

Getting Started

Health professions students are encouraged to stop by the office open a file. Once a file has been established, students may begin asking their instructors for letters of recommendation. Advisors, however, are available to all students with or without files. In addition, a knowledgeable staff is on hand to help with the more basic questions.



Rutgers, Health Professions Office

Mailing Address:

**A207 Nelson Biological Laboratories
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RUTGERS

School of Arts and Sciences

RUTGERS

Health Professions Office

An Introduction

The Health Professions Office assists students of Rutgers University - New Brunswick who are interested in pursuing a career in a health-related field.

We work primarily with students interested in medicine or dentistry but also can help students explore their interests in a variety of health professions, including optometry, podiatry, physicians assistant, and others. We provide one-on-one advising to help students plan their academic and co-curricular activities to explore their interests in the health professions. We also provide up-to-date information via our Facebook page, website, recommendation letter repository, workshops, and newsletters. Services include assistance in the application process and forwarding letters of recommendation.



Busch Campus

A207 Nelson Biological Labs

Office Hours: Monday-Friday

8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

Phone: (848) 445-5667

Email: HPO@dls.rutgers.edu

Facebook: Rutgers Health Professions



Core Pre-professional Courses

Course requirements for different professional schools may vary, but most require that you have similar sequence. Most commonly, students at Rutgers take:*

- General Biology I and II with lab, 01:119:115, 116, 117 (10 credits)
- General Chemistry I and II with lab, 01:160:161, 162, 117(9 credits)
- Organic Chemistry I and II with lab, 01:160:307, 308, 311 (10 credits)
- General Physics I and II with lab, 01:750: 203, 204, 205, 206 (8 credits)
- Two semesters of college-level English or writing
- One year of mathematics at the college level. This usually includes one semester of calculus and one semester of statistics.
- A course in Biochemistry (required for med school, recommended for most others)
- A course in Psychology



*Note: there are other options for the Chemistry, Organic Chemistry and Physics sequences. Speak with an advisor if you want more information.

Choosing a Major

In general, students should major in a subject that they like. They may fulfill prerequisites for professional schools as part of their major, minor, or elective courses. While it is important to do well in the sciences, and majoring in a science is fine if that is what you really love best, exploring another interest is absolutely great! Regardless of your major, a strong liberal arts background is a great preparation for graduate work in the health professions.

For example, it is recommended that students take coursework in psychology, sociology, statistics,

physiology, and genetics. These courses will help on the MCAT and other entrance exams, and in preparing for professional school studies. Some recommended course to improve reading and thinking skills are:

- Philosophy courses, especially Current Moral and Social Issues, Introduction to Moral Theory, and Medical Ethics
- Psychology - General Psychology, Physiological Psychology, & Effective Thinking
- Sociology - Sociology of Medicine and Health Care
- Public Health - Introduction to Public Health, Health and Public Policy
- Foreign language, particularly Spanish or Mandarin

Letters of Recommendation

It is strongly recommended that premedical and pre dental students have at least 5 confidential letters of evaluation on file with the HPO (more is better!) by the time they are applying to medical/graduate school. At least two of the letters must be from science courses. Students majoring in Biological Sciences, Genetics, Cell Biology and Neuroscience, or Molecular Biology and Biochemistry must provide at least one letter (strongly recommend two) from upper level major course work as one of their science letters. All other majors are recommended to provide letters from upper level science course work as well. Additionally, all other majors must provide at least one letter from an upper level course specific to their major.

While full faculty members are the best, Teaching Assistant letters are acceptable. A letter must be obtained from your Principal Investigator if you are doing research. It is also recommended that you get letters from volunteer and shadowing experiences. Students applying to DO schools must provide a letter from a DO.

Not all recommendation letters are created equal.

Be sure to seek out letters from professors and other recommenders that can speak about your goals, work habits, communication skills, and so forth, in addition to how you performed in their class. See our brochure on asking for a letter of recommendation for more information.. Remember to check your HPOdrome account to make sure that the letters you have requested have been received by our office.

Other Factors

Students must engage in activities that provide the opportunity to have some exposure to their chosen career. Volunteer or paid employment in a health care setting shows an interest in gaining experience and provides a chance to sample the atmosphere. Research is not required but does demonstrate a desire to learn and an ability to work cooperatively with others. If a student is considering the MD/PhD path, substantive and sustained undergraduate research experience is required. Extracurricular activities in areas in which students have an interest are also encouraged.

Entrance Exams

Most health professional schools require a standardized admission test. The scores are used, in combination with grades, recommendations, personal statements, and interviews to evaluate candidates for admission. These exams may be taken any time after completing the required course work.