fall of 2017 will begin the formal application process in summer 2016. Most health professions use a centralized application for applying to healthcare programs.

Admission committees will scrutinize your entire academic record, admission examination scores, personal statement, and letters of recommendation looking for ability, motivation, integrity, and emotional maturity. Every application detail matters.

## ***Cornell College Health Professions Committee (HPC)***

The [HPC](#) assists students applying to professional programs in healthcare. The committee should be utilized by all medical school applicants (current students and Cornell College alumni). Current students and Cornell College alumni applying to all other professional programs in healthcare are also encouraged to utilize the HPC. The HPC process results in a Committee Letter of Recommendation sent to each school the applicant applies to, along with all other letters of recommendation. The Committee Letter of Recommendation is signed by the 4 members of the HPC:

- Barbara Christie Pope, PhD
- Craig Tepper, PhD
- Associate Director of Dimensions
- 1 Cornell College faculty or staff member of the student's choosing

The [HPC Committee Guide](#) is updated annually and should be reviewed by applicants before applying for the HPC. Students can find the most up-to-date version of the HPC Committee Guide on the Dimensions HPC website. Dimensions hosts workshops every year during 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> block on the HPC and healthcare program application processes.

Applications are due to the HPC the summer before the intended application cycle begins. (For example, students hoping to start medical school in fall 2017 will submit all application materials to the HPC by July 1, 2016.) Visit the Dimensions website to learn more about the HPC application process.